

A CONVERSATION-PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO EXPLORE TURKISH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CONCEPTUAL SOCIALIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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The present study explores Turkish international students' conceptual socialization by examining their social interactions with American speakers to look for the ways they coordinated modes of communication through social and linguistic means. A conversational-pragmatic approach was employed to examine the data coming from the video-recordings of a formal, social event held at a U.S. university. The findings indicated that the Turkish students had almost an equal number of endeavors to establish rapport with the American guests and overlapping speech was one of the strategies they employed for rapport increment. Turkish students overused the speech formulas and situation-bound utterances mostly to express gratitude, while the idioms and phrasal verbs were more common in American speakers' utterances. The findings provide insights into Turkish students' conceptual socialization since they socially as well as linguistically demonstrated appropriate behaviors during their conversations with the American guests. While the findings of this study can only be interpreted according to this specific social occasion and might not be generalized to the Turkish students' socialization in different social contexts within the American culture, the study with its naturalistic data does fill a gap in the literature which has been dominated with classroom contexts and artificial language production tasks.

This study aims to examine language use in its social context by combining the social and individual aspects of language learning. It relies on the framework of language socialization which assumes that “acquiring a language is part of a much larger process of becoming a person in society” (Ochs, 2004, p.106). More specifically, language socialization deals with how novices “become competent members of their community by taking on the appropriate beliefs, feelings and behaviors, and the role of language in this process” (Leung, 2001, p.2). Since international students¹ are “transient visitors” (Montgomery, 2010, p. xv) in academic communities outside the borders of their home country, the overarching purpose of this study is to explore how international students as novices in a new country come to know the discursive processes to participate in forms of talk within a speech community (Goffman, 1981), a process that requires language socialization in that target language and culture.

LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION

Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) consider language socialization to be “an interactional display (covert or overt) to a novice of expected ways of thinking, feeling, and acting” (p. 2). In that sense, language socialization relies on two processes: a) socialization through the use of language, referring to “interactional sequences in which novices are directed to use language in specific ways”; and, b) socialization to use the language, referring to “the use of language to encode and create cultural meaning” (Poole, 1994, p.594). These two processes not only indicate the role of language in socialization but also point to the interdependence of language and culture. Hence, the aim of language socialization studies is to understand “how persons become competent members of social groups and the role of language in this process” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p.167).

Socialization is a lifelong process involving many contexts; such as work, school, etc. Since “all language learning is culture learning” (Heath, 1985, p.5), second language (L2) learning brings about L2 socialization, especially if it is done in the target language culture. Therefore, L2 socialization focuses on the processes by which individuals “acquire tacit knowledge of principles of social order and systems of belief” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p.2) through “exposure to and participation in L2-mediated interactions” (Matsumura, 2001, p.636).

Language Socialization and Pragmatic Competence

In many L2 socialization studies, the focus was to examine the extent to which language learners follow the social and pragmatic norms of the target culture in local contexts (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Thus, L2 socialization research can be grouped into two categories: studies focusing on the social aspects and the studies dealing with the linguistic aspects of language learning. The research emphasizing the social aspects of language socialization revolved around the use of linguistic resources available in bilingual and multilingual communities and the ways these resources are employed by bilinguals for their pragmatic and symbolic values (e.g., language maintenance and shift) (Bayley & Schecter, 2003). On the other hand, the studies focusing on the linguistic aspects posit that language socialization plays a crucial role in facilitating L2 learners’ linguistic development in the L2 community. In this respect, acquiring pragmatic competence, that is, the ability to use and interpret language appropriately in contexts, is an essential part of the language socialization process, without which it is hard to participate in a variety of social contexts (Matsumura, 2001).

While language socialization provides a framework to examine the pragmatic development of language learners in the target language culture (Kanagy, 1999; Matsumura, 2001), it has also faced criticism in the L2 acquisition research for its lack of focus on the cognitive aspects of language learning (Gregg, 1999). On the other hand, Blum-Kulka (1997) proposed the term pragmatic socialization to refer to “the ways in which children are

socialized to use language in context in socially and culturally appropriate ways” (p.3). Thus, this study relies on Kecskes’ (2002) conceptual socialization since it not only combines the cognitive and social aspects of language acquisition but also provides a framework to explore the (secondary) language socialization processes of L2 learners. The next section will provide more information on conceptual socialization and how it addresses the gap in L2 socialization research.

CONCEPTUAL SOCIALIZATION

In a longitudinal mixed method study exploring the language socialization processes of international students in the United States, Ortactepe (2011) found that:

the interplay between the social and linguistic aspects of L2 socialization require re-framing of the notion L2 socialization by replacing it with conceptual socialization since the latter distinguishes the L2 socialization from primary socialization in regard to the conceptual background that language learners bring as well as the conceptual fluency they need to develop in the target language (p.329).

