A CONVERSATION ANALYTIC INVESTIGATION OF RESOURCES FOR ALIGNMENT AND AFFILIATION IN TOPIC MANAGEMENT DURING VIDEO-MEDIATED VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

BETÜL ÇİMENLİ OLCARS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

JUNE 2025

Approval of the thesis:

A CONVERSATION ANALYTIC INVESTIGATION OF RESOURCES FOR ALIGNMENT AND AFFILIATION IN TOPIC MANAGEMENT DURING VIDEO-MEDIATED VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

submitted by **BETÜL ÇİMENLİ OLCARS** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching**, **the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences _____

Prof. Dr. Nurten BİRLİK
Head of Department
Department of Foreign Language Education _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hale IŞIK GÜLER
Supervisor
Department of Foreign Language Education _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ufuk BALAMAN
Co-Supervisor
TED University
Department of English Language Teaching _____

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Christopher JENKS (Head of the Examining Committee)
Utrecht University
Department of Languages Literature and Communication _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hale IŞIK GÜLER (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Foreign Language Education _____

Prof. Dr. Olcay SERT
Mälardalen University
Department of Language and Literature _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elvan Eda IŞIK
METU
Department of Foreign Language Education _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Fatma BADEM
Bartın University
Department of Foreign Language Education _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Betül ÇİMENLİ OLCARS
Signature:

ABSTRACT

A CONVERSATION ANALYTIC INVESTIGATION OF RESOURCES FOR ALIGNMENT AND AFFILIATION IN TOPIC MANAGEMENT DURING VIDEO-MEDIATED VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

ÇİMENLİ OLCARS, Betül

Ph.D, Department of English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr Hale IŞIK GÜLER

Co-Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr Ufuk BALAMAN

June 2025, 358 pages

A number of recent studies have explored virtual exchanges in a micro-analytic way, however the ways how alignment and affiliation are built in online interaction remains underexplored. Addressing this gap, this study investigates resources for alignment and affiliation within topic management in video-mediated Virtual Exchange (VE) between tertiary-level second language (L2) speakers from Türkiye and Tunisia. It specifically explores the (re)construction of (dis)alignment and (dis)affiliation within topic management in on-task and off-task talk. The data comes from an Erasmus+ project, in which dyads collaborated for five meetings to complete nine tasks. Using Multimodal Conversation Analysis, the study analyzes over 30 hours of screen-recorded spoken data. This is the first study to combine these under-researched areas, which are essential in both everyday and institutional interactions. Findings reveal when and how off-task talk occurs in task-based

VE. In the dataset, alignment emerges as central to on-task topic management, while affiliation is a byproduct of interaction. Alignment is facilitated through (non)verbal and screen-based resources, with cooperative contributions in both on-task and off-task talk. In contrast, humor, storytelling, and collaborative turn construction are more common in off-task-talk, enhancing mutual understanding and affiliative bonds. Findings show that on-task interactions are structured and goal-oriented, emphasizing alignment, whereas off-task VE interactions are flexible and relational, emphasizing affiliation. The findings highlight the interplay between on-task and off-task interaction, indicating that both are crucial for building an effective communication repertoire in VE. The study has implications for research on topic management, alignment and affiliation, online task-based interaction, VE, and L2 interactional competence.

Keywords: Virtual Exchange, Topic Management, Alignment, Affiliation, Online Task-based Interaction

ÖZ

VİDEO ARACILI SANAL DEĞİŞİMLERDE KONU YÖNETİMİNDE UYUM VE YAKINLIK KURMA KAYNAKLARINI İNCELEYEN BİR KONUŞMA ÇÖZÜMLEMESI ARAŞTIRMASI

ÇİMENLİ OLCARS, Betül

Doktora, İngiliz Dili Öğretimi

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Hale IŞIK GÜLER

Ortak Tez Yöneticisi: Doç Dr. Ufuk BALAMAN

Haziran, 2025, 358 sayfa

Son yıllarda yapılan çalışmalar sanal değişimleri mikro düzeyde incelemiş olsa da, çevrim içi etkileşimlerde uyum ve yakınlık kurma süreçleri yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye ve Tunus'tan üniversite düzeyinde ikinci dil konuşucularının katıldığı video aracılı sanal değişim etkileşimlerinde konu yönetimi bağlamında uyum/uyumsuzluk ve yakınlık kurabilme/kuramama dinamiklerinin görev içi ve görev dışı konuşmalarda nasıl (yeniden) inşa edildiğini incelemektedir. Çalışmanın verileri, katılımcıların Erasmus+ projesi kapsamında beş oturum boyunca ikili gruplar hâlinde iş birliği yaparak tamamladığı dokuz görevden gelmektedir. Veriler, Çokkipli Konuşma Çözümlemesi yöntemiyle incelenmiş, toplamda 30 saatten fazla ekran kaydı analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, hem günlük hem de kurumsal etkileşimde önemli olan fakat yeterince araştırılmamış alanları bir araya getiren ilk çalışmadır. Bulgular, görev temelli sanal değişimlerde konu dışı konuşmaların ne zaman ve nasıl gerçekleştiğini ortaya koymakta; görev içi etkileşimlerde uyumun merkezi bir rol oynadığını, yakınlığın ise çoğunlukla görev dışı konuşmalarda ortaya çıktığını göstermektedir. Uyum, sözel,

sözsüz ve ekran temelli kaynaklar ile işbirlikli katkılar aracılığıyla sağlanmakta; mizah, hikayelendirme, ve işbirlikçi söz sırası inşaası ise daha çok görev dışı konuşmalarda görülerek karşılıklı anlayış ve yakınlık bağlarını pekiştirmektedir. Sonuçlar, görev içi etkileşimlerin yapılandırılmış ve hedef odaklı, görev dışı etkileşimlerin ise daha esnek ve ilişki temelli olduğunu ortaya koymakta; her iki tür etkileşimin de etkili iletişim açısından tamamlayıcı nitelikte olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışma, konu, uyum, yakınlık, çevrimiçi görev temelli etkileşim, sanal değişim ve ikinci dilde etkileşimsel yeterlilik alanlarına özgün katkılar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sanal Değişim, Konu Geliştirme, Uyum, Yakınlık, Görev Tabanlı Çevrimiçi Etkileşim

To every woman who has been denied
the chance to pursue her dreams…

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Hale Işık-Güler, for her unwavering support throughout this long and sometimes bumpy road. Her academic guidance has been invaluable, and equally important, her emotional support often arrived exactly when it was most needed. I am equally grateful to my co-advisor, Assoc. Prof. Ufuk Balaman. Although he joined the supervision team later in the process, he supported me as if he had been involved from the very beginning. His insightful feedback and generous dedication of time were crucial to the successful completion of this dissertation. I am sincerely thankful to my esteemed jury members. Prof. Christopher Jenks provided constructive feedback and support throughout this journey, and I deeply appreciate his careful reading of my work. Prof. Olcay Sert has been a mentor in the truest sense. I still recall how our meeting in Newcastle helped me shape the backbone of this thesis. I feel incredibly lucky—and genuinely proud—to be one of his students. My heartfelt thanks also go to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elvan Eda Işık, whose detailed feedback at various stages of this work made a significant impact. I am equally indebted to Dr. Fatma Badem, my colleague at Bartın University, who generously offered her insights both before and after the defense.

This research would not have been possible without the participants who volunteered their time and shared their experiences with me. Thank you for your contributions, your trust, and your patience. I gratefully acknowledge the financial and academic support provided by TÜBİTAK through programs 2014-A, 2011, and 2224-A. The institution supported my academic journey in more ways than one—so much so that my friends jokingly claim I have used up the entire TÜBİTAK budget myself.

My time at Newcastle University was truly formative for this dissertation. I would especially like to thank the MARG research group and all the distinguished scholars I had the pleasure of learning from during my stay. A

very special thank you goes to Dr. Müge Satar—host, mentor, colleague, and friend. Her warmth and intellect made a world of difference, and I consider myself lucky to have crossed paths with her. I also wish to thank my wonderful colleagues in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Bartın University. Each member of this department—Dr. Erdi Şimşek, Dr. Burcu Ak, Dr. Talip Gülle, Dr. Fatma Gümüşok, Dr. Kenan Çetin, and Dr. İnanç Karagöz—has supported me either emotionally, professionally, or both. I feel privileged to work among such thoughtful and dedicated individuals. Special thanks to our recent graduate Rüveyda Betül Asmacı for her help with transcribing some part of the data. I have no doubt she will soon be among the next generation of brilliant researchers.

To Bekir and Tuğçe Güler, thank you for the support I have always felt. Your presence—whether through a kind word, a shared laugh, or simply knowing you were there—has brought comfort and strength when I needed it most. Though miles apart, the unwavering support of Eda and Hüseyin Yıldız has always reached me across the distance. Eda, who is like a sister to me in every sense of the word, and Hüseyin, with his "quiet" encouragement, often seemed to want me to finish this PhD even more than I did. Their belief in me, especially during the moments I doubted myself, meant more than they can ever know. I am also incredibly thankful to the Z03 team for making this journey lighter with their friendship and support. Cansu, Luz and Hatice, a special thank you-you were always there with a kind word, a laugh, or a quiet reminder that I could keep going. Your warmth, wisdom, and steadfast belief in me have been a constant source of comfort for me.

Now, truth be told, I cried to a lot of people during this process (some of whom you have met above). But particular thanks go to Dr. Merve Bozbıyık, Dr. Neslihan Köse, and Dr. Mehmet Can Demir, Handenur Coşkun and Sevgi Cebar Emence for holding space for my breakdowns—and more importantly, for helping me stand back up each time. Their presence, patience, and kindness kept me going when things felt overwhelming. To my dear PhD buddies, Dr. Özlem Özbakış and Dr. Yasemin Erdoğan—we laughed, we cried, we procrastinated, we worked hard… and look, we actually finished. I genuinely do not know how I would have kept going without your solidarity

and humor. You were my emergency call in moments of despair and my partners in both academic pain and joy. This journey was far less lonely, and far more bearable, because we walked it side by side.

This is not a journey one can walk alone. I owe much to the people mentioned above and also my family—both the Çimenli and Olcars families—especially my mother and mother-in-law, who supported me wholeheartedly, even if they never quite figured out what exactly I was working on (and honestly, who could blame them?). Their unwavering faith in me kept me grounded. And finally, my greatest thanks go to my beloved husband, Osman. Where do I even begin? You have been my calm in every storm, my cheerleader on the sidelines, and my partner in all the chaos. Your love, patience, and support have truly been the bedrock of this entire process. You took on almost every household chore—yes, even the ones you hate—just so I could have the space and focus to write. You listened to my endless complaints about deadlines and drafts. You reminded me of who I am whenever I forgot. Thank you, my love, for every sacrifice you made, big and small, and for carrying more than your share of the load without ever making me feel guilty for it. I know in my heart that you will be an incredible father to our baby boy. Now, it is time to turn the page and focus on our next beautiful chapter.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

L2	Second / Additional Language
IC	Interactional Competence
L2 IC	Second / Additional language Interactional Competence
CA	Conversation Analysis
MCA	Multimodal Conversation Analysis
ELT	English Language Teaching
FPP	First Pair Part
SPP	Second Pair Part
RBB	Rolling the Ball Back
CMI	Computer Mediated Interaction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This study explores transnational virtual exchanges between second language (L2) speakers from Türkiye and Tunisia. It aims to examine resources for alignment and affiliation used within topic management in Virtual Exchange (VE) through collaboratively designed tasks developed around a general theme of intercultural communication and global citizenship. Within this chapter, first, section 1.2. is dedicated to explanation of terms and definitions to make their use in this dissertation clear as the main phenomena in the dissertation are conceptually nuanced in nature. Then, the connection of the present study with the related research is established in 1.3. Following this, the aim and significance of the study is discussed in 1.4 in relation to gaps in the previous literature and the need for the study. What follows this in 1.5 is the presentation of the research context and research questions. To close this chapter, an outline of the whole dissertation will be given in 1.6, the last section of this chapter.

1.2. Background to the Study

The present study investigates transnational VEs between undergraduate students majoring in English Language Teaching in Türkiye and MA students majoring in English Studies in Tunisia, facilitated by tasks designed under the

Erasmus+ [1] Digitask4IC project. Using the DigiTask web platform, participants collaborated on tasks centered on intercultural communication and global citizenship. Through the lens of Conversation Analysis (CA), this research explores how resources for alignment and affiliation as interactional resources are mobilized within topic management in a VE environment and what these resources can illustrate about participants' L2 interactional competence (L2 IC). This study is informed by various study strands that will be detailed in the subsequent paragraphs.

VE offers a promising context for investigating topic management in interaction. Defined as technology-mediated intercultural communication that brings together learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, VE typically relies on online platforms to facilitate collaborative engagement (O'Dowd, 2020). In L2 learning settings, VE frequently involves synchronous, video-mediated communication, providing learners with opportunities for meaningful and authentic language use. Given the participants' differing cultural and linguistic repertoires, challenges may arise in achieving affiliation—and at times even alignment—potentially complicating the collaborative management and progression of topics in an online environment, making VE a risky environment for someone who wants to investigate alignment and affiliation [2]. There is a highly expected nonsharedness between dyads because they are from different countries in which rules, regulations, prohibitions, policies, and daily life routines differ. However, that is actually why VE makes sense as an environment as it enables a particularly fertile ground for exploring topic management and resources for alignment and affiliation. Unlike traditional classroom interactions, VE offers ample authentic opportunities for students to engage in intercultural communication, often across significant social, political, and linguistic differences. These differences—shaped by divergent national norms,

[1] Erasmus+ is one of the European Union's program for youth, education, training, and sport, established to support international cooperation and mobility within these sectors. The primary objectives of Erasmus+ are to enhance the quality of education and training systems, foster social inclusion, promote active citizenship, and strengthen European identity. It facilitates learning mobility opportunities for individuals—such as students, staff, trainees, and young people—as well as strategic partnerships among educational institutions, youth organizations, enterprises, and NGOs (Erasmus +, 2025).

[2] The specific focus of the study was not initially known, it was later determined in a data-driven manner based on emerging phenomena. See 3.6 and 3.7 for detailed explanation on this.

routines, and policies—create a context where resources for alignment and affiliation are not assumed but must be actively co-constructed. It might be hard to achieve this intercultural environment with face-to-face interaction as it is hard to bring all those people together for this long or to work exclusively with participants from the same nationality.

The interaction that students have in-class is usually a lot different than authentic interaction. That's why people are trying to provide students with authentic language interaction opportunities outside the classroom. For more than two decades now, various methods such as pen friendship, tandem language learning and physical mobility have been employed to ensure students experience authentic interaction in the target language. Telecollaborative practices, which range from early forms like pen-pal correspondence to contemporary online task-based exchanges, have aimed to equip learners with the skills to navigate authentic interaction in the target language (O'Dowd, 2018). VE between L2 language classrooms and studies on VE are on the rise. Balaman's (2023) emphasis on an emic, data-driven approach to interaction analysis—particularly within video-mediated and digital teaching contexts—provides essential methodological and conceptual tools for examining how participants collaboratively manage understanding and solidarity in virtual exchange (VE) settings. His articulation of reflection in, on, and for action, alongside a detailed focus on moment-by-moment meaning-making, offers a valuable framework for understanding alignment and affiliation not merely as interpersonal phenomena but as pedagogically significant practices that manifest through the sequential organization of talk. Moreover, Balaman's insights into the translocation of language teacher education across digital platforms directly inform the analysis of how VE environments mediate the co-construction of teaching and learning opportunities through affiliative practices and alignment work.

