

Requestive Language Use in Bilingual Preschool Children in Turkey: A Classroom Discourse

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Abstract: A large body of research has been conducted on the requests employed by monolingual children, whilst knowledge about the requests uttered by bilingual children has remained scarce. To address this issue, this paper, for the first time in the literature, focuses on the request strategies and purposes employed by preschool children bilingual in Turkish and Zazaki in Turkey. By examining the requests of these children, this paper demonstrates how these learners differ from monolingual preschool children concerning their requestive language and the affordances of the local context. The investigation was based on the video-recorded spontaneous speech of 10 five-year-old preschool children (range=5.0-5.6 years). The results were analyzed according to the request strategies and then according to the purposes of requests. The interactions were handled under two headings: child-child and child-teacher interactions. The outcomes indicated that imperative forms constituted the most frequent strategy both in child-child and teacher-child interactions and that the use of hints was revealed at a rudimentary level, and request for action was the most common purpose elicited in both interactions.

Anahtar Sözcükler:

rica
söz eylemi
ikidillilik
çocuklar

Türkiye’de İki Dilli Anaokulu Çocuklarında Rica Dili: Sınıf Söylemi

Özet: Tek dilli çocukların rica dili ile ilgili çok sayıda çalışma bulunmasına rağmen, iki dilli çocukların rica dili ile ilgili çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Bu konuyu araştırmak için, bu çalışma, literatürde ilk kez olmak üzere, Türkiye’de Türkçe ve Zazaca dillerine sahip iki dilli okul öncesi çocukların spontane olarak kullandıkları ricaların stratejilerine ve amaçlarına odaklanmıştır. Bu çalışma, bu ricaları inceleyerek, bu öğrencilerin tek dilli anaokulu çocuklarından rica dili ve yerel bağlamın olanakları açısından nasıl farklılaştığını göstermektedir. Araştırma, 5 yaşındaki 10 okul öncesi çocuğun (5.0-5.6 yaş aralığında) video kaydına alınmış spontan konuşmalarına dayanmaktadır. Sonuçlar rica stratejilerine ve ardından rica amaçlarına göre analiz edilmiştir. Etkileşimler çocuk-çocuk ve çocuk-öğretmen etkileşimi olmak üzere iki başlık altında ele alınmıştır. Sonuçlar, emir kipinin en sık görülen stratejiyi oluşturduğunu, ipucu kullanımının çok sınırlı düzeyde kaldığını ve en sık ortaya çıkan amacın eylem talebi olduğunu göstermiştir.

1. Introduction

Preschool education is a far-reaching realm whose dynamics are exceptionally contingent on its participants' attitudes and behaviors (Kontos, 1999). This period of education is characterized by its crucial role in the development of children's "perception, personality, communication with other people and mastering childhood activities" (Veraksa, 2001, p. 80). In an educational sense, a typical classroom in a nursery school consists of young-age students and a teacher who frequently communicates verbally. Within this setting, they perform physical activities and watch for what others do or say. In this way, this interaction becomes the major factor that helps children establish the self-concepts that enable them to shape their own identities by observing how others view themselves (Cazden, 1986; Colwell & Lindsey, 2003; Nærland & Martinsen, 2011).

Children's talk in the classroom comprises a three-way interaction: child-child, child-teacher, and teacher-child. Of these, the child-child talk constitutes the greatest part, which includes conventional styles of interaction taking place during social playing, eating, and competing with or teasing each other and is also considered "a crucial site for pragmatic development, offering children a wide range of opportunities for mutual learning of pragmatic as well as linguistic skills" (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004, p. 294). Through this development, children acquire the essential abilities "to request, inform, explain and participate in conversations in an appropriate way" (Marcos, 2001, pp. 209-210).

Playing with peers is the quintessential segment of peer interactions. McLoyd (1979) handles this session in two distinct parts: 'social play' and 'social nonplay.' In social plays, children engage in real-like situations pretending to be the real participants of that event (e.g., two children pretending to drive a car to a toy shop and buy toys). As for the social nonplay, they make up an unattainable discourse (e.g., a talk between a mother and a baby), in which they have to employ "exaggerated intonations and rhythms of speech, and distorted gestures and movement" (p. 470).

