Introduction

This pilot study investigates how two Hungarian 9 year old boys form their opinions and argue for their choices when they are supposed to choose objects to be taken to a deserted island. The data suggested that socio-emotional relations between the students have strong influence on reasoning in pair-work situations. In fact, accommodation was observed in grammatical structure, content and bodily communication when the students explained the reasons for their choices in interview or pair-work situations.

Method and materials

28 children participated in my research from two boys with similar cognitive skills and family background were chosen for this study. The data contains video-recorded tasks, questionnaires and interviews with the student’s teacher.

I. MULTIMODAL INTERACTION ANALYSIS

Two interviews (1–2.), one pair-work (3.) and a pair-interview (4.) were videotaped and analysed.

The Survival Task (Nagy, 2014) was applied to investigate reasoning from the viewpoint of situation-and partner accommodation. In this problem-solving task fourteen objects were given to the children who were supposed to choose the seven most important things to be taken to a deserted island.

Materials:
A pack of dried pea, magnifying glass, a herb book, band aids, antiseptic gel, gauze, nails, rope, a can of food, matchbox and the pictures of an axe, a knife and a saw.

II. QUESTIONNAIRES

The Sociometric Questionnaire (Méri, 1970/2004) was applied to map the socio-emotional relationships in the investigated class.

III. INTERVIEWS

The teacher was interviewed concerning the students’ skills in oral interview exams.

Results & Discussion

It is assumed that speech is socially and bodily embedded multimodal activity. In the context of diverse relationship-patterns (i. e. in diverse social situations) the intertwining layers of grammar, content and bodily acts were used as the main viewpoints of the analysis.

FINDINGS

A sociometric measure was carried out among the participants. The relationships between Péter and Bálint illustrated on a the sociogram:

I. CONTENT ACCOMMODATION

1. Children’s reasoning varied as to the length and clarifications.
2. Reasoning was motivated by the children’s expectations about future events.
3. Reasons were based on the children’s existing knowledge, either theoretical (e. g. how to make fire with stones) or practical (e. g. how to read a book).
4. Clarifications were based on the children’s presumptions. Such as possibilities (e. g. if the wind blows the paper away) or probabilities (e. g. there will be some animal) or both.
5. Children changed their individual preferences during the pair-work situation and accommodated to each other.

II. GRAMMAR ACCOMMODATION

Individual differences

Accommodation in pair-work:

Teacher’s opinion

“Bálint’s speech composition and articulation is better. His stance is more confident. Péter is giggling a lot. Probably he tries to cover his uncertainty, his problems comprehension. His word suffxation is improper.”

III. BODILY ACCOMMODATION

When explained the necessity of a particular object, the children use more bodily communications in pair-work than in the individual task.

FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

• How can the findings be applied to education?
• How grammar, content and body aspects of reasoning are influenced by social relationship between children in pair-work situations?
• How children’s reasoning differs from the formal reasoning patterns?

References


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