Therefore, while conceptual socialization draws insights from language socialization, it broadens the scope of language socialization studies (Kecskes, 2002). Most of the language socialization research covers L1 socialization and only a few studies have extended the language socialization approach to L2 research (Matsumura, 2001; Poole, 1994). Contrary to previous studies adopting a second language socialization approach, conceptual socialization (Kecskes, 2002) acknowledges that L2 learners have already gone through L1 socialization which enabled them to acquire social and linguistic competence in their L1 culture and language, respectively. Therefore, the main difference between conceptual and L2 socialization lies in the way conceptual socialization “emphasizes the primacy of mental processes in the symbiosis of language and culture, and aims at explaining the bidirectional influence of two languages in second language development” (Kecskes, 2002, p.156). In other words, conceptual socialization results in a change in an L2 learner’s L1 dominated conceptual base by exposing him/her to new knowledge and information that derive from lived experiences in the target language culture (Ortactepe, 2011).

Kecskes and Papp (2000) state that the problem of language acquisition is neither grammatical knowledge nor communicative skills since the former can be learned while the latter can be acquired. They argue that conceptualization is the problem that makes “full mastery of an L2 or FL” difficult to achieve (p.9). Thus, Kecskes (2002) defines conceptual socialization as “the transformation of the conceptual system which undergoes

characteristic changes to fit the functional needs of the new language and culture” (p.157).

Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) suggest that the study of language socialization should comprise two intertwined processes: a) examining the role of language in the socialization process, and, b) role of the socialization in the acquisition of appropriate uses of language. Similarly, conceptual socialization can be explored in two dimensions: a skill side, which involves the actual language skills such as conceptual fluency; and, a content side, which is related to more cultural issues such as multicultural attitude and interactional style (Kecskes, 2002).

The Role of Formulaic Language in Conceptual Socialization

In many L1 socialization studies, the emphasis is on how children (novices) acquire interactional routines by engaging in contextually situated activities with their caregivers or experts (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). These interactional units, also called formulaic expressions, are “multiword units of language that are stored in long-term memory as if they were single lexical units” (Wood, 2002, p.2) and play an essential role in daily communication because “...much of what is said in everyday interaction is by no means unique... [but] consists of enacting routines, making use of prefabricated units in a well-known and generally accepted manner” (Coulmas, 1981, p.1). More specifically, the acquisition of these repetitive interactional routines is of paramount importance because every day, people encounter similar situations which involve routine and predictable language use (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992). In terms of language learning in the target language community, then, these expressions become formulaic in language learners’ interactive ability and facilitate further interaction with the experts, which as a result, will enable them to acquire the target language proficiency as well as the sociolinguistic norms (Shi, 2006; Kanagy, 1999; Poole, 1994; Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). Moreover, these pre-coded utterances are conventionally triggered by specific social events and expected to be appropriately used as part of everyday politeness formulae (Dogancay, 1990). This is more related to the fact that “people belonging to a particular speech community have preferred ways of saying things (cf. Wray 2002) and preferred ways of organizing thoughts” (Kecskes, 2007, p.192). Bell (2007) argues that these multi-word utterances are a reflection of nativelike selection, which can be referred as the ability to speak a fluent and appropriate version of a language. In this respect, these formulaic expressions not only indicate socially recognized ways of communicating in a specific language and culture but also prevent misunderstandings, communication breakdowns and misbehavior in social situations (Dogancay, 1990).

There are a plethora of terms used to describe these interactional units: formulaic expressions, pre-fabricated speech, conversational routine, etc. This study will prefer the term formulaic language to refer to “multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically rather than being generated de novo with each use (Kecskes, 2007, p.193). In order to clarify the

confusion related to identification of interactional routines (Pawley, 2007), Kecskes (2002, 2007) proposes the hypothesis of a continuum to explain the differences in each type of fixed expression in terms of their conventionalized meanings used in predictable situations.

Table 1.1: Formulaic Continuum (Kecskes, 2007, p.193)

Gramm. Units	Fixed Sem. Units	Phrasal Verbs	Speech Formul as	Situation-bound Utterances	Idioms
<i>Be going to</i>	<i>As a matter of fact</i>	<i>Put up with</i>	<i>Going shopping</i>	<i>Welcome aboard</i>	<i>Kick the bucket</i>
<i>Have to</i>	<i>Suffice it to say</i>	<i>Get along with</i>	<i>Not bad</i>	<i>Help yourself</i>	<i>Spill the beans</i>

The formulaic continuum includes grammatical units on the left and more pragmatic expressions on the right (see Table 1.1); “the more we move to the right on the functional continuum the wider the gap seems to become between ‘what is said’ and ‘what is communicated’” (Kecskes, 2002, p.4). On the right hand side of the continuum are idioms, non-compositional, institutionalized, fixed/frozen expressions, “whose meaning is more or less unpredictable from the sum of the meanings of its morphemes” (Yorio, 1980, p.434). The next unit on the continuum is the situation bound utterances (SBUs) which are “highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations” (Kecskes, 2000, p.606). Since SBUs provide situational frames for communication within each culture (Yorio, 1980), their acquisition is closely related to conceptual socialization. The slight distinction between SBUs and speech formulas is that SBUs are strictly tied to the speech situation, while speech formulas, being more flexible, can be used at any time during an interaction when needed (Kecskes, 2007).