An extensive body of literature on requests pays special reference to the superordinate class of requests known as speech acts (Ervin-Tripp, 1976, 1982; Tabar, 2012). Speech acts are defined by Gass and Selinker (2008) as "functions of language, such as complaining, thanking, apologizing, refusing, requesting, and inviting" (p. 288). Speech acts are divided into three distinct categories in attempts to create a clear-cut distinction between the complementary units of a speech act: locutionary acts (i.e., the act of uttering something), illocutionary acts (i.e., the intended action in uttering something), and perlocutionary acts (i.e., the resulting consequence of the intended action) (Austin, 1962, pp. 98–101). In this classification, requests fall under the category of illocutionary acts due to their inherent reference to the notion of intended action. In this regard, Austin also provides an exhaustive account depending on the verbs corresponding to each category: (I) verdictives (e.g., acquit, hold, calculate), (II) exercitives (e.g., appoint, dismiss, request), (III) commissives (e.g., promise, vow, pledge), (IV) expositives (e.g., affirm, deny, emphasize, illustrate), and (V) behabitives (i.e., those which include the notion of reaction to other people's behavior and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct) (p. 151). Drawing on Austin's classification, Searle (1976) presented an overlapping taxonomy ("representatives," "directives," "commissives," "expressives," "declarations") in which he challenged Austin's categories in terms of the insight into the evidentiality of each item within their corresponding situations (pp. 10–13). As an example of this challenge, while "requesting" is given as an example of exercitives in Austin (1962),

Searle regards it as a stereotypical type of directives. Notwithstanding, in both views, requests are defined as decisions that are taken—and necessarily uttered—to stimulate the addressee(s) to take a certain action.

The complexity of a request is further intensified through a dichotomy known as directness vs. indirectness—a notion used to determine whether a request is presented in an overt (e.g., *Give me the paper!*) or a covert (e.g., *I need the paper.*) way to elicit the desired action (Pinker et al., 2007; Wilkinson et al., 1984). According to Clark (1979), an indirect request (e.g., *Do you know the time?*) provides both a literal meaning (i.e., *I ask you whether you know the time.*) and an indirect meaning (i.e., *I request you to tell me the time.*), whereby the former is typically understood as an ordinary Yes/No question and the latter as an information-begging request which also includes a performative action (i.e., telling the time verbally) (p. 430).

Drawing on the distinction between direct and indirect requests, Elrod (2001) studied young children's requests to determine the role of nonlinguistic context on the perception of requests by children. The results indicated that direct requests are understood better than the indirect ones and that this understanding is not affected significantly by nonlinguistic context. In a similar way, Blum-Kulka (1987) studied the connection between the indirectness of requests in Hebrew and English with their degree of politeness and concluded that these two notions are conceived as different from each other and that even the most indirect requests were not regarded as the politest ones.

Around the world, although requests have mostly been studied in adult interactions (e.g., Byon, 2004; Daneshpazhuh & Shahrokhi, 2016; Donald, 2022; Halenko & Jones, 2017; Terkourafi, 2015; Thuruwan & Yunus, 2017), there have been few empirical investigations into children's requests. In one of the studies conducted with children, Korecky-Kröll et al. (2017) investigated the requests employed in child-teacher and child-child interactions among three-year-old monolingual German-speaking children and children bilingual in Turkish and German. Comparing the outcomes of the two groups with regard to the socioeconomic status of the families, the authors found differences among monolingual parents as opposed to no differences among bilingual parents and also noted that children with a high socioeconomic status used more indirect requests, while the children with a lower socioeconomic status mostly employed direct requests. In contrast, Stavans and Shafran (2018) evaluated two trilingual populations in Israel (group I: Arabic [L1], Hebrew [L2], and English [L3] and group II: Hebrew [L1], English [L2], and another language [L3]) and found that both groups opted for indirect over direct requests. In a cross-sectional study, Savić et al. (2021) compared the pragmalinguistic development of young (aged 9, 11, and 13 years) Greek Cypriot and Norwegian EFL learners in request production through a video-based oral discourse completion task and found that older children showed higher performance as well as proficiency in the use of requests.