CA offers valuable insights into how participants from different cultural backgrounds interact when brought together in online environments. It enables a detailed examination of what these learners talk about, how they organize their talk, and the types of interpersonal connections they are able—or unable—to establish during such exchanges. From a CA perspective, recent

research on VE has underscored the collaborative construction of intersubjectivity, the management of intercultural encounters, and the emergence of learning opportunities within interaction. Through these engagements, learners co-construct meaning, navigate interactional challenges, and negotiate mutual understanding—processes that are central to the development of second language (L2) interactional competence.

Rapid growth of many different computer mediated interaction (CMI) tools in the late 90s has created an undiscovered territory for conversation analysts (Garcia & Jacobs, 1999). These developments have prompted researchers to explore how individuals interact and collaboratively construct knowledge within emerging digital learning environments. As a result, Conversation Analysis (CA) studies have increasingly focused on uncovering the interactional structures that characterize technology-mediated communication. Early studies revealed that conversations in CMI "are not fixed and hard-wired cognitive phenomena but rather are normative and socially organized" (Wooffitt, 1990, p. 27). Furthermore, studies have indicated that CMI often provides learners with more authentic communicative opportunities than those typically found in teacher-fronted, whole-class instruction (Chun, 1994). Classroom interaction is generally constrained by institutional agendas and governed by pre-established norms and turn-taking structures, which are designed to fulfill pedagogical goals rather than promote spontaneous communication (Seedhouse, 2004; Tudini, 2013). Scholars have demonstrated that online synchronous interactions often share fundamental organizational features with face-to-face conversations, including turn-taking, sequence organization, repair, and topic development (e.g., Jenks, 2014; Balaman & Sert, 2017a, 2017b). At the same time, the affordances and constraints of technology—such as screen sharing, time lags, and visual framing—shape interactional dynamics in unique ways, requiring participants to adapt their interactional practices.

CA's distinctive methodology, emphasizing naturally occurring interactions and emic points of view, has substantially influenced the so-called "social turn" in SLA research. At its core, Conversation Analysis (CA) emphasizes the examination of naturally occurring data obtained from authentic audio or

video recordings of non-experimental interactions (Waring, 2019). This dedication to naturalistic data differentiates CA from methodologies that depend on elicited or experimental data. The analytical procedure starts with thorough transcribing, employing conventions such as Gail Jefferson's (2004), which document not just verbal content but also prosodic characteristics, timing, and non-verbal components, facilitating the accurate recording of complex interactional subtleties. Every instance in these collections is subjected to meticulous case-by-case examination, considering its distinct sequential context (Schegloff, 1996). In data analysis, CA adopts an emic perspective, aiming to comprehend interactions from the participants' viewpoint instead of imposing external classifications or interpretations (Pike, 1967; Seedhouse, 2005). Analysts consistently inquire, "why at this moment?" to clarify the underlying rationale for various actions throughout particular instances of contact (Wong & Waring, 2020). This thorough methodology, based on naturalistic data and careful analysis, enables CA to offer deep insights into the complexity of human interaction, rendering it an essential tool for comprehending the nuances of communication across diverse social contexts.

It can be stated that *topic* is an inseparable part of context today and topic management in any ordinary or institutional talk is regarded as a vital component (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017). The subject(s) of a conversation are generally referenced as the "topic". Nonetheless, this characterization may pose challenges within CA methodology, as determining the subject(s) of a discussion is not that straightforward. Researchers have long pointed out the difficulty in defining the boundaries of a topic (Markee, 2005; Seedhouse, 2004), as these are not stable units but interactionally achieved phenomena (Stokoe, 2000; Riou, 2015). Atkinson and Heritage (1984) asserted that the analysis of topical flow is complex. Sacks (1992) claims that "talking topically doesn't consist of blocks of talk about a topic" (p. 762) in his exploration of topical flow. A conversation may encompass a combination of various topics and sub-topics, rather than being composed of distinct units of separate topics. From the perspective of CA methodology, these topics are not determined externally by the researcher; instead, they are collaboratively constructed through social interactions

among the participants (Seedhouse, 2004; Riou, 2015). Thus, co-construction of topic is not an incidental phenomenon, but a highly structured interactional accomplishment (Svennevig, 1999). Various interactional practices that participants use to initiate, maintain, change and terminate a topic are examined and evidenced in early studies through sequential organization of their talk by many researchers in varying contexts (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Holt & Drew, 2005; Jefferson, 1984; Maynard, 1980; Svennevig, 1999; West & Garcia, 1988).

CA methodology addresses topic management from the perspective of participants, rather than from the researchers' viewpoint or any external classification. Conversation analysts examine the co-construction of topicality through processes of topic initiation, maintenance, transition, and termination, as evidenced by the analysis of moment-to-moment interactions (Stokoe, 2000). Sacks (1992) asserts that "the way in which it's a topic for participants is different than the way it's a topic for anybody else" (p.75). The collaborative and co-constructed nature of a topic is essential for defining it interactionally. Jeon (2012) describes the topic as "something participants in a conversation co-construct and share with each other in order to maintain the conversation over a period" (p. 32). The co-constructed nature of topicality relevant to participants will encompass transition and termination, as well as the relationship between topic maintenance and L2 interactional competence, aligning with the study's objectives.

The task-based approach has shown effectiveness in facilitating meaningful language practice and promoting language learning opportunities in both face-to-face and online environments (Long, 2015; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Ziegler, 2016). However, providing opportunities for communication alone is inadequate for ensuring effective language learning. Dooly (2011) asserts that the quality of task design is essential for enabling learners to fully capitalize on these opportunities. This is particularly significant in online or digitally mediated contexts, where interaction dynamics are influenced by the technological affordances and constraints present. Telecollaborative tasks, which are explicitly designed for virtual exchanges, have become a significant area of interest.

Nunan (2004) defines a task as a classroom activity that engages learners in understanding, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language, drawing on their grammatical knowledge to convey meaning, with meaning prioritized over form (p. 4). While Nunan emphasizes the "task-as-workplan" perspective—focusing on the predesigned features and pedagogical intentions of a task, this view has been critiqued by scholars such as Seedhouse (2005), who highlights the often-significant gap between the intended pedagogy and the actual interaction that occurs during implementation. This discrepancy draws attention to the concept of task-as-process, which centers on how tasks unfold in real classroom contexts. In this view, the task is understood through learners' situated participation and evolving interpretations of the instructional setting (Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004). This thesis adopts the task-as-process perspective, with a focus on the dynamic, interactional realization of tasks during classroom discourse. Previous literature has identified additional significant features of a task. Key aspects include the promotion of authenticity (Wang, 2007), adaptability for transformation and adjustment to new environments (Hampel, 2006), the fostering of digital literacy skills (Hauck & Youngs, 2008), the provision of clear and simple instructions (Müller-Hartmann & Kurek, 2016), ensuring content attractiveness (Kurek & Müller-Hartmann, 2017), facilitation of learner autonomy (Hampel, 2010), and the maintenance of an appropriate level of task complexity. Here a question comes to one's mind: Are topic and task different constructs? If yes, how?

From a CA perspective, a task is not necessarily a topic, and a topic is not necessarily a task, though they can be related in practice. Tasks are structurally imposed or contextually oriented courses of action — they involve goal-oriented activities (e.g., filling a form, making a decision, building something collaboratively). In CA, especially in institutional or classroom talk, tasks are analyzed as sequences of actions designed to accomplish something. On the other hand, topics are what people talk about; they are less rigid and can arise naturally without any goal-related agenda. A task may contain a topic or several topics, but the topic is a component of the interaction rather than the structure itself. For example, in a language classroom, a teacher may assign a task (e.g., "discuss your weekend"), but the

topic ("my trip to the beach") emerges in how students respond. The task sets up the conditions for topical talk. We refer to such topics as task-induced topics in this study. In CA-informed task-based language teaching (TBLT) research, it is often noted that tasks are interactional projects that involve sequences like pre-closings, repair, turn-taking, and more. Topics may be used to progress these projects, but they are not equivalent to the project itself. It must be stated that not every topic is tied to a task, especially in casual conversation. In mundane interaction, participants shift topics fluidly without a predefined goal or structure, which would not be classed as a "task". To sum up, a task may entail a topic, and participants often organize talk topically within a task, but they are not interchangeable. A topic is an emergent resource of interaction, while a task is a recognizable social activity with an orientation to outcome. Therefore, not every topic is a task, and not every task is reducible to a topic — though the two often interweave in structured interaction.

Despite notable advancements in comprehending the functioning of task-based instruction within online environments, several areas necessitate additional academic research. One such critical area is the role of off-task talk in online environments, which is often overlooked or dismissed and therefore merits deeper investigation. Examining these interactions can provide important insights into learner agency, identity formation, and the social dynamics inherent in digital language learning. The concept of off-task talk in language classrooms is complex and contested. Hauser (2016) defines it as student interactions on topics unrelated to the current task, while Markee (2005) cautions against rigid definitions, noting that both "task" and "topic" are fluid and context-dependent. This ambiguity is heightened by the dynamic nature of classroom interactions and differing perceptions among teachers, students, and researchers.

What one may view as off-task might, for others, serve important social or pedagogical functions, such as facilitating understanding. Off-task talk can be conceptualized as any topic introduced by a participant during an on-task interaction that lacks direct relevance or connection to the primary task being performed. An off-task topic emerges spontaneously, indicating a deviation

from the task-induced or goal-oriented discourse. These topics are generally personal, social, or unrelated and fulfil functions beyond task advancement, including rapport building, tension alleviation, or the expression of personal interest.

Language learning tasks often involve subtasks and informal exchanges that contribute to the broader learning process, making the line between on-task and off-task talk difficult to draw. Off-task moments, though frequently viewed as distractions, can support identity construction, social cohesion, and the development of L2 interactional competence. Given the fluid boundaries between task-related and spontaneous learner-driven discourse, a more nuanced and situated perspective is needed. This study addresses that need by examining off-task talk in video-mediated task-based interactions through a multimodal conversation analysis approach. By exploring how such talk is initiated, maintained, and resolved, the research highlights its role in meaning negotiation and collaborative knowledge construction, offering insights for more responsive task design in both digital and face-to-face language learning settings.

While much of the literature on online L2 interaction focuses on task performance, an emerging body of work emphasizes the pedagogical and interactional significance of off-task talk (Markee, 2005; Stone, 2019). Off-task talk can provide a rich site for spontaneous language use, fostering rapport and allowing participants to express individuality. Such talk contributes to alignment and affiliation, offering insight into how learners manage both the structural and relational aspects of communication. In many cases, learners shift fluidly between task-focused and off-task activities, revealing complex interactional work and the multifaceted nature of participation.

Alignment and affiliation—two core constructs in CA—offer a lens through which to understand interactional dynamics in these settings. They have long been central topics in studies of interaction, particularly in relation to preference organization, agency and autonomy. While this study primarily focuses on alignment and affiliation, it views these terms in the light of expressions of broader concepts such as agency, autonomy, and preference. From a CA perspective, agency and autonomy are not fixed attributes but are

dynamically constructed through interaction. Agency reflects an individual's ability to shape interaction, even within social constraints. For instance, Stivers and Rossano (2010) highlight how speakers strategically design their turns—using tools like interrogative syntax, rising intonation, gaze, and epistemic targeting—to elicit responses and steer conversations. These resources demonstrate how speakers hold others accountable and assert influence, thereby exercising agency. Autonomy, on the other hand, involves the ability to maintain self-direction during interaction. According to Stivers (2022), recipients often use subtle cues like interjections to manage social expectations and assert independence. Hesitations and marked interjections often serve as subtle indicators of a speaker's discomfort or reluctance, allowing participation without full commitment and setting interactional boundaries. The concept of preference sheds further light on how responses are socially organized. While various types of responses are possible in any given moment, they do not carry equal social weight. As Sacks (1974) and later Atkinson and Heritage (1984) have demonstrated, some responses are treated as more socially appropriate or expected than others. Building on this, Heritage (1984) and Pomerantz and Heritage (2012) argue that preference structures reveal an inherent asymmetry—affiliative responses tend to be socially normative, whereas disaffiliative ones are marked and potentially disruptive to the interactional flow, thus reflecting and reinforcing the underlying social order.

Alignment refers to the structural coordination of turns, such as responding appropriately, adhering to sequencing norms, and managing transitions (Stivers, 2008). *Affiliation*, by contrast, captures the affective dimension—expressing empathy, agreement, or emotional resonance. These interactions often serve as a platform for participants to express personal interests, share experiences, and build rapport, thereby reinforcing social cohesion and group identity (Stivers, 2008). Through these exchanges, participants can align themselves with one another on a more personal level, which can enhance the overall communicative environment and contribute to a more collaborative atmosphere (Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). As Stivers (2022) notes, these processes are distinct but intertwined: one can align without affiliating, and vice versa. For instance, two speakers might coordinate their interaction

flawlessly but maintain emotional distance, withholding displays of empathy or shared sentiment. This distinction is vital in understanding how students in VEs build coherence and rapport despite sociocultural distances.

While alignment and affiliation describe cooperative actions in interaction, *disalignment* and *disaffiliation* refer to uncooperative or non-conforming responses. Disalignment can be defined as a break from the expected or projected course of an interaction, where a speaker does not follow the conversational path set by the previous speaker. This often occurs when someone interrupts the sequence to ask for clarification, make an independent assessment, or introduce a new topic. Such actions momentarily shift the focus or structure of the conversation, challenging the speaker's control of the floor or signaling that the narrative is not yet complete or fully accepted. Importantly, disalignment is not inherently oppositional; rather, it can reflect a need for clarification, a renegotiation of roles, or an effort to better understand the unfolding interaction.

Disaffiliation denotes an absence of emotional or evaluative support for the speaker's position, sentiments, or viewpoint. It emerges when a listener refrains from expressing agreement, sympathy, or enthusiasm, indicating social distance or a difference in perspective (Stivers, 2008). For instance, addressing a complaint without demonstrating empathy or maintaining neutrality in response to a significant emotional expression may show disaffiliation. Disalignment primarily concerns the disruption of the structural flow of discourse, whereas disaffiliation pertains to the interpersonal and affective aspects of interaction. Both can subtly alter the dynamics of participation and the negotiation of meaning in a conversation. Crucially, disalignment does not necessarily imply disaffiliation. A participant may exhibit structural disalignment, such as by interrupting to seek clarification, while concurrently maintaining affective affiliation with the storyteller's perspective. Conversely, one may align procedurally while disaffiliating affectively, as when a recipient's prompt affirmation structurally aids a narrative yet conveys minimal, neutral, or unsympathetic tones. Consequently, none of these adjustments is intrinsically affiliative or disaffiliative; nonetheless, each carries relational significance (Stivers, 2011).

In educational contexts, especially those involving online task-based interaction, the interplay of alignment and affiliation becomes critical. Alignment supports the procedural progression of tasks, while affiliation builds the trust and emotional safety necessary for productive collaboration. Stivers et al. (2011) point out that affiliative moves—such as expressing agreement, showing empathy, or reacting with shared enthusiasm—enhance interpersonal connections, making collaboration more cohesive and resilient. Even subtle displays, like nodding or echoing positive sentiments, contribute to a feeling of collective engagement. This dual focus enriches our understanding of how language learners engage with one another in authentic, goal-oriented interaction. In sum, alignment and affiliation operate together to create successful, productive, and meaningful interactions. Recognizing their distinct but complementary roles provides a richer understanding of how conversations are structured and how participants navigate both the procedural and emotional landscapes of communication. Moreover, as Stivers (2007) demonstrates, effective topic management depends not only on the mechanics of talk but also on the participants' sensitivity to each other's emotional and attitudinal cues. Participants who skillfully balance alignment and affiliation can adapt to the shifting needs of the interaction, ensuring that both procedural coherence and relational harmony are maintained. This adaptability is crucial for sustaining conversation over time, especially in contexts where both the task and the social relationship matter and can be indicative of participant's L2 interactional competence.