The formulaic continuum is adopted in this study not only because a majority of spoken or written communication relies on the use of formulaic utterances (Hymes, 1968) but also formulaic expressions are ‘group identifying’ since they reflect a community’s shared language practices (Yorio, 1980). In other words, while the misuse of these formulaic expressions by the language learners leads to cross cultural pragmatic failures (Thomas, 1983) and face-threatening acts, their appropriate use establishes rapport, enables smooth conversations and indicates communicative competence (Dogancay, 1990). While formulaic utterances will be the first things to enter an international student’s daily vocabulary and speech as soon as s/he enters the target language community (Ortactepe, 2011) and will facilitate the

development of L2 proficiency especially at the early stages of language learning (Kasper & Rose, 2002), according to Ortactepe (2011), their acquisition “follows a non-linear, U-shaped process that relies on trial-and-error and is objected to L1 transfer and overgeneralization” (p.226). Coulmas (1979) also suggests that competency over these expressions require observation and participation in their respective situational contexts.

In this study, since the focal group is international graduate students, it is assumed that they are already proficient in the use of grammatical units and fixed semantic units due to the fact that all international students coming to the United States have to take a standardized language proficiency test (e.g., TOEFL) measuring reading and writing skills as well as grammatical knowledge. Therefore, this study will specifically exclude those two grammatical units on the left-hand side of the continuum while focusing primarily on the use of phrasal verbs, speech formulas, situation-bound utterances and idioms. Thus, the present study lies on the assumption that the more language learners move on the formulaic continuum towards more situational meaning, the more they will keep the preferred ways of native speakers and engage in smooth, flawless conversational exchanges (Norton, 2001).

METHOD

Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it aims to bring a conversational analytic approach (Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby & Olsher, 2002) to L2 socialization research by focusing on the pragmatic competence of L2 learners. Second, it attempts to capture the socialization process of international students in the U.S. by providing a snapshot of their interactions with native English speakers at a formal social occasion. While there have been many studies relating pragmatic development to L2 socialization (Ohta, 1999; Kanagy, 1999, Matsumura, 2001; Li, 2000), only the studies of Ohta (1999), Kanagy (1999) and Matsumura (2001) shed light on the acquisition of pragmatic units by L2 learners. Nevertheless, all the three studies fail to capture the socialization process in a naturalistic setting. More specifically, Kanagy's (1999) and Ohta's (1999) studies rely on classroom observations, which presents itself as a limited discourse depending on Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) interactional sequence, while Matsumura's (2001) data come from a multiple choice questionnaire, which lacks authentic language use in naturalistic settings. Only Li's (2000) study discusses the development of pragmatic competence as a reflection of language socialization in naturalistic L2 workplace settings. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in the L2 socialization research by examining the use of formulaic speech in a naturalistic discourse while also exploring the interactional attitudes the L2 learners display in their interactions with the American speakers of English.

Research Questions

As mentioned earlier, conceptual socialization comprises two sides: a skill side which involves the actual language skills such as conceptual fluency and lexical quality; and a content side which is related to more cultural issues such as multicultural attitude and interactional style (Kecskes, 2002). Therefore, the following research questions will be addressed to explore both sides of conceptual socialization.

Questions related to content side of conceptual socialization are:

- 1) What strategies were used by the Turkish students in order to manage rapport with the American speakers of English?
- 2) What topics do they address during conversations with American speakers of English? What does their selection of topics tell about their conceptual socialization?
- 3) To what extent do Turkish students follow the speakership code in their interactions with the American speakers of English?

By addressing these three research questions, this study assumed that the way the Turkish students established rapport with the American speakers of English, the topics they brought up in their conversations, as well as the way they followed the speakership code would reveal insights into their content side of conceptual socialization, as reflected in their multicultural attitude and interactional style during these conversations.

Questions related to skill side of conceptual socialization aim to explore their use of formulaic language which is “the heart and soul of native-like language use” (p.194) since they “require shared experience and conceptual fluency” (Kecskes, 2007, p.195). In this respect, the research question concentrating on the skill side of conceptualization is: What kinds of formulaic language were used by Turkish students in their interactions with the American speakers of English? With this question, this study aimed to shed light on the skill side of Turkish students’ conceptual socialization, since the acquisition of these formulaic units requires sensitivity to the preferences of target language speakers (Bell, 2007).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data came from spontaneous English as a second language communication which took place at a reception organized for Turkey’s National Day (April 23rd, 08) at a large university in the U.S. The Turkish Student Association, who organized the reception, video-recorded the whole event to keep it in their archives. The recorded conversations were transcribed by the researcher according to Jefferson’s transcript notations (Atkinson & Heritage, 2006), which resulted in a 1707 word database out of 13 conversations occurred between Turkish and American speakers of English.

The data were analyzed in terms of Kecskes’s (2002) distinction of content and skill side of conceptual socialization. A discourse level analysis of the transcripts was adapted to explore those aspects which could shed light onto the content side of the participants’ conceptual socialization. In this

respect, the transcripts were analyzed in terms of the topics discussed, the way the Turkish students established rapport with their ‘guests’ and the extent to which they followed the speakership code in their interactions with the American speakers of English. Also, an utterance level analysis was done to examine the skill side of their conceptual socialization, which was operationalized as their use of formulaic language. The analysis of the formulaic utterances was conducted in several steps. First, the researcher identified every formulaic expression that took place in the data. Second, each formulaic expression was placed into a category in Kecskes’ (2007) formulaic continuum. Third, findings were analyzed on the basis of the type and frequency of occurrence of each category.