In Turkey, however, pragmatic competence has only been compared among bilingual children that were proficient in Turkish and a language not natively spoken in Turkey, e.g., Turkish-English (e.g., Haznedar, 2010), Turkish-German (e.g., Marti, 2005), and Turkish-Dutch (e.g., Backus & Kutlay, 2017; Göktolga, 2016). More to the point, requestive language has predominantly been evaluated in monolingual Turkish children, though in a limited fashion. Zerey (2014) evaluated a total of 40 monolingual Turkish preschool children from two classes (mean ages=4.2 and 5.5), along with two teachers. The author analyzed three interaction types (i.e., child-child, child-teacher, and teacher-child) and arrived at a conclusion that request for action was the most common form of request among all three interactions.

In the same vein, Eken (2014) also analyzed the requests employed by monolingual Turkish children aged 2.0-4.0 years based on the request classification by Dore (1978) and, in a similar way to the study by Savić et al. (2021), concluded that the children's requests become more diversified as their age increased. Contrariwise, a study by Gülten (2008) compared two groups of 8th graders, with one group including native Turkish speakers and the other group including native English speakers. The author found that conventional hints and direct strategies were the most commonly employed strategies in both groups, while non-conventionally indirect strategies were scarcely used. Additionally, statistics indicated that Turkish native speakers employed direct strategies more than English native speakers did.

On the other hand, literature also indicates that endangered or minority languages have also been subject to investigation within the scope of sociolinguistic analysis (see Arıkan et al., 2019; Köse et al., 2017). *Zazaki*, also known as *Dimili* or *Dimli*, is currently classified as an endangered language, distinctively known as a colloquial language mostly spoken in southeastern Turkey and north-western Iran (Driem, 2008). Despite the lack of substantial statistics, the total number of speakers in southeastern Turkey is estimated to be around 1.5-2 million. *Zazaki* belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family and had no written records or academic studies before the mid-19th century (Kaya, 2011; Paul, 2002). Thereafter, *Zazaki* was subject to very few studies (see Arslan, 2016; Todd, 1985, as cited in Todd, 2008), of which Todd published the first known study on the grammar and phonetics of *Zazaki* and Arslan compiled an alphabetic-phonetic table of *Zazaki* (see Appendix 1).

To the researcher's knowledge, no study has investigated the involvement of preschool children in requestive situations in bilingual Turkish-*Zazaki* children. More to the point, no study has evaluated the use of requestive language in *Zazaki* children, whether monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual. To this end, the present study aimed to broaden the focus of research on requests to include a population that encompassed bilingual preschool Turkish-*Zazaki* children in a nursery school in Turkey in attempts to identify the request types used both by children and the teacher and also to compare the findings with the literature. Accordingly, the study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What request strategies are employed by children bilingual in Turkish and *Zazaki*?
2. What are the purposes of the requests produced by children bilingual in Turkish and *Zazaki*?
3. Which request strategies are used for which purposes by children bilingual in Turkish and *Zazaki*?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The present study was designed as a qualitative study based on the video-recorded spontaneous speech of preschool children. Prior to the study, the researcher contacted the nursery school in the village, which had only one class and one teacher. The teacher, upon the request of the researcher, had the informed consent forms undersigned by a parent of each child prior to the observation. Following these preliminary preparations, the researcher arrived at the school and recorded the children's naturally occurring interactions with their peers. Throughout the observation/recording process, the researcher paid utmost attention to capturing the voices of the interlocutors as clearly as possible. To achieve this, the researcher was watchful for the contexts with a high potential of request occurrences and

also zoomed into those contexts by paying special attention to avoid distracting the interlocutors.

While interacting with their peers, children sometimes directed their speech at the researcher to place some requests and offers. However, the researcher paid special attention to remaining responseless to those requests and offers. Equally, the teacher behaved in a cautious manner to preclude such breaches as well. Though recorded, these offers and questions were excluded from the analysis since they did not fit into the interaction types analyzed in the study. On the other hand, the researcher took some extralinguistic notes while doing the recordings in an attempt to create a fully understandable record of the situations surrounding each request.