Interactional competence (IC) is understood as the dynamic interplay between participants' use of linguistic and interactional resources and the specific contexts in which these resources are mobilized (Young, 2008). Components of L2 IC within a wide range of contexts has been tracked by focusing on expanded responses (Lee, Park & Sohn, 2011), engagement in storytelling (Ishida, 2011), repair sequences (Hellermann, 2011; Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017b; Sert & Balaman, 2018), change in participation over time (Cekaite, 2007), alignment (Ohta, 2001a), turn completion (Taguchi, 2014), topical organization (Hall, 1995; Ducasse & Brown, 2009; Melander & Sahlström, 2009), and recipiency over topical organization (Dings, 2007). In

this study, L2 IC construct has been examined with a focus on interactional aspects of topic management and (re)building alignment and affiliation as an indication of L2 IC through examining its co-construction across turns-at-talk.

To sum up, this study builds on existing research and addresses the need for discursive analyses of VE. It examines how participants in a VE project navigate alignment and affiliation within topic development during online synchronous video-mediated task-based exchanges. VE settings are designed to offer genuine opportunities for language use; however, they also impose considerable demands on learners to maintain independent interaction. Practices such as maintaining a topic and building alignment and affiliation are effective practices for learners to navigate these demands and can be explicitly taught or demonstrated in instructional settings. This study aims to enhance our understanding of L2 IC in digitally mediated environments by emphasizing the ways in which learners utilize both verbal and embodied resources to this end.

1.3. Aim and Significance of the Study

Researchers began to investigate how people interact and build knowledge in CMI learning environments in the late 90s(Garcia & Jacobs, 1999). CA studies showed that CMI conversations are socially organized (Wooffitt, 1990) and provide learners with more realistic scenarios than classroom settings, which are shaped by institutional goals and rigid turn-taking (Chun, 1994; Seedhouse, 2004; Tudini, 2013). Scholars found that online synchronous interactions share features with face-to-face conversations—such as turn-taking and repair—while also being shaped by technology's affordances like screen sharing and time lags (Jenks, 2014; Balaman & Sert, 2017). Within this digital landscape, Virtual Exchange (VE) has emerged as a key educational practice involving online intercultural communication among learners from diverse backgrounds (O'Dowd, 2018). From pen-pal practices to online task-based exchanges, telecollaborative methods prepare learners for authentic target language use (O'Dowd, 2018). Unlike classroom interaction, VE provides opportunities for genuine intercultural communication, often across significant differences.

The effectiveness of the task-based approach in promoting language learning opportunities through meaningful practice is well-documented (Long, 2015; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Ziegler, 2016). Despite notable advancements in comprehending the functioning of task-based instruction within online environments, there is a paucity of studies on the role of off-task talk in online environments. Examining these interactions can provide important insights into learner agency, identity formation, and the social dynamics inherent in digital language learning. Satar (2015) and Dooly and Tudini (2022) suggest providing ample opportunities for off-task talk in online collaborative environments to be able to learn more about the nature of off-task interactions. This study fills a critical gap by focusing on the interactional richness of both on-task and off-task talk in VE contexts.

Topic is a vital component of context and interaction, both online and face-to-face (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017). Conversation analysts investigate topic management via initiation, maintenance, transition, and termination (Stokoe, 2000). Though researched in many real-world settings (e.g., Maynard, 1980; Jefferson, 1983; Drew & Holt, 1998), topic management is still an underexplored construct in CA (Çimenli, Sert, Jenks, 2022; Seedhouse, 2004; Jeon, 2012; König, 2013; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017). Its complexity invites further exploration (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 1990). Lindström and Sorjonen (2013) highlight the need for further investigation affiliative actions "within a given larger activity" to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This larger activity in the present study is "topic management". The choice of topic management is not a random one. As Stivers (2007) demonstrates, effective topic management depends not only on the mechanics of talk but also on the participants' sensitivity to each other's emotional and attitudinal cues. However, there is no study, to the researcher's knowledge, combining these phenomena yet in VE interaction. This study addresses that gap, focusing on alignment, affiliation, and topic maintenance as a collaborative process.

Alignment and affiliation—key CA concepts—help better understand interaction in VE. Alignment refers to structural coordination, while affiliation reflects empathy or agreement (Stivers, 2008). In educational

contexts, alignment ensures task progression, and affiliation builds trust. Participants who skillfully balance alignment and affiliation can adapt to the shifting needs of the interaction, ensuring that both procedural coherence and relational harmony are maintained. This adaptability is crucial for sustaining conversation over time, especially in contexts where both the task and the social relationship matter. This study explores how VE participants build alignment and affiliation, underlining their relational significance in task-oriented, cross-cultural exchanges.

Interactional competence (IC) is defined as the link between participants' linguistic and interactional resources and their context (Young, 2008). Research has examined IC through various interactional practices: expanded responses (Lee, Park & Sohn, 2011), storytelling (Ishida, 2011; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon Berger, 2018), repair sequences (Hellermann, 2011; Balaman, 2016), alignment (Ohta, 2001a), turn completion (Taguchi, 2014), topical organization (Hall, 1995), and recipiency (Dings, 2007). This study addresses a critical gap by examining how learners in a virtual environment establish and manage alignment and affiliation, thereby emphasizing the relational underpinning essential for effective interaction in task-oriented, cross-cultural online settings.

The present study investigates transnational VEs between L2 speakers from Türkiye and Tunisia, facilitated by tasks designed under the Erasmus+ Digitask4IC project. Using the DigiTask web platform, participants collaborated on tasks centered on intercultural communication and global citizenship. Drawing on multimodal conversation analysis (Mondada, 2016), it focuses on how L2 speakers (re)build alignment and affiliation during on-task and off-task interaction within video-mediated dyadic interactions in a VE project between Türkiye and Tunisia. Through the lens of CA, this research aims to illustrate how resources for alignment and affiliation are mobilized within topic management in a VE environment and what these resources can illustrate about participant's L2 IC.

CA's methodological depth and adaptability make it ideal for studying digitally mediated, multilingual, and cross-cultural communication. It continues to evolve through integration with other frameworks and

applications to emerging interactional contexts, enhancing our understanding of social interaction. CA methodology explains how intersubjectivity is maintained in online and face-to-face conversations via micro-analysis (Tudini, 2013). Multimodal CA acknowledges that meaning is built through more than speech—gestures, gaze, and embodied actions also matter (Goodwin, 2000; Streeck et al., 2011).

Although most of the prior studies have explored feedback, pragmatics, and task design in VE, few have focused on the sequential and multimodal organization of talk. The current research addresses this empirical gap and expands the geographic scope of VE by examining interactions from the Middle East and North Africa which has historically concentrated on Western contexts. In doing so, it contributes to a more inclusive and diversified understanding of VE practices and their relevance to global language education. In this way, it underscores the need for inclusive, empirically grounded, and interactionally sensitive approaches to understanding L2 practices in digital environments.

This study emphasizes the discursive and multimodal aspects of video-mediated VE. It highlights the nuanced resources participants use to sustain conversations and build solidarity—elements often overlooked in earlier research. Ultimately, the study contributes to discursive VE research by analyzing the sequential organization of topic management, alignment, and affiliation in online task-based VE interactions. It investigates how VE participants manage alignment and affiliation during topic development. While VE settings offer authentic language use opportunities, they also challenge learners to manage conversations independently. Practices such as topic maintenance and alignment/affiliation building are critical tools learners use to meet these demands. These practices can be taught and modeled in instructional contexts. These practices can be taught and modeled in instructional contexts. This study enhances our understanding of interactional practices in digitally mediated language learning, with implications for VE task design and pedagogy. It argues for providing learners with opportunities for spontaneous interaction alongside structured tasks to foster L2 IC.

1.4. Research Context and Research Questions

This study explores transnational virtual exchanges (VE) between BA in English Language Teaching students from a University in Türkiye and Master of Arts Students in Department of English Studies from a university in Tunisia, utilizing the DigiTask web tool developed through the Erasmus+ Digitask4IC project (more information to follow below). The present study aims to examine resources for alignment and affiliation used within topic management in VE through collaboratively designed tasks with a general theme of intercultural communication and global citizenship. The study also aims to draw attention to the connection between the ability to use these resources and L2 interactional competence (L2 IC). During the data collection phase, participants were engaged in VE pairwork over a four-week period, meeting 5 times totally, via Zoom to complete nine tasks created jointly by students from Hacettepe University, University of Innsbruck, and University of Autonoma de Barcelona. The Digitask platform (www.digitask.app) served as the central hub for task access and completion, while Zoom was used as video-mediated meeting point. Participants' interactions were recorded and stored. These recordings were subsequently uploaded to Google Drive as well, providing researchers with rich video-based data to analyze the nature and outcomes of these transnational virtual exchanges.

The present study employs Conversation Analysis (CA) to explore the intricate dynamics of these video-mediated virtual exchanges. By examining the micro-level details of dyadic interaction, the research aims to uncover how participants construct and maintain alignment and affiliation within topic management in both on-task and off-task exchanges. To this end, the study investigates the following overarching research question: How are alignment and affiliation built in on-task and off-task topical talk in video-mediated virtual exchange?

This central question guides the investigation into the specific conversational practices and resources that participants use to (re)build alignment and affiliation. By focusing on both on-task and off-task interactions, the present study seeks to identify the distinct and shared resources that emerge in these

conversational contexts. Specifically, the following two sub questions are addressed:

1. What are the resources for alignment and affiliation used within on-task topic management in video-mediated virtual exchange?

2. What are the resources for alignment and affiliation used within off-task topic management in video-mediated virtual exchange?

Research Question 1 focuses on identifying the interactional resources that participants employ to build alignment and affiliation during on-task discussions. Through line-by-line microanalysis, the study examines how learners collaboratively manage tasks while simultaneously nurturing social bonds. Research Question 2 explores the interactional resources for alignment and affiliation used during off-task interactions, where the focus shifts from task completion to more informal, social exchanges. By analyzing these interactions, the study provides insights into how affiliation is maintained beyond the immediate task context, revealing the role of social talk in virtual exchanges highlighting that these resources might be components of L2 IC. By addressing these questions, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of affiliation in topic management, L2 IC, and L2 language learning environments, offering valuable implications for the design and facilitation of task-based online interaction and virtual exchange.

1.5. Definitions of Key Terms

Many of the terms employed in this research are discipline-specific, and some may have nuanced meanings that differ from their use in other fields. This section introduces and defines key terms and concepts that are central to the study. It ensures that readers are equipped with a clear understanding of the specific language and conceptual framework used throughout the dissertation.

Task

Nunan (2004) defines a task as a classroom activity that engages learners in understanding, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target

language, drawing on their grammatical knowledge to convey meaning, with meaning prioritized over form (p. 4). While Nunan emphasizes the "task-as-workplan" perspective—focusing on the predesigned features and pedagogical intentions of a task, this view has been critiqued by scholars such as Seedhouse (2005), who highlights the often-significant gap between the intended pedagogy and the actual interaction that occurs during implementation. In this view, the task is understood through learners' situated participation and evolving interpretations of the instructional setting (Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004).

Topic

"Topic" is a tricky subject to focus on (Markee, 2005). Topics often lack clear boundaries, as they frequently blend into one another (Jefferson, 1984; Markee, 2005). It can be defined as the subject of a conversation. Participants may shift from one topic to another and revisit previously discussed topics later within the same conversation. Conversation analytic studies aim to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a topic by focusing primarily on "what a given bit of talk is doing rather than what it is about" as noted by Sidnell (2010, p. 226).

Topic Management

"Topic management" is often referred to as "topic development" in previous works, or they are used interchangeably, making the issue even harder to pin down. In this study, we purposefully use topic management to describe the process by which a topic is initiated, maintained, changed, and terminated. One reason for this use is the implied connotation that comes with the term "development", as if this was a linear line of progression, whereas "management" suggests a more dynamic and multifaceted process. One additional reason for not selecting "development" is that it is employed to describe both the entire topic management and topic maintenance processes, making it hard for the readers to differentiate between two distinct concepts.

Topic maintenance

Jeon (2012) describes topic maintenance as "the process of establishing a proffered topic as the topic of conversation through cooperation of

participants" (p. 43). It is also mentioned in previous literature as "topic/topical progressivity" and "topic continuity" referring to the same action. In this study, we choose the term topic maintenance to describe this interactional phenomenon. However, we acknowledge that alternative terms such as topic continuity, or topic(al) progressivity are also used in the literature to describe similar practices. Our choice does not imply that these alternatives are inaccurate or less valid; rather, we use topic maintenance for consistency and clarity within the scope of the analysis.

Alignment and Affiliation

Alignment and affiliation are essential concepts for the analysis of social interaction dynamics, highlighting different levels of cooperation among participants. These concepts, while frequently interconnected, function at distinct levels of social interaction, each essential for sustaining conversational flow and social organization (Stivers, 2011). "Alignment" denotes a "structural level of cooperation" (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 20).

Affiliation, as opposed to alignment, refers to the hearer's demonstration of support for and endorsement of the teller's expressed stance. For example, when a speaker shares a personal grievance, an affiliative response might involve expressions of sympathy, agreement with the speaker's evaluation, or an empathetic narrative of a similar experience. Affiliation pertains to "the affective level of cooperation", in that "affiliative responses are maximally pro-social when they match the prior speaker's evaluative stance, display empathy and/or cooperate with the preference of the prior action" (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 21). Affiliation is mentioned as "affiliative alignment" in some previous work (e.g. Steensig, 2012), but only "affiliation" is used to refer the same action in this study.

Disalignment and Disaffiliation

While alignment and affiliation describe cooperative actions in interaction, disalignment and disaffiliation refer to uncooperative or non-conforming responses. Disalignment can be defined as a break from the expected or projected course of an interaction, where a speaker does not follow the conversational path set by the previous speaker. Such actions momentarily

shift the focus or structure of the conversation, challenging the speaker's control of the floor or signaling that the narrative is not yet complete or fully accepted. Disaffiliation denotes an absence of emotional or evaluative support for the speaker's position, sentiments, or viewpoint. It emerges when a listener refrains from expressing agreement, sympathy, or enthusiasm, indicating social distance or a difference in perspective (Stivers, 2008). For instance, addressing a complaint without demonstrating empathy or maintaining neutrality in response to a significant emotional expression may show disaffiliation.

On-task Topic Maintenance/Talk/Interaction

What is meant by on-task topic maintenance/ talk/interaction is maintaining a topic that is pre-determined in the task design and that participants are expected to talk about in order to complete the task. In other words, in this study, task-induced topics were purposefully chosen and later assigned to the participants by the task designers. However, this does not mean that task designers fully planned what the participants would talk about while doing the tasks. The manner in which participants maintain a given topic, the interactional resources they employ, and the thematic content itself can differ significantly across dyads. Even when engaging in identical tasks, dyads often manage topic management and task execution in distinct ways. This variation highlights the relevance of distinguishing between the task as a predetermined workplan and the task as an emergent process shaped through interaction (Seedhouse, 2005).

Off-task Topic Maintenance/Talk/Interaction

One challenge in defining off-task topic maintenance/ talk/interaction lies in the elusive nature of the concept of topic itself, as scholars have long noted (Jefferson, 1984; Markee, 2005; Maynard, 1980). In this study, we use the term off-task topic to refer to any conversational topic introduced by a participant during an on-task interaction that bears no direct relevance to the task at hand. These topics are not pre-planned by the task designer, nor are they part of the procedural steps required to complete the activity. Instead, they are typically personal, social, or unrelated (to the prescribed task) in nature and serve purposes other than advancing the task.