The Setting: A formal social occasion

The pragmatic use of the formulaic expressions by the Turkish students can only be interpreted by considering the social conditions in which they are being used, as well as the interlocutors’ age, sex, role, authority and relative status with respect to each other (Coulmas, 1979; Bell, 2007). Therefore, this section will provide information about the setting the data came from. The Turkish Student Association, one of the organizations that promote cultural diversity on campus, organized a reception April 2008 to celebrate the 88th National Sovereignty and Children's Day of Turkey. This event was a social occasion since it had guests and organizers as participants, a beginning (welcoming of the guests), a main event (guest speakers, dinner) and an end terminating the event (folk music proceeded by saying thanks and goodbye to the guests) (Goffman, 1963).

This social occasion was also a formal event, because there was both a *dress code* bounding the organizers of the event, the guest speakers and other faculty members and a *linguistic code* which will be responded in the findings section pertaining to the language behavior of the Turkish students (Irvine, 1979). In terms of revealing positional identities, the prominent public position that the Turkish students enclosed was first, cultural representatives of Turkey, and second, the hosts of the social occasion.

FINDINGS

Content side of socialization

Rapport establishment

As for the first research question related to the strategies used by the Turkish students to manage rapport with the American guests, the findings revealed 25 rapport establishment attempts made by both American guests (54%) and Turkish students (46%). Some examples from the rapport building expressions that Turkish students used are: *how are you doing, nice to see you, I appreciate for your coming, I am so happy to see you, that'd be great, and you look great.*

Excerpt (1)

Line 1	Turkish student1: Speaker: Turkish student1: Speaker:	Hi, I am (name). How are you?= =Good. How are you Good to see you. Hi (name), the man with whom I share a distinctive haircut
Line 6	Turkish student 2: Speaker: Turkish student 2:	(laughs) Oh, nice to see you too. How is your studies?= =I thought you were gonna say the man with whom I shared a distinctive experience in Turkey
Line 10	Speaker: [it's OK?]	How are you, is it OK? Graduate work is,
	Turkish student 2:	[Going well]. Thanks

Excerpt 1 is a typical example of a conversation that took place at the beginning of the reception where the Turkish students were welcoming the guests. As shown in this excerpt, both parties of the event, the hosts and the guests, engaged in rapport management with the co-present interlocutors, and their orientation was mostly rapport-enhancement (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Most of these rapport building expressions were situation bound utterances. The Turkish students used these expressions mostly to express their appreciation of their guests' coming to the reception. In this sense, the Turkish students established rapport with their guests through the use of speech acts that expressed gratitude (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). In this respect, Turkish students employed these rapport building expressions to effectively manage their relationship with the American guests, an indicator of their competency in one of the macro-functions of language (Spencer-Oatey, 2002). Rapport-management is a skill that requires conceptual socialization, since cultural differences in language use may result in different rapport management outcomes (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Therefore, the fact that the Turkish students displayed a similar orientation towards rapport management as the American guests does provide insights into their conceptual socialization in the American culture.

Topics

The topics discussed in a conversation as well as the strategies employed by the interlocutors to introduce these topics constitute an important dimension in conversation organization. In other words, not only 'what people *can*' but also 'what they *should*' talk about are constrained by the speech event in which the talk occurs (Richards & Schmidt, 1983). As far as the topics the Turkish students brought up during their conversations with the American speakers are concerned, the analysis revealed nine different topics: *school*,

organization/event, introducing someone, common friend, Turkish people, American people, work, Turkey and food. These topics are not only in line with the social context - since these conversations occurred at a reception celebrating the Turkish National Day - but also represent who the interlocutors were and the reason they got together that day. The choice of topics in this social occasion, then, underlines the role of the speech event in the topics discussed by the interlocutors, which requires exposure to the norms of language and culture through conceptual socialization.

Speakership code

The third question examined the extent to which Turkish speakers followed the speakership code around which all interactions are organized (Goldberg, 1990). The speakership code warrants that the speaker has the right to complete his turn. However, while one can gain immediate control of the discourse through interruptions, by challenging this code, overlaps serve as tools to address interactional wants or needs (Goldberg, 1990). In this respect, the turn-taking skills of the Turkish students were analyzed to explore their turn taking skills to take the floor during the conversations.

The analysis of the corpus indicated no interruptions but overlaps in the interactions between Turkish and American speakers. As shown in the excerpt below, these overlaps, which contained informative or evaluative comments, served as strategies to establish rapport by encouraging the other person to develop or further the conversation.

Excerpt (2)

Jen: and there is so much email I know I have been afraid there is more things that I am missing. Once it goes off my screen even if I put a red flag by it, it is just so hard to keep up with that all [the time.

Dilek: [yeah yeah you're right

In Excerpt 2, Dilek overlaps with Jen to make a comment on Jen's having a hard time in keeping up with the emails she receives. Dilek's overlap with Jen is not an interruption intended to disrupt the conversation or to take the floor; instead, is an indicator of Dilek's active involvement in the discourse.