2.2. Participants

The study included ten five-year-old (range=5.0-5.5 years) preschool children, comprising seven girls and three boys. Purposive sampling (Patton, 2015) was utilized to select the samples from a nursery school located in a village called Daralan in Diyarbakir, Turkey, all the more decisively since the official language is Turkish and the colloquial language is Zazaki in that village. In a related manner, according to the classification devised by Gass and Selinker (2008), all the children included in the present study were 'successive bilinguals' in Turkish and Zazaki in that they learned Turkish sometime after the development of Zazaki (p. 28). Likewise, as expounded by the teacher, the parents/caregivers of the children were also successive bilinguals who were moderately proficient in Turkish, a notion frequently observed by the teacher during the parent/caregiver interviews. As for the teacher, she was a monolingual speaker of Turkish and had little understanding of Zazaki. The children were sampled based on the non-random sampling technique that entails choosing what is immediately available (Walliman, 2011). During the observation, the researcher randomly assigned a number and a pseudonym (e.g., Robert, Jane, Jennifer) to each child and noted down all these assignments to preserve their anonymity and to facilitate their identification during the recording, analysis, and documentation processes.

2.3. Data Collection

The entire observation was recorded using a digital video camera mounted on a tripod. The observation encompassed a total of four sessions, each session lasting approximately for 40 min, with the first session beginning at 9.00 a.m. and the last session ending at 12.10 p.m. During the recess times, no recording was performed since the children were allowed out of class, and thus, no classroom interaction was conducted. The recording lasted 160 minutes and 5 seconds, encompassing a number of classroom activities varying from breakfast to singing activity.

The classroom setting was a medium-size room equipped with several attractive toys (e.g., dolls, trucks, cars, puzzles, and blocks) and other materials such as crayons, palettes, and paintbrushes. Prior to the first session, the teacher introduced the researcher to the class, only elaborating on the fact that the researcher is a teacher who would like to watch them in the classroom; while doing this, the teacher paid special attention to avoid hinting them about the actual reason for the observation, mainly to allow them to display their natural comportment. To reinforce this, the teacher also asked the children to pay no heed to the camera and the recording process and to behave as usual. In this way, no rapport was established between the researcher and the children to avoid the disruption of their natural comportment and allow for a non-threatening environment.

2.4. Data Analysis

The entire recording was transcribed by the researcher and checked for accuracy by a colleague proficient in Turkish and Zazaki. All the utterances were transcribed precisely in the same way pronounced by the children, paying no heed to the pronunciation mistakes made during articulation. Additionally, appropriate punctuation marks were added to communicate the pauses, exclamations, and other prosodic features employed by the children. Following transcription, the entire text was coded to isolate the utterances involving requests. In the first stage of the coding, all the request tokens were highlighted and coded on the transcript using Microsoft Word 2016 application. Meanwhile, tokens with the same wording were counted separately due to the uniqueness of their context (e.g., *Stop!* could be a request uttered to stop a peer from hitting the requester and also a request produced to stop a peer while running). Subsequently, the tokens were divided into two groups based on their language (e.g., Turkish and Zazaki). In the second stage, these codes were exported to Microsoft Excel 2016 and then were initially classified according to the two interactions, including (i) child-child and (ii) child-teacher. Afterward, they were categorized according to the request strategies classified by Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) and then reclassified according to the purposes of requests proposed by McLoyd (1979). The outcomes were presented using descriptives, including frequencies (f) and percentages (%). In the final stage of the analysis, the request strategies and purposes were juxtaposed to determine which strategy the children used for which purpose. All the request strategies were recorded from the transcript according to their purposes to achieve this.

3. Findings

The findings of the study are discussed under the themes created in accordance with the research questions. These themes consisted of (i) strategies and (ii) purposes of the requests elicited in the study, and (iii) juxtaposition of these strategies and purposes.