1.6. Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters all of which contributes to our understanding of the foci phenomena. To lay the ground for the study, background of the study is shared, the research context and research questions are introduced, aim and the need for the study is discussed and definitions of the key terms of the study are given in the **first chapter**. The **second chapter** starts with an introduction about the flow of the chapter as in all other chapters. Following this, a review of related literature will be given presenting previous research related to Technology Mediated L2 Interaction including Virtual Exchange, Online Task-based L2 Interaction, and Off-task Talk. Topic Management in Online L2 Interaction describing topic management processes and related studies comes next. (Dis)Alignment and (Dis)Affiliation section follows this. The chapter ends with a review of L2 Interactional Competence literature.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology under six main sections. Research Context and Research Questions are reintroduced here before a detailed description of the DIGITASK4IC Project. What follows this is presentation of Participants and Research Procedures. Data Collection, Data Selection, Transcription and Collection Building processes are processes are given here as well. The chapter ends with detailed information on Conversation Analysis as the methodological framework of the study, Validity and Reliability of the study and Ethical Considerations.

Chapter 4 is organized into two main sections, each of which addressing research questions. In the **first analytical section**, Resources for Alignment and Affiliation within On-Task Topic Management in Video-mediated Virtual Exchange Interactions will be investigated based on 10 representative extracts to reveal resources for alignment and affiliation used in managing a topic during on-task interaction followed by a summary of findings. In the **second analytical section**, on the other hand, Resources for Alignment and Affiliation within Off-Task Topic Management in Video-mediated Virtual Exchange Interactions will be examined based on 5 representative extracts revealing resources for alignment and affiliation used in topic management during off-task talk followed by a summary of findings.

Findings in chapter 4 will be discussed in **Chapter 5** in relation to research questions and previous literature in accordance with research questions. The first sections of the chapter reveal the resources used for alignment and affiliation within topic management sequences in video-mediated online interaction. Lastly, theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study will be discussed here. In the last chapter of the study (**Chapter 6**), Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research will be given. The dissertation ends with a personal reflection of the process.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter is organized into four main sections to examine the literature relevant to the research areas that form the foundation of the study. The chapter will demonstrate how VE serves as an authentic, real-world context for examining L2 interaction. It will illustrate the types of interactional practices that emerge in such settings, which are directly relevant to the current study. This chapter will also highlight how task-based interaction unfolds in video-mediated L2 contexts to foreground the relevance of task structure and participant orientation to task progression—key considerations in analyzing the interactional sequences in the present study. It will then draw attention to the richness of off-task episodes as analytically meaningful and interactionally consequential moments, which are particularly relevant for understanding how learners manage topics and social relationships in VE settings. The chapter will also present a review of topic management research: the concepts of topic management, including topic initiation, topic maintenance, topic transition, and topic termination establishing a link between topic maintenance and L2 IC. (Dis)Alignment and (Dis)Affiliation will be explored in detail in this chapter. This section is crucial for analyzing how participants position themselves interactionally in response to one another, particularly in relation to topic management and engagement, which are closely tied to relational and affective dimensions of interaction which are closely tied to relational and affective dimensions of interaction. As the final section of this chapter, an overview of L2 interactional Competence with a focus on how it is investigated in online environments.

2.2. CA and Technology Mediated L2 Interaction

Conversation Analysis (CA) has been widely adopted in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research to explore how language is interactively used and developed, particularly within classroom settings (Firth & Wagner, 1997). However, learner engagement extends beyond face-to-face environments. Negretti's (1999) pioneering application of CA to online interactions marked a turning point, drawing attention to the potential of digital platforms for L2 development. Technology-mediated environments support more spontaneous and authentic interaction, in contrast to classroom discourse, which is often shaped by institutional aims and structured turn-taking (Tudini, 2010).

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a research methodology adept at recording the organizational and managerial aspects of linguistic and interactional resources utilized by L2 speakers in both technology-mediated and face-to-face encounters. A variety of studies have used Conversation Analysis (CA) to examine Computer-Mediated Interaction (CMI) in audio and video communication (Tudini, 2002), as well as in other online environments such as gaming (Collister, 2008), and software applications like Skype, which encompasses synchronous text, voice, and video communication (Arminen & Leinonen, 2006; Arminen & Weilenmann, 2009; Çimenli, 2017; Çimenli, Sert, & Jenks, 2022; Godwin-Jones, 2005; Jenks, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Licoppe, 2009), along with task completion (Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017a; Blake, 2000; Sert & Balaman, 2015) to explore the organization of discourse in these contexts and juxtapose the findings with established characteristics of face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, there are also research studies that focus on more particular characteristics of CMI. Examples include openings and closings of online conversations (Gonzales, 2013; Rintel, Mulholland, & Pittam, 2001), absence of replies (Rintel, Pittam, & Mulholland, 2003), inquiries and responses (Jenks & Brandt, 2013), repair (Schönfeldt & Golato, 2003), face negotiations (Golato & Taleghani Nikazm, 2006), identity formation sequences (Stommel, 2008), and the enhancement of L2 interactional competence (Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017b; Cekaite, 2007; Dings, 2007; Ducasse & Brown, 2009; Hall, 1995; Hellermann, 2011;

Ishida, 2011; Lee, Park & Sohn, 2011; Melander & Sahlström, 2009; Ohta, 2001a; Sert & Balaman, 2018; Taguchi, 2014).

The application of CA in technology-mediated interactions, as previously enumerated, originated from the notion that CMI resembles a realistic face-to-face discussion (Gonzalez Lloret, 2015, p. 569). Furthermore, Bayrm (2010) asserted that CMI "resembles both written language and conversation" (p. 63). A growing body of research on CMI interaction according to CA principles predominantly examines interactional patterns in online communication, including turn-taking, repair mechanisms, and sequential structure (Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Markman, 2005). CMI research primarily investigate participants' collaborative development of "socially, linguistically, and interactionally acceptable forms of online spoken communication" (CMSI, Jenks, 2014, p. 156). The relevant research primarily comprises extensive text-based data (Gonzalez Lloret, 2011; Kitade, 2000; Negretti, 1999) alongside an increasing number of corpora of audio and video data, which Jenks (2014) designates as "verbal dialogue" (p. 36). CMI research is highly interested in synchronous online communication because of the documented pedagogical advantages of real-time chat, which compels participants to think quickly and collaboratively construct dialogue, similar to face-to-face interactions (Tudini, 2010, p. 1). Although certain characteristics unique to text-based chat contexts result in varied sequencing of turns-at-talk due to the asynchronous nature of the interaction (Smith, 2003; Tudini, 2013), the turn-taking mechanism in voice-based chat contexts mostly mirrors that of face-to-face discussion.

Embodied actions such as gestures, facial expressions, and gaze play a central role in face-to-face interactional competence (IC) (Uyar & Balaman, 2024). For instance, Uyar and Balaman (2024) demonstrate that gaze can serve as a key indicator of L2 IC in paired speaking tests. In online environments, however, access to these embodied resources is often limited or entirely absent due to camera framing constraints and varying levels of participant engagement with the screen. As a result, the nature of embodied conduct in video-mediated settings is significantly altered. Studies indicate that participants compensate for these limitations by relying more on prosodic features, facial

expressions within the visible frame, and supplementary tools like chat functions (Licoppe & Morel, 2012; Mondada, 2016a; Satar, 2016). These adaptations affect how intersubjectivity and affiliation are achieved and maintained, which can be particularly impactful for L2 learners who often depend on visual cues to support understanding (Balaman & Sert, 2017b). Consequently, intersubjectivity in computer-mediated communication (CMC) tends to be more fragile, with greater potential for disalignment through phenomena such as unexpected silences, overlapping turns, or misunderstandings.

Online environments markedly transform the temporal and sequential structures of interaction, introducing factors such as lag, overlap, latency, and specific interface designs. These changes impact how participants display and interpret alignment and affiliation. Recent Conversation Analysis (CA) research highlights that the technological affordances and limitations of online platforms—such as latency, lag, and screen layout—shape the ways alignment and affiliation are both expressed and perceived (Licoppe, 2017; Mondada, 2021). Such affordances can delay turn transitions and diminish the effectiveness of embodied cues like gaze and posture, which in face-to-face settings typically serve to signal recipiency or stance (Heath & Luff, 2000; Jenks & Brandt, 2013). Online interaction amplifies the importance of explicit interactional work to achieve intersubjectivity. CA studies of online educational settings show that participants often use redundant formulations, confirmations, and visual-verbal repetitions to maintain mutual understanding (Satar & Wigham, 2021). These practices become especially relevant in L2 settings, where reduced cues can lead to premature topic closure or unintended disalignment.

To have a better understanding of learning, Sert and Seedhouse (2011) suggest that "SLA databases should go beyond formal instructional contexts and include domains where L2 users (Cook, 2007) have more flexible opportunities to use the language" (p. 5). This need to understand how people interact and how they interactionally build knowledge in new learning environments has urged CA studies to work on technology-mediated platforms such as text, audio and video computer mediated communication,

email, forums and bulletin boards, social networks, and games) (Balaman, 2016, 2019; Balaman & Sert, 2017a, 2017b; Brandt & Jenks, 2013; Jenks, 2010, 2014; Sert & Balaman, 2015; Tudini, 2010). Learners' orientation to communicative needs and language use in daily activities has been claimed to develop their L2 interactional competence (IC) (Hall, 1999; Hellermann, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011; Pekarek Doehler, 2010).

Jakonen, Dooly, and Balaman (2022) emphasize the transformative role of technology in language education, highlighting how digital, hybrid, and virtual environments extend learning beyond traditional classrooms. It explores how tech-mediated social interactions facilitate collaborative knowledge construction, challenge conventional educational boundaries, and create new opportunities and challenges for effective teaching and research. The focus is on designing technology-rich environments that foster engaged, social, and meaningful language learning experiences across diverse global contexts. Thorne and Hellerman (2022) investigate the complexities and challenges of digital-mediated communication, particularly in educational and language learning contexts. This research draws attention to challenges such as attentional overload, diminished non-verbal cues, and interruptions to natural interaction patterns inherent in videoconferencing, which often result in fatigue and reduced engagement. It underscores the critical role of multimodal communication—including voice, text, gestures, and digital tools—and explores how technology actively influences both pedagogical approaches and interactional dynamics. A thorough understanding of these interactional and cultural factors is essential for enhancing online learning environments and promoting effective language education. Virtual exchange is one of the technology-mediated contexts that enables L2 learners to interact in an authentic and meaningful way.

2.2.1. Virtual Exchange and L2 Interaction

Virtual exchange (VE) has gained increasing prominence in language and intercultural education as a means of fostering communication and collaboration across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Defined as "student-centered, international, and collaborative approaches to learning where

knowledge and understanding are constructed through interaction and negotiation with students from other cultures" (Baroni et al., 2019, pp. 8–9), VE leverages digital technologies to facilitate dialogue among geographically dispersed learners. These interactions frequently occur in a common or target language, thereby offering authentic opportunities for language practice and intercultural learning (O'Dowd & O'Rourke, 2019). According to O'Dowd and Dooly (2020), virtual exchanges significantly contribute to intercultural awareness and the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in four key ways. Firstly, they offer opportunities for cultural learning by exposing participants to authentic, real-world materials—such as online news and webpages—that go beyond the more limited resources typically found in textbooks. Secondly, participants engage in direct information exchange about their own sociocultural contexts, serving as authentic informants for one another. Thirdly, virtual exchanges help learners recognize that cultures are not static or monolithic but are instead complex, ever-evolving systems with fluid and permeable boundaries (p. 365). Lastly, these exchanges also support the development of pragmatic competence in the target language which might also result in the development of L2 interactional competence (IC).

VE has received much attention in the language and intercultural education literature (O'Dowd, & Lewis, 2016). It has been implemented in various educational contexts, from classroom-based activities to independent out-of-class interactions and has been used for over two decades in language education (Dooly, 2011; O'Dowd, 2015; O'Dowd & Dooly, 2020). These exchanges are especially valued for encouraging learners to collaborate using an additional language (L2), as documented in numerous studies (L2; e. g., Dooly & Davitova, 2018; Brandt, 2011; Brandt & Jenks, 2011, 2013; Jenks, 2018; Jenks & Brandt, 2013; Knight et al., 2020; Sert & Balaman, 2015, 2018, 2019; Tudini, 2016, 2018).

The scope of VE-related research has progressively expanded to include issues including development of language skills (Dooly, 2011), autonomy (Eneau & Develotte, 2012; Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016), intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (ICC, Belz, 2003, 2005; Fuchs, 2019; Lee &

Song, 2019; Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016; Ryshina-Pankova, 2018; Ware, 2005, 2013), digital literacy (O'Dowd, 2018), peer feedback and reflective practice (Belz, 2006; Vinagre & Mu˜noz, 2011; Ware & O'Dowd, 2008), the role of interaction and interactive feedback (Canals, 2022), task design and implementation (Dooly, 2011; O'Dowd & Waire, 2009), the acquisition of technological, pedagogical and content skills (Dooly & Sandler, 2013; Rienties et al., 2020), telecollaborative competences and attitudes (Grau & Turula, 2019; O'Dowd, 2015), language proficiency and learning practices (Cunningham, 2019; Lewis & O'Dowd, 2016), the negotiation of meaning (Tudini, 2007), pre-service teacher training (e. g., instruction giving and lexical explanations) (Guichon & Wigham, 2016; Satar & Wigham, 2017; Wigham, 2017; Wigham & Satar, 2021), and the challenges encountered during telecollaboration (Belz, 2003; Belz & Muller-Hartmann, 2003; O'Dowd, 2011; Ware, 2005). The characteristics of VE have been examined using many methodological techniques; nevertheless, only a limited number of research concentrate on the discursive structure that underlies telecollaborative practices.

Much of this work relies on data from text-based exchanges such as emails, forums, and chat tools. While this research has yielded valuable insights, there remains a relative dearth of studies investigating the interactional dynamics of spoken, real-time VE—particularly those employing video-mediated platforms (Akiyama & Cunningham, 2018). Video conferencing has become a dominant mode of communication in both educational and everyday settings, prompting scholars to call for more attention to how such technologies shape interaction and pedagogy (Kern, 2014; Malinowski & Kramsch, 2014; O'Dowd, 2016a). Compared to text-based exchanges, video-mediated interactions enable participants to draw on embodied resources such as gaze, gesture, posture, and facial expressions, all of which play a crucial role in meaning-making and social coordination (Mondada, 2016c; Uyar & Balaman, 2024). On the other hand, O'Dowd (2016a, 2016b) claims that videoconferencing introduces novel communicative and pedagogical challenges for users, necessitating increased focus on these technologies (see also Kern, 2014; Malinowski & Kramsch, 2014). Several studies have begun to address this gap by examining video-based VE interactions. For instance,

Yamada and Akahori (2007) found that video exchanges allowed learners to express emotional and intellectual aspects of their identities more fully. Similarly, Van der Zwaard and Bannink (2019) showed that learners tend to make socially sensitive interactional choices, such as avoiding explicit negotiation of meaning, during video calls. These findings are echoed in the work by Sert and Jacknick (2015), who observed how laughter and other embodied cues are used to navigate potential interactional trouble.