Excerpt (3)

Line 13a Dave: [I didn't know that's where you're from.
 13b I knew a girl.
 13c I never met her
 14 but we used to chat online.
 14a That's where she's from.

14b She always tell me that I should go there
 15a cus it's so beautiful and stuff.
 15b Do all of it.
 Line 16 Gul: [yea:h]
 Dave: [She'd always tell me.
 Gul: [yeah]
 Dave: [I wanna go over there some day. I wanna do
 like a tour like all of- as much of Turkey as
 possible. You know what I mean. Just like go
 around all the coast. Do all of it.

Excerpt 3 presents an interesting dialogue between Dave and Gul because both parties overlap with each other during the course of the interaction. Dave has a story to tell and Gul by her backchanneling demonstrates attention and agreement (Ward & Tsukahara, 2000) rather than deliberate attempts to gain control of the discourse (Goldberg, 1990).

As these excerpts indicate, the overlaps occurred in the corpus were not interruptions to gain floor or to express power, but mostly backchanneling to establish rapport and cooperation with the other speaker, which could point to the fact that the Turkish students had already learned the rules of a conversation and instead of being rude or disrespectful by their interruptions, they aimed for expressing interest and active involvement in the discourse. Overall, the findings related to the content side of conceptual socialization indicated that the Turkish students deployed the right resources to engage in smooth conversations with their guests, by selecting the right topics, and by recruiting skills to maintain rapport and indicate active involvement in the discourse, all of which illustrate their competency in the content side of their conceptual socialization.

Skill side of socialization: Formulaic continuum

As mentioned earlier, native-like use of language requires more than mastering the grammatical structures and communicative features of that language but also the use of figurative language which reflect how concepts are encoded metaphorically in that language. For this reason, the present study assumed that the skill side of conceptual socialization would be reflected in Turkish students' use of figurative language which requires a common background of shared experiences.

Table 1.2 below presents the number of words that represent the four types of formulaic units that were focused in the analysis. For each formulaic unit, words were counted in the transcripts according to the unit they belong to. Some examples for each unit are:

Speech formulas: *that's why, I mean, I feel like*
 Phrasal verbs: *wake up, drive for, type in*

Situation-bound utterances: *I appreciate for your coming, nice to meet you, going well*
 Idioms: *I am kidding, get mad, keep up with*

Table 1.2: Number of words that represent the four types of formulaic units

	Phrasal Verbs		Speech Formulas		Situation-bound utterances		Idioms		Total	
	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
American guests	9	56.3	12	44.44	6	20.7	3	75	45	59.21
Turkish students	7	43.8	15	55.56	23	79.3	1	25	31	40.79
Total	17	100	27	100	29	100	4	100	76	100

The findings of indicated that the Turkish students used Speech formulas and SBUs more than American guests did while American guests employed more phrasal verbs and idioms.

Phrasal Verbs

The findings related to the use of phrasal verbs, revealed that Turkish students and American guests used 16 phrasal verbs overall. A comparison of the use of phrasal verbs between the two groups also indicated not much of a difference since Turkish students used 7 phrasal verbs (43.8%) while American guests used 9 of them (56.3%).

Table 1.3: The number of phrasal verbs used by Turkish and American speakers

Phrasal Verbs	Turkish Students		American Guests		total		
	f	%	f	%		f	%
<i>drive</i>		14.3					
<i>along</i>	1		<i>come from</i>	2 22.2	Turkish		
<i>come</i>		14.3	<i>Hearing</i>		Students		
<i>back</i>	1		<i>from..about</i>	1 11.1		7	43.8
<i>go back</i>	1	14.3	<i>type in</i>	1 11.1			
<i>to be full</i>		14.3				9	56.3
<i>of</i>	1		<i>come in</i>	1 11.1	American		
<i>talking</i>		14.3			Guests		
<i>with</i>	1		<i>sitting on</i>	2 22.2			

<i>put</i>	<i>the</i>	14.3					
<i>lyrics on</i>	1		<i>wake up</i>	1	11.1		16 100
<i>hear back</i>	1	14.3	<i>drive for</i>	1	11.1	Total	

Let's look at Excerpt 4 to get a closer look at the way the Turkish students used phrasal verbs.

Excerpt (4)

Turkish student: *We were talking with (name of the first American speaker) about vegetables and beef*
 American guest 2: *(laughs)*

In Excerpt 4, the Turkish student tried to include the third speaker in the conversation by telling him what they were talking about before the third person joined the conversation. She used the phrasal verb "talk with" to describe the speech; however, she used the subject of the sentence ungrammatically. It is a common mistake by Turkish speakers of English since in Turkish it is appropriate to say:

Biz Jack ile yemeklerden konusuyorduk.
 We with Jack about food talking

There is only two speakers involved in the activity (the speaker and Jack), yet in Turkish it is appropriate to indicate the other person by using "with". However, such a sentence is formulated in English, it means there are two people and Jack was also involved in the activity. This example hints that even though the Turkish students in this study used almost as many phrasal verbs as American guests, they made some mistakes resulting from the differences in the use of prepositions between Turkish and English, which indicates the role of L1 transfer in the acquisition of formulaic language (Ortactepe, 2011).