3.1. Request Strategies

A total of 258 request tokens were initially divided into two groups depending on the two interactions. Subsequently, the elicited requests were categorized according to the strategy types devised by Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984, pp. 307–308). This categorization indicated that most of the requests (84.1%) were produced in child-child interaction, followed by child-teacher interaction (15.9%). More to the point, imperatives (70%) constituted the most common strategy in child-child interaction as opposed to imperative ellipsis (61%) in child-teacher interaction. Interestingly, however, no tokens of imbedded requests were elicited from both interactions.

Although only Turkish was used in the interaction addressing the teacher (i.e., child-teacher), both Turkish and Zazaki were utilized in child-child interaction. Of the tokens elicited from child-child interaction, 77.4% of them were in the Turkish language, and the remaining 22.6% were in the Zazaki language. Moreover, imperatives constituted the largest category in both Turkish and Zazaki (77% and 45%, respectively), followed by imperative ellipsis (19% and 35%, respectively) and explicit need or want statements (2% and 15%, respectively), respectively. Of note, explicit need or want statements and conventionalized hints were found to be more commonly produced in Zazaki than in Turkish (15% vs. 2% and 5% vs. 1%, respectively).

3.1.1. Imperatives

As explicated above, imperatives constituted the majority of the request strategies in child-child interaction (70%), whereas no such request token was observed in child-teacher interaction, which could be attributed to the nuance arising from the relationship between the children and the teacher that restricts them to address their teacher using an imperative tone. Expectedly, the imperatives in child-child interaction were mainly used to ask for a toy, some kind of food, or to force his/her peer to give/take a certain item. Below are examples of imperatives uttered by the children:

Example in Turkish:

Mary → Robert (session #3 [107:12]; activity: cleaning/tidy-up)

Önümden çekil!

‘Get out of my way!’

Example in Zazaki:

Julia → Robert (session #2 [63:45]; activity: stand up/sit down game)

Ti zî werz!

‘You stand up, too!’

3.1.2. Imbedded requests

For this category, no request token was observed in any of the three interactions and in either languages, which implicates that the requests did not attain the level of politeness characterized by the usage of polite forms such as *Could you...?*, *Could I ...?* and so forth.

3.1.3. Permission requests

Considering the level of politeness put forth by Blum-Kulka (1987, p. 137), this category, which is generally used in the question forms like *Shall/Can/Could/May I...?*, features one of the most polite requests used for asking permission for a specific activity or game, e.g., asking permission to get/use a peer’s possession (ibid). As a corollary, this type, though rarely, was mostly used by children to ask for permissions from their teacher (24%), almost all of which were preceded by the address term ‘*My teacher.*’ Notwithstanding, there were only two (1%) examples of the child-child interaction:

Examples in Turkish:

George → Robert (session #2 [52:19]; writing/drawing the alphabet letters)

Sana bişey söylüyüm mi?

‘Shall I tell you something?’

Julia → Teacher (session #4 [139:30]; activity: playing with toys)

Öğretmenim, tuvalete gidebilir miyim?

‘My teacher, can I go to the toilet?’

3.1.4. Explicit need or want statements

Unlike the previous ones, this category was observed in both child-child (n=10, 5%) and child-teacher (n=5, 12%) interactions. In both of these interactions, the children produced these statements mainly to express their needs of preferences, such as the kind of activity they wanted to play with or the kind of food they wanted to obtain. These strategies are exemplified below:

Examples in Turkish:

Jack → Rose (session #2 [61:00]; activity: stand up/sit down game)
Ben burda oturmak istiyorum.
'I want to sit here.'

Jane → Teacher (session #1 [06:52]; activity: singing/warm-up)
Öğretmenim! Ben geleyim mi?
'My teacher! Shall I come?' (in response to the teacher's question, 'Who wants to come here and sing?')