Other studies highlight the benefits of video-based exchanges in fostering engagement and awareness of interactional norms. For example, Ko (2012) and Yamada (2009) observed that learners became more attuned to the flow of conversation and the importance of turn coordination during synchronous video interactions. Leone (2012) explored how clarification and confirmation requests in a tele-tandem project contributed to the development of ICC, while Akiyama (2015) reported that video-mediated exchanges increased learners' awareness of sociolinguistic variation and pragmatic norms. Longitudinal studies have further demonstrated the positive impact of VE on both L2 comprehension and production (Saito & Akiyama, 2017, 2018). Cunningham (2017) investigates the alignment or divergence of demands made or softened by L2 speakers in comparison to L1 speakers over eight video conferences involving L2 German learners and L1 German speakers. Based on a multivariate statistical analysis, his findings reveal that both L1 and L2 speakers primarily use direct requests in their oral and written productions, although L2 speakers tend to employ internal modifications less often. He argues that Virtual Exchange (VE) offers a valuable context for naturalistic pragmatic language use, presenting language learners with an effective model for acquiring the target language.

Moalla, Abid and Balaman (2020) explore virtual exchange projects involving students from a university in Türkiye and Tunisia, focusing on fostering intercultural communication and collaboration through task-based activities using tools like Skype. The project aims to enhance intercultural awareness, empathy, and interactional skills by engaging students in intercultural tasks, reflections, and narratives, with positive outcomes such as relationship building and stereotype reduction. The discussions highlight the importance

of designing authentic, real-life social interaction scenarios and suggest improvements like extending interaction time, diversifying communication tools, and refining task design to maximize intercultural learning and skill development. Balaman (2021) examines the interactional dynamics of video-mediated collaborative writing in digital contexts, highlighting the role of repair practices and multimodal coordination in enabling effective co-construction of written texts. Through detailed micro-analyses of interactions in platforms like Google Docs and Skype, the study reveals the complex, embodied, and situated nature of online collaboration, highlighting the roles of talk, screen activity, and text editing in managing disagreements and maintaining the flow of writing. The findings offer valuable insights for TESOL professionals and educators aiming to enhance online collaborative writing practices, especially in second-language learning contexts, by understanding the social and interactional functions of repair and multimodal coordination in digital spaces.

Balaman and Pekarek Doehler (2022) investigate how interactants coordinate screen-based activities with spoken interaction within collaborative, task-oriented, and intercultural video-mediated interactions. They highlight the use of verbal cues like "let me check," non-lexical vocalizations, and grammatical projections to manage turn-taking, signal ongoing or upcoming screen actions, and maintain mutual understanding despite the private nature of digital work. The findings of the study emphasize the fine-tuned synchronization of verbal, paralinguistic, and physical actions—such as cursor movements and clicks—that facilitate smooth collaboration, especially in contexts with asymmetrical access to shared digital content. In a recent study, Çolak and Balaman (2022) investigated the use of online dictionaries and other digital resources in video-mediated second language (L2) interactions within virtual exchange contexts. Their findings reveal that participants strategically employed tools such as online dictionaries, Wikipedia, and image searches to verify meanings, identify synonyms, and address comprehension challenges during intercultural tasks. These practices reflect learners' interactional competence and multimodal engagement, shaped by the immediate, socially situated nature of the interaction. The study underscores the pedagogical value of integrating diverse digital

resources into language learning, emphasizing the critical role of task design, contextualized support, and teacher training in enhancing communicative outcomes.

In a recent VE study, Canals (2022) discovered that students frequently negotiate meaning, provide interactional feedback, and attend to this feedback more consistently when English serves as the lingua franca between Spanish and English language learners. Satar and Çimenli Olcars (2025) define *Virtual Exchange Interactional Competence* (VE-IC) as the capability of participants to utilize interaction effectively to facilitate and enhance intercultural learning in virtual exchanges (p. 20). The work highlights the importance of respectful and equitable dialogue, taking into account power dynamics, and incorporates skills like managing topic transitions, turn-taking, and multimodal communication to enhance meaningful intercultural interactions. The components of VE-IC encompass the ability to utilize interaction as a mediating instrument for intercultural learning, acknowledge power dynamics, and participate in respectful and open dialogue. The framework includes skills related to managing topic transitions, turn-taking, and employing multimodal resources to enhance meaningful intercultural interactions.

Badem-Korkmaz, Ekin and Balaman (2022) delve into how pre-service language teachers (PST) respond to and resist advice from trainers during the design of video-mediated language tasks. Using Conversation Analysis, the research reveals that PSTs often resist suggestions by providing detailed accounts, delaying agreement, or critiquing advice, especially when they believe certain pedagogical features better serve their goals. Despite initial resistance, PSTs tend to modify their stances, but traces of their professional judgment remain evident in their final task designs and reflections, highlighting the complex negotiation between pedagogical ideals and practical constraints. These interactions serve as valuable opportunities for deeper professional learning, allowing PSTs to demonstrate their expertise and critically engage with technological integration in language teaching. The study also informed the design of Digitask4IC VE Process. Ekin, Balaman and Badem-Korkmaz (2024) examine the design, implementation, and evaluation

of telecollaborative video-mediated tasks in language education, emphasizing the importance of feedback, interactional dynamics, and reflective practices. The study highlights how task design influences mutual understanding, intercultural communication, and the development of pedagogical skills among pre-service teachers and learners. Using Conversation Analysis, the research underscores the collaborative, micro-level social interactions that shape successful online intercultural language learning experiences and the ongoing refinement of teaching practices in digital environments.

Balaman (2025) explores how pre-service language teachers develop digital literacy skills through collaborative, video-mediated interactions, focusing on the use of shared control features in platforms like Microsoft Teams and DigiTask. The study is directly from the same project of which the dissertation is also a part. Such interactions often involve managing technical difficulties, which serve as catalysts for incidental learning and the development of digital literacies, positioning participants as active collaborators rather than passive recipients in the communicative process. The research emphasizes multimodal conversation analysis and micro-longitudinal approaches to understand the emergent digital literacies, highlighting the role of teacher educators in fostering inclusive, evidence-based digital practices in language teacher education.

Despite these advances, a relatively small proportion of VE research has focused on the fine-grained, sequential organization of interaction, particularly through a conversation-analytic lens. Studies using CA have shown that the structures of turn-taking, repair, and topic management are central to understanding how language learning unfolds in interaction (Markee, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004). Within VE, this perspective allows for a close examination of how learners co-construct understanding and navigate communicative challenges in real time. The video-mediated studies described in the preceding paragraphs predominantly identify the particular linguistic characteristics employed during VE, including the formulation of clarification requests and confirmation checks, the mitigation of requests, and the articulation of ideologies. Moreover, these studies are frequently positioned within broader discourses on teacher education, the cultivation of

intercultural competence, and language acquisition (Thorne, 2010). Investigations into the discursive structuring of telecollaborative practices are less prevalent in the video-mediated literature on virtual environments. This study builds on existing research and addresses the need for discursive analyses of virtual exchange (VE). It examines how participants in a VE project navigate alignment and affiliation within topic management during online synchronous video-mediated task-based exchanges. VE settings are designed to offer genuine opportunities for language use; however, they also impose considerable demands on learners to maintain independent interaction. Practices such as maintaining a topic and building alignment and affiliation are effective practices for learners to navigate these demands and can be explicitly taught or demonstrated in instructional settings. This study enhances our understanding of L2 interactional competence in digitally mediated environments by emphasizing the ways in which learners utilize both verbal and embodied resources.

2.2.2. Online Task-based L2 Interaction

Tasks play a central role in language classrooms, forming the foundation of many instructional activities. They have been widely acknowledged for their effectiveness in fostering opportunities for language learning (Long, 2015; Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Nunan (2004) defines task as a classroom activity that engages learners in understanding, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language, with a focus on utilizing their grammatical knowledge to convey meaning, prioritizing meaning over form (p. 4). He emphasizes the "task-as-workplan" perspective, focusing on the design features of a task prior to its implementation both inside and outside the classroom. However, this conceptualization has been problematized by Seedhouse (2005), who highlights the discrepancy between the intended pedagogy (the workplan) and the actual pedagogy that unfolds during classroom interaction. Seedhouse argues that this divergence underscores the importance of examining the task-in-process—what actually occurs during task implementation—as this is where authentic interactional data emerges. Similarly, Mondada and Pekarek Doehler (2004) underscore that learners' engagement in communicative events during task performance reflects their

"ongoing interpretations of the instructional setting" (p. 510). In this dissertation, *task-as-process* perspective is adopted, focusing on how tasks are enacted and interpreted by learners in real-time interaction.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) enables learners to engage with language in use, simulating real-world situations within the classroom rather than presenting linguistic elements in isolation. Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) have historically developed independently, each with unique research trajectories; however, there has been a significant intersection between the two fields (González-Lloret and Ortega, 2014). Researchers in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) have often utilized insights from Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) to inform the incorporation of digital tools in language education. This convergence is especially salient in contexts where technology supports task-based instruction, underscoring a shared focus on the effective design and implementation of pedagogical tasks in digitally mediated environments.

González-Lloret and Ortega (2014) argue that the amalgamation of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) with task-based language teaching (TBLT) is both pertinent and essential. This phenomenon is attributed to two primary factors: first, the continuous evolution of digital technologies that reshapes language learning and usage, creating new educational demands. The second is the necessity for thoughtful pedagogical responses that ensure meaningful alignment of tasks and technologies within curriculum design. This contextually embedded approach has contributed significantly to both the pedagogical and methodological development of the field (Ziegler, 2016). In both face-to-face and online settings, the task-based approach has demonstrated its ability to create spaces where learners can meaningfully practice language use (Long, 2015; Ziegler, 2016). However, merely offering opportunities for communication is not sufficient to ensure effective language learning. As Dooly (2011) argues, the quality of the task design plays a crucial role in determining whether learners can fully benefit from these opportunities. This becomes especially relevant in online or digitally mediated environments, where the nature of interaction changes due to the

affordances and constraints of the technology used. In such settings, telecollaborative tasks—designed specifically for virtual exchanges—have emerged as a key area of interest. According to O'Dowd and Waire (2009), and further detailed by González-Lloret and Ortega (2014), effective telecollaborative tasks share several core characteristics:

> (i) Primary focus on meaning, prioritizing communicative intent and meaning-making over formal linguistic features (Yanguas, 2010; van der Zwaard and Bannick, 2014);
>
> (ii) Goal orientation, emphasizing purposeful interaction aimed at a tangible outcome studies (Hauck & Youngs, 2008; Jauregi et al., 2011; O'Dowd & Waire, 2009);
>
> (iii) Learner centeredness, where the design process is informed by the learners' needs, proficiency levels, and goals (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2015);
>
> (iv) Holism, integrating authentic, real-life practices into pedagogical tasks (Fernandez-Garcia & Marinez-Arbelaiz, 2002; Tudini, 2007);
>
> (v) Reflective learning, encouraging higher-order thinking through post-task reflection and critical engagement with task content (Gonzalez-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

In addition to these core characteristics, other important task design features have been identified in the literature. These include promoting authenticity (Wang, 2007), adaptability for transformation and adjustment to novel environments (Hampel 2006), fostering digital literacy skills (Hauck & Youngs, 2008), providing clear and simple instructions (Müller-Hartmann & Kurek, 2016), ensuring the attractiveness of content (Kurek & Müller-Hartmann, 2017), facilitation of learner autonomy (Hampel 2010), and maintaining an appropriate level of task complexity (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2011). When these principles are incorporated, tasks become not only more engaging but also more effective in supporting language learning in computer-mediated contexts (Ziegler, 2016).

Given these findings and the highlighted significance of tasks in technology-mediated environments, an increasing amount of research investigates online task-based environments from a multimodal perspective. To start with, Balaman and Sert (2017a, 2018) focus on the development of online L2 interactional competence, concluding that students can achieve significant interactional improvements in online exchanges through task engagement and structured activities. These advancements encompass collaborative

hinting practices, epistemic congruence, demonstration of listenership/alignment, and the employment of epistemic checks. The primary findings indicate that the online context serves as both a layer and a framework, enabling learners to discover novel developmental patterns through contextually relevant resources during task-based exchanges that enhance L2 interactional competence. Balaman and Sert (2017b) explore the development of interactional and epistemic competencies in second language learners participating in online collaborative task-based activities over time. They examine how learners negotiate knowledge, address misunderstandings, and modify their conversational resources to enhance task performance and L2 interactional competence. The studies utilize conversation analysis and multimodal data to illustrate the transition from initial challenges with indirect communication and epistemic incongruence to more advanced, resourceful, and collaborative interactions, underscoring the significance of interactional resources, task design, and epistemic management in promoting language development in digital contexts.

Balaman and Sert (2017c) investigate the interactional successes of L2 learners in two different task types face-to-face conversation tasks and online emergent information gap tasks. The authors offer a comparison of how a focal L2 learner modifies their interactional resources to fit context-sensitive variations in both environments using conversational analysis. The results show clear differences in turn-taking, action creation, and task management, therefore showing the learner's ability to negotiate the complexity of every task type. By showing how learners2 adjustments to local circumstances can guide task design and improve language learning results, this study helps to clarify L2 interactional competency. Similarly, Sert and Balaman (2018) examine online L2 interaction, with a focus on how participants negotiate, monitor, and repair communication to align with task demands and linguistic norms. Using CA, the study illustrates the development of L2 IC through sequences involving rule negotiation, breach management, and self-initiated repair, often supported by multimodal resources. Participants transition from external policing to self-regulation, indicating their learning process and comprehension of task norms. Longitudinal evidence demonstrates how

these interactional practices facilitate language development in digital, task-based environments.

Satar and Wigham (2017) examine the interactional resources employed by language teachers and trainees during online task instructions, highlighting the significance of multimodal resources, including gaze, gestures, posture, and verbal cues, in enhancing understanding, role allocation, and task management. The authors emphasize the methods by which teachers navigate transitions between instructional phases and roles using visual and verbal markers. This is particularly important in online and video-mediated environments, where distinct boundaries and multimodal cues are essential for effective communication. In the same vein, Knight, Dooly, and Barbera (2019) examine learner engagement with screen-based resources and multimodal semiotic cues in online language learning tasks, highlighting the intricate and active role of technology in mediating communication. The study examines learner responses to instructions, interaction initiation and management, and navigation of interface elements, frequently balancing spontaneous and mediated actions. The research emphasizes the significance of multimodal and interactional analysis in understanding turn-taking, learner agency, and the dynamic, multimodal characteristics of online pedagogical interactions. It specifically examines how visual, textual, and auditory resources affect learner engagement and communication.

In another study, Satar and Wigham (2021) examine multimodal instructional practices in online language task-based teaching, highlighting the coordination of speech, gaze, gestures, and print modes such as chat and URLs to effectively manage resources and provide instructions. The significance of semiotic awareness is emphasized, particularly in recognizing semiotic lag and misalignment, to enhance interaction and resource sharing in videoconferencing. The research highlights the complexity of multimodal interactions and provides insights into the ways online educators utilize various semiotic resources to enhance instruction, which has implications for teacher training and professional development. Despite extensive scholarly research on classroom interaction, there remains a limited understanding of

off-task talk, viewed as something dispreferred (Sharma, 2015), that occur within the classroom (Waring 2013, p. 191).

To conclude, the intersection of TBLT and digital technologies has reshaped the landscape of language education, driving innovations in instructional design and shaping learner engagement in virtual and video-mediated contexts. Tasks function not only as a framework for language use but also as a medium through which L2 interactional competence and digital literacy are developed. The literature reviewed highlights the critical role of well-designed tasks in facilitating meaningful, goal-oriented, and multimodally rich interactions that support language development. These findings confirm the pedagogical value of aligning task design with the capabilities and limitations of digital tools and platforms. However, despite significant progress in understanding how task-based instruction operates in online contexts, several important areas require further scholarly attention. For instance, the role of off-task talk in online environments—often overlooked or dismissed—merits deeper investigation. Analyzing such interactions may offer valuable insights into learner agency, identity construction, and the social dynamics of digital language learning. This study addresses this need by examining the interactional practices that arise around and beyond task boundaries, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of language use and development in digitally mediated learning environments. The following section provides more information on off-task talk.