Speech Formulas

Speech formulas such as "I'd like to", "you know" and "I feel like" are similar to SBUs in nature, yet the difference lies in the fact that speech formulas can be used anywhere in a conversation regardless of the situation while SBUs are strictly tied to particular speech situations (Kecskes, 2007). The analysis of the speech formulas during the conversations revealed 27 speech formulas used by Turkish students and American guests: 15 by the Turkish students (55.6%), and 12 by the American guests (44.4%).

Table 1.4: The number of speech formulas used by Turkish and American speakers

Speech Formulas Turkish Students									
Students	f	%	American Guests	f	%	total	f	%	
<i>that's why</i>	3	20	<i>you know</i>	3	25				
<i>i mean</i>	5	33	<i>is that what/that's what</i>	2	17	Turkish Students	15	55.6	
<i>it's like/not like</i>	2	13	<i>i mean</i>	1	8.3				
<i>i feel like</i>	1	6.7	<i>you know what i mean</i>	1	8.3				
<i>it was great that..</i>	1	6.7	<i>supposed to ...</i>	2	17	American Guests	12	44.4	
<i>we are glad that..</i>	1	6.7	<i>she's like...</i>	1	8.3				
<i>we are sort of..</i>	1	6.7	<i>i know exactly how you feel like</i>	1	8.3	Total	27	100	
<i>i'd like to..</i>	1	6.7	<i>he's sort of</i>	1	8.3				

A closer look at the speech formulas used by Turkish and American speakers indicate almost no difference in terms of the number of different speech formulas used: Turkish students used eight different speech formulas while this number is nine in American guests. Also, some of the speech formulas used by the Turkish students are similar to each other in terms of their nature (e.g., “it was great that” and “we are glad that”) since they were used to express their gratitude for the guests’ attending the reception. However, as shown in Excerpt (5), Turkish students used some of these speech formulas quite often (e.g., “I mean”, 5 times; “that’s why”, 3 times), and this overuse of some formulas increased the number of speech formulas used by them overall.

Excerpt (5)

- 63 Lisa: OK..I am so happy to see you because I tried to send you an email but I couldn't find your email address on the web site =
- 65 Jen: =Oh Ok
- 66 Lisa: and I sent just I mean like like two days ago, to ISS, but I don't think they- I mean forwarded to you because I never heard them back.
- 68 Jen: Oh Ok I was hearing from about this all the time, is that what you were talking about?
- 70 Lisa 1: Yeah.
- 71 Jen: OK
- 72 Lisa: So I am teaching this writing class that's why I actually wrote to you,

- 73 Jen: [Oh OK]
 74 Lisa: [to foreign-international students]

As shown in Excerpt 5, the speech formula, *I mean*, has been used twice in the same turn as filler by the Turkish student. The overuse of the filler “*I mean*” during these conversations concur with the findings of an earlier study that Kecskes (2007) conducted to explore the use of formulaic language in English Lingua Franca communications among non-native speakers. Kecskes (2007) also found that the speakers used “*you know, I/you mean, and you’re right*” more often than the other words in the group of speech formulas. Kecskes (2007) explains this finding by saying that it is not only because these formulas are used frequently by native speakers so that it is really easy for nonnative speakers to pick up these speech formulas but also these formulas may fulfill different functions such as back-channeling and filling a gap.

Situation-bound utterances (SBUs)

As one of the elements of the formulaic continuum, SBUs are “highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations” (Kecskes, 2000, p.606). Since the use of SBUs are highly predetermined by the situation, the acquisition of these units by an L2 learner requires shared socio-cultural background of the target language culture, highlighting the role of conceptual socialization.

The analysis of the use of SBUs that took place during the conversations revealed a total number of 29 SBUs used by both Turkish students and American guests. Interestingly, most of the SBUs (23 of them) were used by the Turkish students (79.3%), while only 6 of them belong to the American guests (20.7%).

Table 1.5: The number of SBUs used by Turkish and American speakers

Situation-bound utterances		Turkish Students		American Guests		Total		
F	%	f	%	f	%		f	%
<i>Welcome</i>	3	13	<i>how are you</i>	2	.3	Turkish Students	23	79.3
<i>nice to meet you</i>	3	13	<i>good to see you</i>	1	.7			
<i>Good</i>	2	8.7	<i>Congratulations</i>	1	.7	American		
<i>how are you</i>	3	13	<i>it's my honor to be with you</i>	1	.7			
<i>nice to see</i>	2	8.7	<i>thank you</i>					

<i>you</i>				.7
<i>going well</i>	1	4.3		
<i>Thanks</i>	1	4.3		
<i>I</i>	1	4.3		
<i>appreciate</i>				
<i>for your</i>			Guests	6 20.7
<i>coming</i>				
<i>I am so</i>	1	4.3		
<i>happy to</i>				
<i>see you</i>				
<i>how are</i>	1	4.3		
<i>you doing</i>				
<i>thanks for</i>	1	4.3		
<i>coming</i>				
<i>here</i>			Total	29 100
<i>going well</i>	1	4.3		
<i>I am sorry</i>	1	4.3		
<i>that's nice</i>	1	4.3		
<i>that'd be</i>	1	4.3		
<i>great</i>				