Example in Zazaki:

Anne → Robert (session #1 [20:47]; activity: breakfast)
E kekê nê wena!
'I don't [want to] eat the cake.' (i.e., as a response to her peer's offer)

3.1.5. Conventionalized hints

Conventionalized hints, as expounded by Ervin-Tripp (1976), can be distinctively used by adults in that they require a certain level of metalinguistic cognition to produce metaphorical utterances. Suitably, the children's usage of hints remained at a rudimentary level (child-child; 2% and child-teacher; 2%) when compared to the frequency of other request strategies. Of note, the children used hints mainly to tantalize or tease their peers or to prevent them from appropriating their toys or possessions, as explicated in the examples below:

Examples in Turkish:

Rose → Robert (session #4 [125:59]; activity: playing with toys)
O benimdir!
'That's mine!' (i.e., to prevent her peer from taking her toy)

Anne → Teacher (session #3 [116:12]; activity: free time/chitchat)
Öğretmenim! Robert, Mary'yi döndü.
'My teacher! Robert hit Mary.' (i.e., to urge the teacher to tell off Robert)

Example in Zazaki:

Jack → George (session #3 [110:50]; activity: cleaning/tidy-up)
Ti xerepnenê!
'You are disarranging [the mats]! (i.e., to warn his peer about the situation and urge her to stop doing what she was doing)

3.1.6. Imperative ellipsis

The utterances in this category could be considered as the shortest requests in that they do not have a verb (e.g., *More milk!*), most often standing for a shortened version of imperatives (Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, 1984, p. 307). Expectedly, the children used this request strategy more frequently in child-teacher interaction (61%) than in child-child interaction (22%). The use of this strategy is exemplified in the following utterances:

Examples in Turkish:

Robert → Jane (session #4 [130:03]; activity: playing with toys)
Benimki!

‘[That’s] mine!’ (i.e., to make his peer to return his toy when the toys were being distributed by that peer)]

Mary → Teacher (session #1 [11:24]; activity: breakfast)

Öğretmenim!

‘My teacher!’ (i.e., to inform the teacher about the wrongdoings of her male peer while pointing at him with her finger at the same time)

Example in Zazaki:

George → Anne (session #1 [35:00]; activity: breakfast)

Mı rê şeker!

‘Candy for me’ (i.e., to express his preference among several options)

3.2. Request Purposes

Once the request strategies were identified, the requests were reclassified according to their contextual purposes in the classroom, which are termed ‘quantitative measures of speech’ by McLoyd (1979, p. 475). These categories included (a) *verbal imitation*, (b) *directive for shared activity*, (c) *directive for partner observation*, (d) *directive for partner action*, and (e) *request for information* (ibid, pp. 475-6). Of these, directive for partner action, i.e., the request which entails the addressee to make a particular move such as ‘*Give me the toy!*’, was revealed as the most common purpose in child-child interaction (84%), while directive for shared activity was the most common purpose in child-teacher interaction (51%). In contrast, the use of requests for producing a directive for partner observation was almost nonexistent in both interactions (1% and 0%, respectively).

3.3. Juxtaposition of Request Strategies and Purposes

In the final phase of the analysis, the elicited request strategies and purposes were juxtaposed to see which strategy was used for which purpose in both interactions. It was revealed that the request strategies employed by the children were mostly used to elicit partner action in both interactions, followed by requests for information and shared activity, respectively. On closer look, it was also salient that both interactions employed permission requests only for obtaining information. In contrast, child-child interaction produced explicit need or want statements exclusively for shared activity and child-teacher interaction produced conventionalized hints exclusively for partner action.

4. Discussion

The present study, for the first time in the literature, set out to examine the request strategies and purposes of children bilingual in Turkish and Zazaki and to analyze the correspondence between their strategies and purposes. The most apparent finding is that the children’s requests featured an overwhelming use of direct requests (e.g., imperatives) both in Turkish and Zazaki. In a similar vein, Zerey (2014) and Routarinne and Ahlholm (2021) reported that among the children monitored throughout the study period, the use of indirect requests was consistently lower in younger children than in older children. In addition, Uçar and Bal (2015), who evaluated the use of requests among monolingual Turkish children aged 4.5-5.6, concluded that the children mostly produced direct requests that predominantly included head acts (e.g., *Go!* rather than *Can/Could you go?*). Given the inherently tumultuous environment of preschool classrooms (Massey, 2004), these findings seem rather anticipated. Based on these findings, it is encouraging to claim that the children availed themselves of the