2.2.3. Off-task Talk in L2 Interaction

To begin unpacking the concept of *off-task*, Markee (2005) and Hauser (2016) each offer a definition for it. Hauser (2016) characterizes off-task talk as student interactions that involve topics unrelated to the current task or activity. Markee (2005) adopts a more cautious approach in defining the concept, arguing that not every deviation from the designated topic should be considered off-task, as both "topic" and "task" lack clear boundaries. This difficulty in defining off-task talk is further compounded by the difficulty in defining a task arises from the complexity of classroom dynamics and the fluidity of interactions. Different stakeholders in the educational

environment—teachers, students, and researchers—may perceive a task in varying ways. For example, behaviors deemed off-task by educators may be perceived by students as essential social interactions that facilitate their learning process. Additionally, tasks in language learning are multi-faceted, involving various subtasks that, while not directly aligned with the primary objective, contribute to the overall learning process.

The fluid transition between on-task and off-task behavior further obscures these distinctions. Students may briefly change topics, engage in unrelated discussions, and subsequently return to the primary task, complicating the identification of when they have diverged. The subjective nature of task relevance further complicates the issue. An observer may perceive a topic as off-task; however, it may be significant for participants, particularly in enhancing contextual understanding or fostering social connections that promote collaborative learning. The relationship between formal and informal interactions in the classroom is complex, complicating the classification of discourse as solely on-task or off-task. The challenges associated with defining a task arise from its intrinsic complexity, the subjective viewpoints of participants, the dynamic nature of classroom interactions and lack of discursive studies focusing on these.

In the study at hand, "off-task" topic is conceptualized as any topic introduced by a participant during an on-task interaction that lacks direct relevance or connection to the primary task or activity being performed. Off-task topics may arise spontaneously, signaling a departure from the task-oriented or goal-driven discourse that typically structures instructional interaction. These episodes often revolve around personal, social, or otherwise unrelated matters and serve functions beyond task completion—such as fostering interpersonal rapport, relieving tension, or expressing individual interests. Off-task talk typically occurs when participants initiate or sustain such digressions either during or in proximity to the task sequence. For instance, it frequently emerges in transitional moments—such as when a pair completes a task phase earlier than anticipated—or, less commonly, as a mid-task interruption that temporarily redirects attention away from the task objectives. A typical example might involve two students collaboratively

working on a math problem. If one suddenly asks, “Did you watch the football game last night?” this introduces an off-task topic unrelated to the academic task. Although it diverges from the primary goal of solving the problem, such an exchange may serve social functions—such as building rapport, reducing tension, or providing a mental break. Thus, off-task talk refers not just to deviation from task content, but also to participant-driven interaction that can serve interpersonal or affective purposes within educational or collaborative settings. While not aligned with the immediate task objectives, these moments may still contribute meaningfully to the broader interactional and relational dynamics of the group.

Despite the inherent complexities, a growing body of research has examined how learners perceive, manage, and engage in off-task interactions within classroom settings. Stokoe (2000), for instance, observes that students' perceptions of what constitutes 'off-task' talk often surface in their concluding contributions, which are shaped by the immediate discursive context. Her analysis challenges rigid dichotomies between ‘on-task’ and ‘off-task’ talk, highlighting the nuanced ways in which students construct topical relevance. This underscores the importance of attending to students’ own judgments about what is considered pertinent or peripheral within classroom discourse. Notably, discussions that extend into social or out-of-classroom topics are frequently treated as illegitimate, whereas those aligned with instructional goals tend to be sanctioned as legitimate.

This dissertation explores how students identify, respond to, and interpret episodes labeled as 'off-task,' offering insights into their understanding of task expectations and classroom participation. In a similar vein, Markee (2005) investigates off-task talk in second language classrooms, with a particular emphasis on its occurrence during small group work. It aims to explicate how such talk is constructed in terms of its sequential placement and how it interacts with on-task talk in the broader classroom context. The research indicates that off-task talk frequently emerges at points of topic closure and during transitions to new topics, offering natural entry points for such interactions. Pedagogically, these findings reveal that off-task talk is more intricate than traditionally perceived, involving the negotiation of member-

relevant identities and the capacity of learners to manage overlapping speech exchange systems. Rather than being merely disruptive, off-task interactions can constitute meaningful learning experiences, contributing to learners' socialization and communicative development. These insights carry important implications for teacher education, underscoring the need to recognize and respond to the nuanced dynamics of classroom discourse in ways that productively incorporate off-task episodes.

Building on this, Hauser (2016) explores how learners navigate off-task side sequences in L2 learning interactions, highlighting their use of multimodal resources—including gaze, body posture, laughter, and physical artifacts—to sustain or curtail these exchanges. According to the study, side sequences, unrelated to the main task, provide opportunities for language awareness, interactional skill practice, and the establishment of a relaxed atmosphere conducive to language development. The research emphasizes the collaborative aspect of managing these interactions and the opportunities to improve learners' English proficiency and L2 interactional competence. Similarly, Stone (2019) examines classroom interactions among Japanese learners of English, highlighting the ways in which students manage on-task activities alongside off-task conversations that include language repair, translation, and social exchanges. The frequent utilization of Japanese L1 resources, code-switching, and non-verbal cues is emphasized as instrumental in enhancing understanding and learning in informal or off-task discussions. The research indicates that interactions, frequently transcending rigid task boundaries, foster significant opportunities for language It conceptualizes off-task talk as a shift towards a more conversational mode of communication, encompassing actions that are not directly pertinent to the activity at hand. This shift is characterized by a transition from task-focused interaction to more informal, reciprocal dialogue. The findings reveal that while participants show a preference for communicating in English, they draw on their L1 Japanese resources during repair sequences when English resources are insufficient, thus creating additional opportunities for language learning. Additionally, Illés and Akcan (2016) highlight the importance of spontaneous, playful, and creative language use in the EFL classroom, noting that these interactions enhance metalinguistic awareness, humor,

authenticity, and student motivation. The study involving prospective teachers in Hungary and Türkiye indicates that promoting spontaneous interactions can improve fluency, creativity, and preparedness for varied communication contexts. They suggest that educators promote spontaneous, authentic communication activities, encompassing off-task discussions and language play, to enhance the engagement and relevance of language learning in real-world contexts.

Stone (2023) investigates how students signal task completion in classroom and social interaction contexts through verbal, embodied, and social cues, often before the formal conclusion of the task. In educational settings, early finishers frequently engage in constructive discussions that promote language development and social interaction, challenging the assumption that early completion inevitably leads to off-task behavior. The study argues that such interactions can provide meaningful language practice, highlighting the need for careful consideration before assigning additional tasks to early finishers. Similarly, Abe (2023) explores how Japanese learners of English manage topic transitions and interactional practices during online, text-based, task-oriented conversations across different proficiency levels. Advanced learners demonstrate more sophisticated resources, such as using textual cues to navigate topic shifts and effectively balancing on-task and off-task talk. In contrast, lower-proficiency learners tend to rely on repetitive question-answer sequences and show limited sensitivity to topic development. The findings reveal that off-task talk is an integral part of L2 interactional practices, with learners' ability to manage it closely tied to their proficiency. Only high-proficiency dyads consistently manage both on-task and off-task interactions in ways that meet communicative and institutional expectations.

Despite the common perception of off-task talk as a distraction, these studies collectively highlight its pedagogical and interactional value. Off-task interactions can foster identity construction, social bonding, language awareness, and the development of L2 interactional competence. Given the fluid and context-dependent boundaries between on-task and off-task discourse, further discursively grounded, multimodal, and longitudinal research is needed. Such work can deepen our understanding of how learners

collaboratively negotiate, interpret, and utilize off-task talk, informing more effective teaching practices and task design in both face-to-face and digital language learning environments. In response to this gap, the present study investigates off-task talk in video-mediated task-based interactions, aiming to reveal its interactional functions and pedagogical relevance through a multimodal conversation analytic lens. By analyzing the ways in which off-task talk is initiated, sustained, and resolved in video-mediated interactions, this study seeks to shed light on how learners negotiate meaning and co-construct knowledge in digital learning environments. Understanding the role of off-task interactions in language learning can help educators create more engaging and effective learning experiences for their students. Ultimately, the findings of this dissertation have the potential to enhance language teaching methodologies and improve the design of task-based activities in both face-to-face and online contexts.

2.3. Topic Management in Online L2 Interaction

Topic is widely recognized as an inseparable part of context today and topic management in any ordinary or institutional talk is regarded as a vital component (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017). Co-construction of topic is not an incidental phenomenon, but a highly structured interactional accomplishment (Svennevig, 1999). Various interactional practices that participants use to initiate, maintain, change and terminate a topic are examined and evidenced through sequential organization of their talk by many researchers in varying contexts (Maynard, 1980; Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Jefferson, 1984; West & Garcia, 1988; Svennevig, 1999; Holt & Drew, 2005). However, topic management as an interactional construct is still not a popular research focus among conversation analysts (Çimenli, 2017; Seedhouse, 2004; Jeon, 2012; König, 2013; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017).

Topic is broadly understood as the subject matter of a conversation. While multiple topics may emerge over the course of an interaction, typically only one topic is actively discussed between co-participants at any given moment. For example, in a crowded room, different groups may simultaneously

engage in conversations on different topics, yet within each group, the "one topic at a time" principle generally applies. From a conversation analytic perspective, topics are not externally imposed by researchers but are collaboratively constructed by participants during interaction (Seedhouse, 2004; Riou, 2015). As Sacks (1992) emphasizes, what counts as a topic for participants is distinct from how an outsider might define it. Similarly, König (2013) highlights that topic management is not solely linguistic but also inherently sequential and interactional. For instance, the initiation of a new topic, when ratified by recipients, creates an interactional space that requires all participants to draw on conversational resources, such as linking previous and upcoming actions and topics (König, 2013). Thus, topic management is not arbitrary but achieved collaboratively through participants' contributions during turns-at-talk.

Jeon (2012) similarly describes topic as something co-constructed and shared among participants to sustain conversation over time. To understand topic from this perspective, conversation analytic research focuses less on what talk is about and more on what it accomplishes within the interaction (Sidnell, 2010). Accordingly, studies have examined how participants initiate, maintain, shift, and close topics through the sequential organization of talk (Maynard, 1980; Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Jefferson, 1984; West & Garcia, 1988; Svennevig, 1999; Stokoe, 2000; Holt & Drew, 2005). Schegloff (2007) further connects topic management to turn-taking, sequence organization, and preference structures. Notably, while preferred responses typically signal sequence closure, preferred responses at topic boundaries can instead project topic expansion in subsequent turns (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). To highlight this point, To highlight this point, Schegloff (2007) asserts that "in topic-proffering sequences preferred responses engender expansion and dispreferred responses engender sequence closure" (p. 169).

As it can be seen from Figure 1 below, topic management can be conceptualized through four main notions: namely topic initiation, topic maintenance, topic change, and topic termination. The successful accomplishment of these four interactional actions relies on both shared and participant-specific resources.

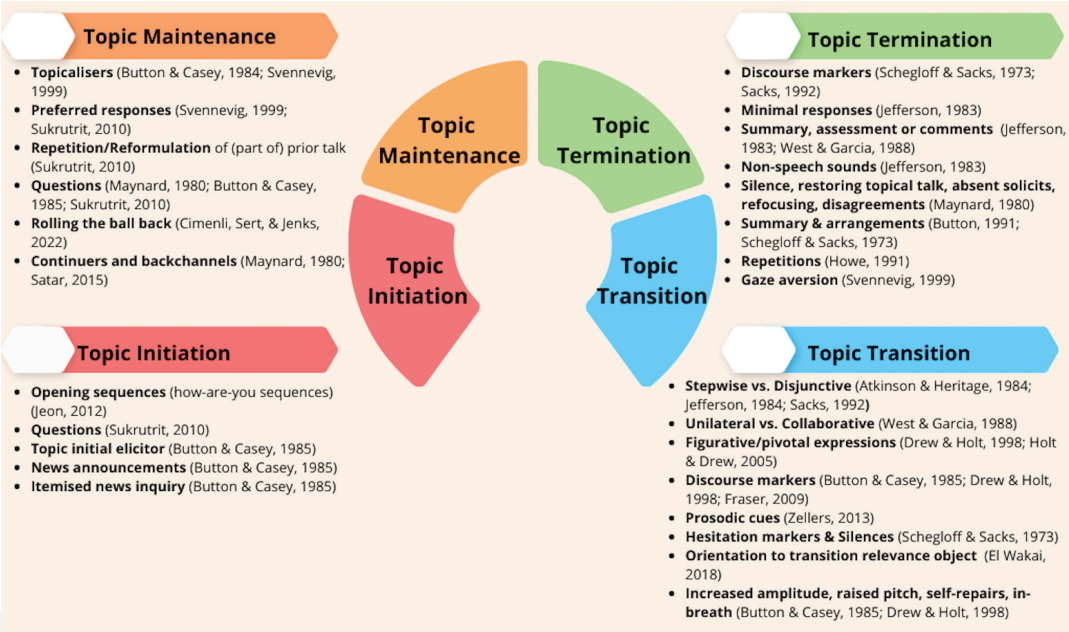


Figure 1. *Topic Management Resources (Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025)*

This dissertation investigates the interactional resources participants employ to (re)establish alignment and affiliation while managing topics in VEs. Despite the growing relevance of VEs in language learning and communication, topic management and affiliation in these contexts remain underexplored within CA research (Çimenli, Sert, & Jenks, 2022; Dolce & van Compernaolle, 2020; Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025). Accordingly, this study aims to uncover the interactional unfolding of alignment and affiliation as participants navigate topic management within VE interactions. Prior to discussing alignment and affiliation, the subsequent section will succinctly outline four primary concepts of topic management (see also Çimenli, 2017; Çimenli, Sert & Jenks, 2022; Supakorn, 2017 for further details).

2.3.1. Topic Initiation

Topic initiation can be defined as the introduction of new mentionable(s) by an interactant during a social encounter. Nevertheless, the initiation of a topic is not a mere coincidence; rather, it is accomplished through the utilization of various resources at specific conversational junctures in close proximity to the interactional context (König, 2013). For example, the interactional

organization of topic initiation, such as classroom interactions where pedagogical expectations are at stake, is influenced by institutional expectations and structures (Stokoe, 2000; van Compernolle, 2011).

In traditional classroom contexts, the teacher typically initiates the majority of sequences through 'topic proffering' (Schegloff, 2007). A topic may be initiated immediately after a greeting (how-are-you) sequence (first topic initiation) or subsequent to a prior topic (subsequent topic initiation) (Jeon, 2012). The "How-are-you" sequence is recognized as a prevalent form of pre-topical discourse, wherein participants inquire about each other's wellbeing (Schegloff, 1968). Familiar interactants may initiate a "first topic" by referencing previous conversations or shared experiences, whereas unfamiliar participants predominantly depend on self-presentational discussions (pre-topical sequences) and "setting talk" as first topics (Svennevig, 1999, p. 116; Sukrutrit, 2010). This study involves dyads that are unacquainted in the beginning and engage in five task-based interactions at five different times with the same partner (see 3.4.2). The very first task they were supposed to do was titled as "getting to know each other" helping them do self-introductions and have some kind of familiarity before they start doing other tasks (see Appendix A for the tasks, see 3.4.1 for information on tasks).