Given the fact that these conversations occurred at a reception organized by the Turkish students, the overuse of SBUs is not surprising since most of the SBUs are context-related and reflect the Turkish students' gratitude towards American guests for their attendance in the reception. For instance, SBUs such as "how are you", "nice to meet you", and "welcome" were used 3 times throughout 13 conversations and SBUs such as "good" and "nice to see you" were used twice. Even though they were only used once, SBUs like "how are you doing", "I appreciate for your coming", and "thanks for coming here" all reflected the nature of the event. The following small-talk represented a typical situation how SBUs are used in this event.

Excerpt (6)

Speaker: congratulations. Thank you for making all this organization. Very nice evening=
 Turkish student 3: = I appreciate for your coming.
 Speaker: No, it is my honor to be with you (.) Thank you.
 Turkish student 3: Thank you.

In Excerpt 6, both parties use SBUs because the situation requires them to exchange greetings. It is their first encounter with each other, and both parties use SBUs to convey their gratitude towards each other. In this respect, this turn-sequence reflects a ritualistic exchange starting out with a formulaic expression and followed by a formulaic response.

Idioms

Both Turkish and American students used idioms less than any other formulaic units on the continuum. This finding not only makes sense since it was a formal event and some of the conversations took place between Turkish students and invited faculty members from different departments, but also concurs with Ortactepe's (2011) study which pointed out to a "no-idiom phenomena" (p.148) since both the international and American students used fewer number of idioms in oral and written production tasks. Table 1.6 below presents the use of idioms in the present study.

Table 1.6: The number of idioms used by Turkish and American speakers

Idioms		f	%	Total %
Turkish students	<i>i am kidding</i>	1	100.0	25.0
American guests	<i>get mad</i>	1	33.3	
	<i>flooded with emails</i>	1	33.3	
	<i>keep up with</i>	1	33.3	
	Total	3	100.0	75.0

The only idiom that was used by a Turkish speaker was "I am kidding" which was used in the following situation where the American guest was actually the Turkish student's classmate:

Excerpt (7)

- 1 Ted: You look good, you don't look tired.
 2 Lisa 1: (laughs)Yea:h, I showered (laughs). That's why. No I am kidding
 3 Mary: she's not sitting in class (unintelligible)
 4 Ted: Yeah right.

In comparison to the other conversations, the only idiom used by the Turkish student occurred in a less formal context since the co-present interlocutor was her classmate. However, the fact that the American speakers used more phrasal verbs and more idioms, while the Turkish students used more speech formulas and SBUs, could hint a pragmatic transfer from Turkish to English resulting from the ritualistic nature of the Turkish language (Dogancay, 1990). More specifically, especially the SBUs were overused by the Turkish students because Turkish is a highly ritualistic language where SBUs play special roles, and sometimes their use is a must, not a choice (Kecskes, 2002; Dogancay, 1990).

DISCUSSION

Grounded in the framework of language socialization, the present study investigated the conceptual socialization process of Turkish students in the U.S. This study's unit of analysis was the 'social activity' (Ochs, 2004) that took place between Turkish students and American guests who got together at a reception. The present study examined the social interactions between Turkish and American speakers of English to look for the ways they coordinated modes of communication through social and linguistic means. Contrary to previous studies that investigated language production through language related tasks (e.g., multiple choice questions), the data for this study came from a rich social occasion which revealed observations of actual language used by the interlocutors (e.g., Turkish students, American students, professors, invited speakers, etc.).

The results related to the content side of the socialization process indicated that the Turkish students had almost an equal number of endeavors to establish rapport with the American guests, and the number of overlaps they had during the conversations were almost equal to the American guests'. These findings are not surprising given the fact that these conversations took place at a reception where the American guests were invited by the Turkish students who were the organizers of the event. The topics that were discussed during the conversations also reflected the nature of the event since most of the discussions were on Turkey, food, and school. Hence, the findings suggest that these students within this particular situation have demonstrated competencies supporting their conceptual socialization in the American culture. Yet, it should be kept in mind that these behaviors could have been the same if the situation had taken place in Turkey since hospitality is an important characteristic of Turkish culture.

As far as the skill side of the socialization is concerned, the results did not indicate much of a difference in the linguistic behavior of the Turkish students and American guests. The American speakers used more phrasal verbs and idioms, while the Turkish students used more speech formulas and SBUs. One explanation for Turkish students' using fewer phrasal verbs could be the fact that in Turkish language, there are no two word or three word verbs to indicate directions or describe a situation. Instead, Turkish language makes use of suffixes. Also, as demonstrated in Excerpt (4), even in the situations where Turkish students use a phrasal verb, they might still make mistakes because of L1 transfer. Ortactepe's (2011) study also found that "Negative transfer...was influential in Turkish speakers' production of formulaic expressions rather than freely generated units" (p.235). Thus, this study concurs with the previous research that highlighted the role of L1 transfer on L2 pragmatic development (Kasper, 1992; Kecskes, 2000; Howarth, 1998; Barron, 2003; Ortactepe, 2011).