directness and hence brusqueness of imperatives to convey their messages to convey their requestive message more practically (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2004). This practically lends itself to the dichotomy of directness *vs.* indirectness, whereby direct requests are understood better than the indirect ones (Elrod, 2001). From these notions, it follows that the children, relying on the same sense of ease, opted for imperative forms rather than embracing themselves to formulate hard-earned need or want statements, ostensibly to save time and effort. On the other hand, a broader perspective has been adopted by Waddington et al. (2022), who delved into preschool children's reflections on their own unjustified requests in two groups of native English speakers aged 3 and 5 years old and concluded that 5-year-old children were able to employ hints and indirect requests while the 3-year-old children mostly uttered direct requests. Likewise, this notion was among the conclusions attained by a study conducted by Savić et al. (2021), in which older children were found to be more proficient in the use of lexical downgraders and hints compared to younger children. All these findings collectively suggest that producing indirect requests such as hints is not only a matter of higher metacognitive skills but also a point of divergence between age groups. In turn, this divergence might also rest on the dynamics appertaining to the instructions provided to the children.

Another intriguing finding related to request strategies was that both the children and the teacher employed imbedded requests (e.g., *Can/Could I take ...?*) at a highly rudimentary level. In a confirmatory manner, Myrset (2022), who evaluated the effect of concept-based instruction of requests in two groups of primary school students, contended that the students did not use downgraders, i.e., indicators of mitigated requests, as commonly as expected, despite having received targeted education. Based on these findings, the author suggested that young learners need additional scholarly attention to acquire politer requests. Given that the children in the present study were preschool students and did not receive intensive instruction on the use of requests, this finding seems rather plausible.

As for the comparison of the two languages with regard to the frequencies of request strategies, explicit need or want statements and conventionalized hints were revealed to be more frequently produced in Zazaki than in Turkish. This finding could be explained by the phenomenon known as 'language choice,' which is both a social and linguistic term referring to the tendency of multilingual speakers to choose the languages they have for different purposes (Genesee and Bourhis, 1988). Expounding on this notion, Genesee and Bourhis maintained that bilingual speakers perform their language choices depending on four criteria: (1) situational language norms (i.e., using different languages in different situations), (2) speech accommodation (i.e., convergence vs. divergence), (3) in-group favoritism (i.e., discriminating against outgroup members and favoring in-group members), and (4) sociostructural factors (i.e., language choices in cross-cultural encounters) (p. 231). Accordingly, the difference in the production rate of explicit need or want statements and conventionalized hints between Turkish and Zazaki appears to have a connection with the situational language norms and speech accommodation, in that the former appertains to the situations that urged the children to verbalize those requests in Zazaki more than they required them to produce the requests in Turkish and the latter relates to the possibility that the children might have needed to converge with or diverge from their interlocutor based on the dynamics of the available context. On the other hand, another possible explanation could be associated with the varying levels of competence in the languages known by the children in the present study, in that the children were successive bilinguals who were initially exposed to Zazaki and then were immersed in Turkish-speaking environments. A similar notion was elicited in the findings of a study by Backus and Yağmur (2019), who compared the pragmatic

skills of bilingual Turkish immigrant children in the Netherlands and their monolingual Turkish peers. In a confirmatory manner, the authors concluded that there was a significant difference between the pragmatic competence of these two groups and that this difference could be ascribed to their varying levels of exposure to Turkish.

Among the request purposes, directive for partner action was the most common type used in child-child interaction, whereby children produced these requests mostly to urge their partners to take a certain action (e.g., to ask a partner to give the requester a toy). Similarly, both Eken (2014) Zerey (2014), who evaluated monolingual Turkish preschool children, noted that request for action was the most common purpose elicited in their study populations. Clearly, then, there seems to be ample parallelism between monolingual Turkish and bilingual Turkish-Zazaki preschool children with regard to their purpose in the production of requests in child-child interaction.