Question-answer adjacency pairs (Sukrutrit, 2010) and informative statements, such as news announcements, serve to initiate a topic (Button & Casey, 1985). Button and Casey (1984, 1985) identify three types of topic initiation that occur in boundaried topic transitions: topic initial elicitor, itemized news inquiry, and news announcement. First serves to introduce a new topic among co-participants and (i) segments conversation, (ii) refrains from projecting a specific topic, thus differing from displays of prior experience or pre-topical inquiries, and (iii) allows for an open-ended range of potential subsequent topics (p. 170). The second item includes a topic that recipients may wish to expand upon. The interactant refers to something that is already accessible to them. The itemized news inquiry is distinct from initial topic elicitors as it encompasses at least one topical item. The third instance differs from the others in that the interactant possesses comprehensive

knowledge about the topic in the news announcement and finds it engaging to elaborate, while also assessing whether the co-participant(s) wish to contribute to the discussion. News announcements function as informative statements that may, but do not necessarily, relate to prior talk. Unlike topic-initial elicitors, the other two types of topic initiation resources introduce a topical item that enables recipients to orient to and actively advance the ensuing topic (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985).

Research has shown that the ability to initiate topics in a second language develops over time as learners become more socially and linguistically integrated into their environment. For instance, König (2013, 2020) examined the interactional practices of German-speaking au pairs using French as an additional language. The findings reveal that topic introductions, which were initially abrupt and lacking in contextual awareness, became increasingly sophisticated over a nine-month period. As the au pairs grew more familiar with their host families, they learned to initiate topics in ways that were sensitive to the interactional context, including time, place, and the identity of their interlocutors. Importantly, König (2020) argues that this progression is closely tied to a broader shift in the au pairs' social identity — from outsiders fulfilling employee roles to more integrated members of the family — which directly shapes how they participate in conversations.

A similar developmental pattern is evident in Kim's (2017) longitudinal study of two adolescent English learners working with an in-home tutor. Initially hesitant to engage in spontaneous conversation, the learners' topic initiation practices evolved gradually. Over the course of nine months, they moved from remaining largely silent to introducing topics abruptly, and eventually to initiating conversations by drawing on shared experiences and personal knowledge of the tutor, such as asking about aspects of the tutor's life. This progression illustrates how topic initiation is not simply a linguistic act but one embedded in social relationships and interactional history. These studies collectively highlight that topic initiation is a socially co-constructed, context-sensitive process, shaped by participants' familiarity, social roles, and shared experiences. They also suggest a developmental trajectory in which learners transition from abrupt or formulaic initiations to more nuanced, recipient-

oriented practices. The following section turns to the concept of **topic maintenance**, outlining the interactional resources that support the sustained development of conversational topics.

2.3.2. Topic Maintenance

El-Wakai (2018) defines topic maintenance as "the interactional process of developing a topic through the cooperation of the co-participants" (p. 34). Schegloff (2007) evidences how topic "can be interwoven with the organization of turn-taking, sequence and preference organization" (as cited in Seedhouse and Supakorn, 2015, p. 396). Chronologically constructed turns build on each other by the actions they achieved, and topics developed and constitute larger sequences (Schegloff, 2007). As König (2013) summarizes a conversation is "structured through sequences of actions and through topics". (p. 229).

Topic maintenance is collaboratively achieved through several distinct methods identified in the literature: (i) topicalizers (Button & Casey, 1984; Svennevig, 1999; Sukrutrit, 2010; Jeon, 2012), (ii) preferred responses (Svennevig, 1999; Sukrutrit, 2010; Jeon, 2012), (iii) repetition of (part of) prior talk (Sukrutrit, 2010; Jeon, 2012), (iv) asking questions (Maynard, 1980; Button & Casey, 1985; Sukrutrit, 2010; Jeon, 2012), (v) rolling the ball back (RBB)—that is, reciprocating a previously asked question to maintain the same topic (Çimenli, 2017; Çimenli, Sert & Jenks, 2022), (vi) continuers and backchannels (Maynard, 1980; Satar, 2015), and (vii) multimodal resources. The selection and combination of these strategies depend heavily on the interactional context and the manner in which the topic was initially introduced.

Topicalizers are supportive utterances used by recipients to endorse a proposed topic for a certain duration (Svennevig, 1999), often conveying interest or surprise, for example, through phrases like "oh really?". Preferred responses function to affirm and sustain the topic by ratifying the topical item introduced (Svennevig, 1999; Sukrutrit, 2010; Jeon, 2012). Although preference is a complex concept (Church, 2004; Stivers & Robinson, 2006), positive answers or explicit acceptance of questions, particularly at topical boundaries, typically serve as preferred responses (Schegloff, 2007).

However, dispreferred responses do not necessarily terminate a topic. Repetition of prior talk demonstrates recipients' engagement and interest, serving as another means of topic maintenance. Sukrutrit's (2010) research on voice-based chat rooms highlights how repetition functions in this regard, though it can also be used to initiate topic shifts, underscoring the importance of sequential context for interpreting these actions.

Asking questions is a classic and effective method of sustaining a topic. Maynard (1980) argues that without questions, a topic is likely to lose traction. Tag questions, clarification requests, and question series all contribute to maintaining topical focus (Sukrutrit, 2010). Satar (2015) further emphasizes that asking follow-up questions, whether to introduce new topics or to elaborate on current ones, signals social presence and engagement (p. 491). Rolling the ball back (RBB) is conceptualized as an interactional device inviting co-participants to continue a current topic by returning a previously posed question, typically occurring at topical boundaries where the conversation might shift but need not (Çimenli, Sert & Jenks, 2022).

Continuers and backchannels—verbal acknowledgments such as "uh-huh" and "mm-hmm," and nonverbal cues like head nods and facial expressions—play an essential role in demonstrating active listening and engagement (Maynard, 1980; Satar, 2015). Bozkaya (2008) and Yamada (2009) stress the importance of encouraging learners to initiate topics, pose follow-up questions, and provide timely backchannels, particularly nonverbal ones, to promote conversational progression. Nonverbal resources such as gaze, posture, gestures, and facial expressions also contribute significantly to topic maintenance by signaling attentiveness and shared participation, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and conversational cohesion.

Empirical studies underscore the role of these resources in maintaining and expanding topics across different contexts. Black (2017) highlights how questions in synchronous voice-based virtual environments support topic maintenance and conversational expansion. Dolce and van Compernolle (2020) demonstrate that student-initiated topic expansions—including elaborations and challenges to instructor assertions—create rich opportunities for L2 learning. El-Wakai (2018) focuses on bodily resources

such as nodding and eye contact in managing topics during student meetings within problem-based learning contexts. Black and Barron (2018) reveal that cohesive topic transition devices, including co-class membership and contrast relations, are used to negotiate topic boundaries and resolve alignment issues in dyadic eTandem peer interactions. Sert's (2019) longitudinal case study of ESL students illustrates how peer interactions during unsupervised discussions enhance interactional practices, including timely responses, collaborative completions, and lexical choices that support topical coherence. Garcia Garcia (2021) finds that discourse markers serve both to build affiliation and maintain conversational continuity in Spanish. Hellermann and Lee (2021) document a gradual shift from rigid interview-style exchanges to more conversational, collaborative interactions over 94 weeks, noting increased use of overlap, turn competition, assessments, and evaluations that facilitate smoother topic transitions. These findings align with Sert's (2019) observations of mutual adaptation and increased collaborative turn construction (Konzett-Firth, 2020).

Effective topic management relies not only on the linguistic resources participants deploy but also on their orientation to co-participants' turns within the sequential organization of discourse. For example, initiating a new topic in a way that may be ratified by others creates an interactional space that requires all participants to link prior and forthcoming actions and topics (König, 2013). Maintaining ongoing topics, managing transitions, and initiating new topics at appropriate moments are critical markers of L2 interactional competence (Gan, Davinson & Hamp Lyons, 2009). Stivers (2007) further highlights that successful topic management hinges on participants' sensitivity to each other's emotional and attitudinal cues. Those who skillfully balance alignment and affiliation can adapt to evolving interactional demands, sustaining both procedural coherence and relational harmony. This adaptability is particularly vital in contexts where both task goals and social relationships are salient.

Finally, Ducasse and Brown (2009) emphasize that "interactional management between turns and topics," alongside the use of active listenership tokens such as backchannels and acknowledgments, is an

important criterion in assessing L2 interactional competence in paired speaking tests (as cited in Galaczi, 2014, p. 554). Topic maintenance, therefore, is recognized as foundational to the development of interactional competence among language learners (Pekarek Doehler, 2018, 2019, 2021; Galaczi, 2008, 2014; Nguyen, 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017; Tuma, 2022). This allows the researcher to establish a connection between L2 interactional competence and topic maintenance, as IC rationalizes both the linguistic resources the L2 speaker employs and the interactional resources they employ during social interactions. The subsequent section will present the interactional environment of topic transitions, detailing when and how these transitions are accomplished.

2.3.3. Topic Transition

Topic transition[3] is described as "the process by which participants in a conversation move from a topic-in-progress to a new topic at a potential point of topic closure, with or without a sequence closing the topic-in-progress" (Jeon, 2012, p. 49). However, it is not easy to decide where, when and how a topic change. Schegloff (1990) notes that tracking topic progression is problematic in terms of determining points at which topic transition occur especially in daily conversations as topic transitions are mostly imperceptible and unmarked, which is called "stepwise topic transition" (Jefferson, 1984; Sacks, 1992; Holt & Drew, 2005). This does not necessarily mean all topical transitions are unmarked; there are also "boundaried/disjunctive topic transition" (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Jefferson, 1984; Sacks, 1992; Holt & Drew, 2005). Similarly, Seedhouse and Harris (2011) propose two methods for examining topical progression: (i) the unmarked achievement of topical flow between topics, and (ii) the signaling and orientation of topical disjunctions at topical boundaries.

Stepwise topic transition denotes an unmarked an opaque transition from one ongoing topic to a new one, whereas boundaried topic

[3] It is important to note that topic transition differs from the Zone of Interactional Transition (ZIT, Markee, 2004). ZIT denotes the communication that takes place at the intersections of various classroom speech exchange systems (Markee, 2004, p. 584). ZIT may lead to interactional difficulties (Markee, 2004) as it necessitates L2 learners to demonstrate their locally constructed understanding (Mondada, 2011).

transition indicates a marked and noticeable transition between an ongoing topic and the new one. Everyday interaction typically exhibit stepwise topic transition in topics, whereas more structured boundaried topic transitions are predominantly observed in institutional settings (König, 2013). However, this does not necessarily mean that boundaried topic transitions are dispreferred or signals low interactional or language proficiency (Morris-Adams, 2016). Discourse markers/topic transition signals can be employed by interactants to make disjunction between topics more apparent. These markers are typically accompanied by pauses and hesitation markers, which are generally employed in turn-initial positions to indicate and signal a potential topic transition (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

Signals may manifest as increased amplitude, elevated pitch, self-repairs, inbreath, and discontinuity markers, including discontinuity markers such as "well, so" and "that's all" (Button & Casey, 1985; Drew & Holt, 1998; Jeon, 2012). Another possible distinction within a topic transition is whether it is processed collaboratively and unilaterally (West & Garcia, 1988). The former pertains to the consensus and collaboration among participants during the process of topic transition. In contrast, the latter denotes a unilateral advancement of a topic into a new one without the assistance or agreement of co-participants. Tůma (2022) highlights the role of transition markers in facilitating topic transition. However, Satar and Çimenli Olcars (2025) shows that it might be hard to accomplish transition without acceptance of the co-participants even it is initiated by a tutor in tutor-tutee interaction where a possible power issue is at stake.

Svennevig (1999) introduces the concept of "topic transition relevance place", similar to "transition relevance place" as defined by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). The term refers to instances where speakers may introduce a new topic that encompasses different mentionables from the current topic (p.188). Therefore, it can be stated that the sequential position of topic transitions is of significant importance. Research demonstrates that topic shifts can occur at sequentially critical points, such as during interactional troubles (e.g., during the exchange of speakership), to prevent potential breakdowns in interactional flow (Maynard, 1980; Goodwin & Goodwin,

1992). Similarly, Jeon (2012) proposes that there are three situations in which a topic transition may take place: (i) the participants in a conversation concur that they have accomplished the goal of the previous topic; (ii) they are attempting to avoid a potential trouble related to the current topic; or (iii) an unforeseen event occurs while an ongoing topic is developing (p. 50).

It is impossible to demonstrate a topic transition by examining a single turn (or the turns of a single interactant) that suggests a potential change in an ongoing topic. Previous and forthcoming turns related to this proposed change must be analyzed to fully comprehend what is guiding this transition and how co-participants respond to it in subsequent turns. Maynard and Zimmerman (1984) identify three methods for responding to a topic shift: (i) acceptance with a minimal response that does not introduce any topical discussion, (ii) acceptance with a preferred response that involves elaboration on the topic, and (iii) decline accompanied by a return question, which is posed by the recipient following a minimal response to the suggested topic shift. Similarly, Riou (2015) asserts that demonstrating topic transition sequences requires an orientation, either positive or negative, towards the transition proffer in subsequent turns. This is evident as participants exhibit their awareness of a newly suggested path of topic maintenance, which may be accepted, ignored, or declined (p. 12). Consequently, the following turn of a topic shift is of paramount significance in determining the development of the newly proposed topic (Barron & Black, 2015).

The body of research concerning topic transition is more comprehensive than other aspects of topic management (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Jefferson, 1993). Several studies examine specific aspects of topic transition, including contrastive structures (Zellers, 2013), stepwise transitions (Jefferson, 1984), the role of figurative/pivotal expressions (as self or other-summaries) in topic transition (Drew & Holt, 1998; Holt & Drew, 2005), the use of discourse markers (Fraser, 2009), and prosodic cues (Zellers, 2013). El-Wakai (2018) emphasizes the significance of the timing, sequential environment, and the structural design of turns in the exploration of the management of topical talk in student university meetings. She also identified a variety of multi-semiotic resources that the participants employed for topic

transition, including gaze, gesture, and body posture, as well as orientations to meeting artifacts such as meeting agendas as transition-relevant objects.

Abe and Roever (2020) found that learners with higher proficiency generated more elaborate and complex closing sequences, indicating enhanced L2 interactional competence. Students with low proficiency levels utilize fewer transition devices, resulting in more challenging transitions, whereas mid-level students indicate topic transitions. In the same vein, Abe (2023) examined how students with varying proficiency levels signal and manage topic transitions in a dyadic text-based English as a second language context. Tůma (2022) studied transitions in speaking activities in an English as a foreign language classroom. Participants identified forthcoming transitions by looking at the task material, eliminating the need for verbal expressions. Participants' collaborative focus on the task material and use of body language help them move onto the next item even during interruptions. In a recent study, Satar and Çimenli Olcars (2025) investigate topic transition in online exchanges between two trainee teachers and a language learner, identifying three critical features for successful transitions: the timing of transition (mutual agreement on timing), signaling the transition (through verbal, nonverbal, and material resources), and the formulation of work thus far, work at hand, and work to come. Similar to El-Wakai (2018) and Tuma's (2022) studies, their analysis revealed that topic transitions are generally marked, with task materials often serving as transition relevant objects for these transitions. The ability to manage transitions effectively can be one of the key aspects of L2 interactional competence, as it allows participants to navigate the demands of both on-task and off-task interactions (Abe, 2023). The smooth transition demonstrates the participants' orientation to the overall structure of the interaction and their ability to collaboratively manage topic boundaries. The following section will present details concerning the termination of a topic either to facilitate a topic transition or terminate a talk.

2.3.4. Topic Termination

As Myers (1998) asserts that "topic closure is usually collaborative; participants can signal their willingness for a topic to come to a close" (p. 93).