On the other hand, speech formulas and SBUs were used quite often by the Turkish students but mostly to indicate their gratitude towards their guests for attending the event. In this respect, most of the speech formulas and SBUs served the same purpose (expressing gratitude, managing rapport, etc.) and were used in almost similar situations. All these findings are in contrast to the findings of Kecskes' (2007) study that suggested that the egocentric nature of the lingua franca speakers in English lingua franca communications resulted in less use of formulaic language when compared to native speaker interactions. In the present study, the Turkish students used almost the same amount of formulaic language as the American speakers of English who participated in the event as guests. The difference also might result from the fact that the social situation in Kecskes' (2007) study was a round-table undirected conversation, while in the present study it was a ritualistic social event. Hence, it was actually marked with collaboration as well as establishing common ground. Mutual knowledge as well as prior conversational experience was the common ground that not only facilitated smooth conversations between Turkish and American speakers but also encouraged the use of formulaic language in certain frames. Hence, the findings imply that these Turkish students gained access to preferred ways of saying things as well as preferred ways of having a smooth conversation in American English as a result of their conceptual socialization.

All these findings underline the role of the nature of the event where the data came from. The fact that Turkish students used formulaic expressions during the conversations and tried to establish rapport with their guests indicates their conceptual socialization in the target language and culture. Nevertheless, the use of the particular formulaic formulas can only be interpreted according to the specific cultural situations that they occur in (Wood, 2002). Therefore, even though the findings of this study suggest Turkish students' conceptual socialization as reflected in their multicultural attitude and interactional style (content side) as well as their use of formulaic language (skill side), the study relies on their behavior only in this particular social occasion, which does not say much about their overall socialization in different contexts within the American culture. In order to make generalizations about their conceptual socialization process, more situations should be looked where the same participants are involved in different social situations with people from different backgrounds. Yet, the findings that indicated Turkish students' competencies in the skill and content side of conceptual socialization confirm that the language socialization processes of L2 learners should be examined through a conceptual socialization approach since conceptual socialization acknowledges the cultural and linguistic background of L2 learners (as indicated in regard to the role of L1 transfer) but also provides an analytical framework that combines the social (content side) and linguistic (skill side) aspects of language learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Each participant in a social situation brings along his/her own interactional experience through his desires, preferences, norms and values (Schutz, 1967). This experience enables him/her to identify the features of a situation as well as understand the interactional scenes. Therefore, the use of formulaic expressions by the international students, require observation and participation in their respective situational contexts (Coulmas, 1979). For this reason, this study brought a different approach to examine the use of formulaic expressions by adopting conversation analysis (Schegloff et. al., 2002). Contrary to previous studies which limited the use of routine formulas in more restricted social contexts such as classrooms (e.g., Kanagy, 1999; Girard & Sionis, 2004), the study of formulaic expressions was carried to less restricted but harder to examine contexts, such as a social event which brought both Turkish speakers (the hosts) and the American speakers (guests) together.

Although examining the recordings using the methods of conversation analysis does not afford any means of reliable generalizations across participants or social events, it does capture authentic language use in *situ* (Colston, 2005) while also reflecting all aspects of natural speech (Beebe & Cummings, 1996). Nevertheless, since each social situation has its own characteristics (Coulmas, 1979); a change in the setting or the interlocutors will bring about different findings with respect to the conceptual socialization of international students. In this respect, the findings of the study are not generalizable neither to a wider population nor to a different speech event but should be interpreted in its own socio-cultural context.

Hence, this study never aimed to provide casual determinations but to present a snapshot from the social behavior of Turkish international students so as to capture their linguistic behavior as a reflection of their conceptual socialization. Additionally, this study did not limit itself to the use of formulaic expressions but extended to the Turkish students' interactional style by looking at the ways they established rapport and maintained smooth conversations.

Despite these limitations, the findings posed several questions and implications for further research. The overarching question raised from the findings is, *what is the process of conceptual socialization?* The findings indicated that the Turkish students followed the rules of social interaction in American English by using the appropriate formulaic expressions while also establishing rapport with the interlocutors. So, *how did they attain this communicative competence? Did they study the rules back in their home country or was it a developmental process resulting from conceptual socialization?* The answers of these questions can only be achieved through a longitudinal study examining the international students' language development starting from the day they arrive in the United States. In such a study, data collection should not be limited to classroom observations nor to multiple choice questions but should benefit from different data sources coming from many different social events so as to capture the use of language in its multi-

contexts and forms. More research of a longitudinal, ethnographic nature is warranted to shed light on the L2 socialization of international students. Yet, since this study demonstrates a particular method to explore L2 socialization with its preference of natural conversation as opposed to experimental settings, it can be a good example for future studies to be conducted in the field of L2 socialization.

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ⁱ This study uses the term ‘international student’ to refer to those students who leave their home countries in order to study in Higher Education in another country (Montgomery, 2010). While ‘international student’ is widely used in the literature, it is interchangeable with “foreign student” or “overseas student.”