Finally, the juxtaposition of the request strategies and purposes revealed that both child-child and child-teacher interactions employed permission requests only for obtaining information, while child-child interaction produced explicit need or want statements exclusively for the purpose of shared activity and child-teacher interaction produced conventionalized hints exclusively for the purpose of partner action. In a similar manner, Thuruvan and Yunus (2017) showed that the children analyzed in their study employed politer requests when asking for permission from their teachers and, conversely, the teachers used less polite requests when addressing the children, ostensibly due to the fact that the teachers had a higher hierarchy associated with a greater power of authority. This is hardly surprising since it is commonly known that the concept of asking for permission dwells on a higher level of hierarchy on the requestee's side.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings elicited in the present study, it can be concluded that bilingual preschool Turkish-Zazaki children display differing characteristics regarding the languages they have when it comes to the strategies and purposes of the requests they produce. Additionally, it was also revealed that child-child and child-teacher interactions differ from each other in terms of the language they employ for addressing their requestee and also with regard to the strategies and purposes of the requests produced by their requesters. As such, the present study makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the request strategies and purposes of children bilingual in Turkish and Zazaki. Further studies are warranted to investigate the strategies and purposes of the requests produced by multilingual children.

Note on Ethical Issues

Informed consent was obtained from each child's parent in the study.

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Appendix

A representational alphabetic-phonetic alphabet of Zazaki

Letter	IPA	Voicing	Place / Manner of articulation	Example 'meaning'
A a	[a]	+	open, back, unrounded	asme 'moon'
B b	[b]	+	plosive, bilabial	bervi 'witness'
C c	[dz]	+	affricate, alveolar	cor 'up/upside'
Ç ç	[tʃ]	-	affricate, alveolar	çila 'lamp'
Ç̣ ç̣	[tʃʰ]	-	affricate, ejective	çem 'river'
D d	[d]	+	plosive, alveolar	dest 'hand' (body part)
E e	[ɛ]	+	open mid, front, unrounded	estene 'to throw'
Ê ê	[e]	+	close mid, front, unrounded	dês 'wall'
F f	[f]	-	fricative, labio-dental	fek 'mouth' (body part)
G g	[g]	+	plosive, velar	gule 'rose'
H h	[h]	-	fricative, laryngeal	hengure 'grapes'
Ĥ ĥ	[ħ]	-	fricative, pharyngeal	heş 'bear (animal)'
I ı	[ɨ]	+	close, back, unrounded	tıvar 'trust'
İ i	[i]	+	close, front, unrounded	Iqrar 'companionship'
K k	[k]	-	plosive, velar	kal 'uncooked, raw'
Ķ ķ	[kʰ]	-	plosive, ejective	kal 'old (person)'
L l	[l]	+	lateral, alveolar	lew 'lip' (body part)
M m	[m]	+	nasal, bilabial	meře 'mouse (animal)'
N n	[n]	+	nasal, alveolar	nast 'familiar'
O o	[o]	+	close mid, back, rounded	olvoz 'friend'
P p	[p]	-	plosive, bilabial	poı 'hair'
Þ þ	[pʰ]	-	plosive, ejective	þudi 'gum' (dental)
Q q	[q]	-	plosive, uvular	qor 'leg' (body part)
R r	[r]	+	trill, alveolar	radon 'radio'
Ř ř	[r:]	+	apical, alveolar	bir 'forest'
S s	[s]	-	fricative, alveolar	sare 'head' (body part)
Ş ş	[ʃ]	-	fricative, palatoalveolar	şene 'breast' (body part)
T t	[t]	-	plosive, alveolar	tüye 'mulberry'
Ṭ ṭ	[tʰ]	-	plosive, ejective	ṭüye 'owl'
U u	[u]	+	close, back, rounded	sur 'red'
Ü ü	[y]	+	close, front, rounded	cüamerd 'man'
V v	[v]	+	fricative, labio-dental	vore 'snow'
W w	[w]	+	approximant, bilabial	welat 'country, hometown'
X x	[x]	-	fricative, velar	xanıme 'lady, wife'
Ẃ ẃ	[ɣ]	+	fricative, velar	Ẃezale 'deer'
Y y	[j]	+	approximant, alveopalatal	yar 'sweetheart'
Z z	[z]	+	fricative, alveolar	zan/zon 'language'
Ẓ ẓ	[ʒ]	+	fricative, alveopalatal	Ẓia 'dry' (adj)

Adapted from Arslan (2016, p. 213) by permission.

IPA: International Phonetic Alphabet