Topic termination is typically signaled in prior turns that establish a topic boundary, which participants may recognize and respond to. Topic boundaries are unclear in stepwise topical movements; therefore, these analyzable ends are not accessible to interactants, particularly in naturally occurring daily conversations. Conversely, topic boundaries are primarily delineated collaboratively in institutional interactions. Accordingly, Sukrutrit (2010) categorizes topic termination techniques into two main types: explicit and implicit approaches. The former outlines explicit utterances and resources, whereas the latter characterizes long pauses, minimal responses, and brief utterances as resources employed to terminate an ongoing topic.

Topic termination has been examined by various researchers within the context of CA inquiry, revealing multiple resources to terminate an ongoing topic. These resources may be inadequate for closure independently, or they may facilitate other actions at various stages of the sequential unfolding of discourse. These resources involve the use of phrases such as "so, okay, well" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Sacks, 1992, p. 566) as pre-closing resources. Jefferson (1983) identifies three methods for concluding a current topic: (i) minimal responses, (ii) recipient assessments or comments, and (iii) non-verbal sounds, such as laughter, which can serve to navigate awkward or inappropriate situations (Sert & Jacknick, 2015). Drew and Holt (1998, 2005) assert that figurative or pivotal expressions, which serve as summaries, can be utilized by interactants to indicate a potential termination of a topic prior to a distinct transition to a new topic.

Maynard (1980) presents several techniques for topic closure, including "series of silences, restoring topical talk after a story, detailed topical items and absent solicits; topic shifts and absent solicits; refocusing; absent solicits and refocusing; minimal responses (huh huh, oh really) and disagreements" (p. 265). Button (1991) additionally proposes "holding over prior activities, formulating summaries, projecting future activities, announcement of closure and arrangement reintroduction" (p.252). Anticipating future actions may result in the eventual termination of the topic, leading to the termination of the conversation (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Button, 1987). Howe (1991) also identifies several techniques for concluding an ongoing topic:

"acknowledgement tokens with falling intonation, summaries as assessments, repetitions, laughter, and pauses" (p. 9). Assessment is also identified as a means for topic termination by Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) and recently by Girgin and Brandt (2020).

West and Garcia (1988) categorize topic closure techniques into two types based on their contributions to the closure of the current topic: termination of the topic through contributions and termination of the topic through avoidance of contributions. Svennevig (1999) identifies generalization, challenges in speakership circulation, and gaze aversion as methods for topic termination. Sukrutrit (2010) classifies topic termination techniques into two primary categories: explicit and implicit approaches. The former specifies clear expressions and resources, while the latter describes extended pauses, limited responses, and short utterances as resources used to terminate a current topic. The aforementioned techniques are reported to create a topical boundary between the current discussion and potential subsequent topics.

2.4. (Dis)Alignment and (Dis)Affiliation

Alignment and affiliation are fundamental concepts for analyzing social interaction dynamics, as they emphasize varying degrees of cooperation among participants. Alignment denotes the structural components of cooperation, whereas affiliation corresponds to the emotional or affective aspects of interaction. These concepts are essential in conversation analysis, as they affect knowledge management and the progression of social interactions. Instances of alignment and disalignment, along with affiliation and disaffiliation, significantly influence conversational flow and the roles assumed by participants. Alignment and affiliation has been examined and debated in relation to agreement/disagreement, preference organization, affective disposition, social solidarity, and alignment in literature. Thus, we will briefly touch upon these concepts before we explain alignment and affiliation in detail.

In everyday conversation, when one person offers an evaluation, opinion, or observation about something, it typically invites a follow-up response from another speaker—one that expresses a similar or contrasting stance. This

responding turn is interpreted in relation to the first: if it aligns with the initial view, it is understood as agreement; if it diverges, it signals disagreement. These paired turns form a kind of shared activity in which participants not only engage with the topic but also reveal their interpersonal orientation toward one another. Generally, agreements are treated as socially supportive and are structurally preferred, while disagreements are more sensitive, carrying the risk of distancing and thus being dispreferred in the flow of talk (cf. Pomerantz, 1984; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Sacks, 1987). Pomerantz (1984) explores how agreements, and disagreements are produced and interpreted in conversation, emphasizing the structured turn-taking and sequential organization that reflect social preferences and interactional practices. She highlights that agreement is generally preferred and often performed promptly, while disagreement is dispreferred, typically delayed, softened, or embedded within turns to maintain social harmony. The analysis also covers how actions like criticisms, refusals, and self-deprecations are managed through subtle, indirect, or delayed responses to navigate social norms and sustain cooperative interaction.

Preference refers to situations where multiple response options are available, but these options are not socially equivalent (Sacks, 1974; Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). It plays a central role across various interactional domains such as reference, repair, turn-taking, initiating actions, and the organization of sequences (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2012). In the context of responding actions specifically, preference structures highlight the asymmetry between responses—some being socially more aligned or affiliative than others (Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz & Heritage, 2012). Preferred responses—such as accepting an invitation or agreeing with an assessment—are typically affiliative and work to maintain social solidarity. In contrast, dispreferred responses—like rejections or disagreements—often disrupt this solidarity and are characterized by features that soften their disaffiliative impact (Clayman, 2002; Heritage, 1984). Sacks (1987) explains preference and dispreference, stating that preferred acts are those anticipated or probable in discussion, typically occurring simply, explicitly, positively, and quickly. “Dispreferred actions are more complex, implied, negative, and delayed, often marked with

extra linguistic "stuff", and are unusual or less expected" (p. 8) (see also Stivers & Robinson, 2006).

Within conversation analysis (CA), scholars distinguish between two fundamental dimensions of recipient behavior: "alignment" and "affiliation" (Heritage, 1984; Stivers, 2008). Although often intertwined, these concepts operate at different levels of social interaction, each playing a critical role in maintaining the flow and social organization of conversation (Stivers, 2011). Alignment refers to the ways in which participants support the structural and sequential organization of an ongoing activity. Alignment concerns the procedural cooperation between participants—it involves actions that facilitate the projected activity or sequence proposed by the prior speaker. Aligned responses facilitate the proposed course of action by accepting its presuppositions, goals, and turn design (Heritage, 1984; Stivers, 2008). For instance, listeners often display alignment during storytelling by offering minimal response tokens such as *mm hm*, *yeah*, or nodding, which function to pass up opportunities for a full turn and allow the teller to maintain the floor (Goodwin, 1986; Schegloff, 1982). Aligned behavior thus preserves the asymmetric distribution of speaker and recipient roles, especially in activities requiring extended turns, such as narratives, explanations, or complaints. Aligned responses do not inherently indicate affiliation. Disalignment, conversely, occurs when a participant interrupts the projected sequence, for example by seeking clarification, offering assessments, or shifting topics. Disaligned actions disrupt this asymmetry by either contesting the speaker's hold on the floor or by failing to treat the narrative as ongoing or completed. Although disalignment can disrupt sequential progressivity, it is not necessarily oppositional; it may reflect a need for understanding or negotiation of participation frameworks (Goodwin, 1986).

Misalignment, by contrast, refers to a turn that fails to demonstrate an orientation to the action formation of the preceding turn. Such a response is not merely divergent but is sequentially problematic, as it does not exhibit recipient design features that acknowledge the prior speaker's action. In other words, the speaker shows no interactional evidence of recognizing what kind of social action is being pursued in the first pair part (FPP). As a result,

misaligned responses often lead to interactional trouble, such as the need for repair or reformulation. For instance, in homestay interactions involving second language (L2) speakers, misaligned turns may be interpreted by host family members as a lack of interactional competence (Greer, 2022). The guest's failure to display a fitted uptake can trigger responses that reorient or scaffold the ongoing activity, thereby creating opportunities for language learning in naturally occurring settings (Greer, 2022; Hellermann et al., 2019). The key distinction between misalignment and disalignment lies in how participants display orientation to the sequential organization of talk. Misaligned turns do not exhibit orientation to the FPP as initiating a recognizable sequence type (e.g., question–answer, assessment–agreement), leading to breakdowns in the progressivity of the interaction. While misalignment typically results from trouble in action recognition or limited interactional resources, disalignment reflects a participant's interactionally competent yet divergent positioning within the ongoing activity.

Affiliation can be conceptualized as cooperation "at the level of action and affective stance'' (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 21). Affiliation pertains to the affective and evaluative level of interaction. Affiliative responses endorse or share the emotional stance conveyed by the prior speaker's turn, displaying empathy, solidarity, or shared moral orientation (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Stivers, 2008). To clarify the concept of stance, it can be defined as the affective orientation adopted by both the speaker and the listener toward the events being described, whether this orientation is conveyed explicitly or implicitly (Stivers, 2008). Affiliation, as opposed to alignment, refers to the hearer's demonstration of support for and endorsement of the teller's expressed stance. For example, when a speaker shares a personal grievance, an affiliative response might involve expressions of sympathy, agreement with the speaker's evaluation, or an empathetic narrative of a similar experience. Meanwhile, disaffiliation involves a failure or refusal to endorse the speaker's affective stance. Disaffiliative responses may challenge, mitigate, or withhold agreement with the speaker's evaluative position. A disagreement following an assessment (Pomerantz, 1984) or skepticism toward a complaint exemplifies disaffiliation. Disaffiliation involves the withholding of such support or the expression of divergent emotional or evaluative stances. While

alignment and affiliation are used to describe cooperative responses, disalignment and disaffiliation are used to describe uncooperative ones. Crucially, disalignment does not necessarily imply disaffiliation. Both can subtly alter the dynamics of participation and the negotiation of meaning in a conversation.

A participant might disalign structurally—for example, by interrupting to ask a clarifying question—while still affiliating affectively with the storyteller's stance. Conversely, one might align procedurally but disaffiliate affectively, as when a recipient's quick *yeah* structurally facilitates a telling but sounds minimal, neutral, or unsympathetic. Consequently, none of these adjustments is intrinsically affiliative or disaffiliative; nonetheless, each carries relational significance (Stivers, 2011). Various recipient actions and their corresponding levels of affiliation have been thoroughly examined, particularly in relation to responses to assessments, complaints, and storytelling (e.g. Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 2011; Kupetz, 2014; Stivers, 2008). One way recipients can demonstrate strong affiliation is by asserting an independent evaluative stance in their second assessment, thereby showing greater agency in their response (Stivers et al., 2011). However, this dynamic becomes more nuanced when the initial speaker shares a personal, first-hand experience. In such cases, responses are typically expected to mirror the stance of the teller—offering evaluations that affirm both the emotional tone and interpretive framing of the experience—thus reinforcing alignment and affiliative engagement (Heritage, 2011; Stivers, 2008). Within the context of story completion where the recipient is expected to express their perspective on the reported event, preferred and affiliative uptake entails adopting a stance that aligns with the teller's viewpoint regarding the described event(s), such as being perceived as humorous, tragic, distressing, or thrilling.

Sacks (1974) and Jefferson (1978) both propose that the optimal response to a narrative is to adopt a stance that reflects the teller's conveyed attitude—often indicated in the story's preface—whether it be humorous, melancholic, extraordinary, or peculiar. In a mid-telling position, assessments—commonly recognized as indicators of affiliation or disaffiliation with the speaker (Bavelas et al., 2000; Goodwin, 1986; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987)—may be

perceived by tellers as excessively strong. Lindström and Sorjonen (2013) summarize in their comprehensive chapter that a range of verbal, prosodic, and multimodal resources are employed by speakers to display affiliation or disaffiliation in interaction. Verbal displays of affiliation often involve mirroring aspects of the prior speaker's turn—for instance, maintaining the syntactic structure and evaluative terms while adding lexical intensifiers, as shown in Pomerantz's (1984) analysis of agreement responses. Additional verbal resources include syntactic parallelism, ellipsis, and the use of reported speech (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012). Heritage (2011) points to the role of "response cries"—lexically minimal utterances like "oh" or "oh baby"—as affiliative tools, especially when their semantic content is contextually diminished. However, their affiliative interpretation depends heavily on their sequential position, since such expressions can also function as disaffiliative continuers or response tokens. Jefferson (2002), for instance, shows how even the negative response token *no* can be used to express shared stance and alignment when placed appropriately within a sequence. It is important to note that alignment and affiliation are analytically separable: one may align without affiliating, and vice versa. Main features of alignment and affiliation is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Features of alignment and affiliation (from Steensig, 2019)

Alignment (Structural level of cooperation)	**Affiliation** (Affective level of cooperation)
Facilitate and support activity or sequence	Display empathy
Take proposed interactional roles	Match, support, and endorse stance
Accept presuppositions and terms	Cooperate with action preference
Match formal design preference	

Affiliative responses through assessments and other minimal actions constitute a vital part of interactional organization. In everyday interaction, participants frequently produce assessments to express their personal stance, knowledge, or evaluation regarding a particular event, person, or object (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Heritage, 2002). These assessments differ notably from continuation tokens (e.g., "mhm", "yeah"), which primarily

function to encourage the speaker to maintain their turn. Assessment tokens do not merely signal attention but actively demonstrate a recipient's finely attuned engagement with the ongoing talk (Wong & Waring, 2020, p. 95; McCarthy, 2003, p. 59). Through assessments, recipients position themselves not only as listeners but as evaluative participants, showing alignment, affiliation, or at times disaffiliation. Assessment practices serve multiple interactional purposes. Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) argue that assessments secure a co-participant's alignment, provide an evaluative stance toward prior talk, and match or reinforce the emotional tenor displayed by the speaker (pp. 6, 11). This affiliative work is fundamental to the construction of shared understanding and emotional connection in interaction. Goodwin and Goodwin (1992) point out that assessments display the recipient's sustained interest and empathetic positioning toward the speaker's talk (as cited in Barraja-Rohan, 2011, p. 490).

One important category within assessment practices is what Antaki (2012) describes as "high-grade assessments" (HGA), characterized by terms such as "wonderful", "lovely", and "brilliant". These expressions are often treated as preferred responses, particularly when responding to good news, and they frequently co-occur with the news marker "oh", highlighting their sequential role in the shaping of a positively aligned interaction. HGAs can either stand alone or follow a prior assessment, offering an upgrade that displays heightened enthusiasm, understanding, and emotional involvement (Antaki, 2012, pp. 5–6). Similarly, Heritage (2011) argues that response cries typically facilitate the development of more propositional and substantive forms of understanding and affiliation. While establishing an emotional foundation from which this affiliation can be initiated, the propositional content of subsequent acts of affiliation should be mindful of and consistent with the narrative.

The role of epistemic positioning further complicates the relationship between alignment and affiliation. As Heritage (2002) discusses, speakers often assert epistemic independence to resist appearing uncritically compliant with their interlocutor's views. Such moves can be seen as disaligning with the prior action's design, yet they may achieve stronger affiliation by demonstrating

thoughtful, agentive engagement. Transformative answers (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010), which modify the terms of a question rather than responding directly, illustrate how participants strategically disalign while maintaining a cooperative or affiliative stance. Thus, disalignment at the level of sequence does not automatically entail disaffiliation at the level of stance. Epistemic practices such as asserting independent access to knowledge (Heritage & Raymond, 2012) show how participants manage their rights to make evaluations and assessments without undermining relational solidarity.

Response timing offers a crucial window into how participants manage alignment and affiliation. In adjacency pairs, preferred responses (e.g., agreements, grants) tend to come rapidly, while dispreferred responses (e.g., disagreements, refusals) are commonly delayed (Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984). Delays can indicate hesitation, discomfort, or trouble either with the activity's progression (sequential trouble) or with the affective stance projected by the prior turn. Furthermore, when delay precedes an affiliative or aligned response, it suggests that participants needed to manage complexities in stance-taking or action design. Conversely, immediate production of disaffiliative or disaligned responses can suggest either a lack of concern for face-saving (Brown & Levinson, 1987) or a strategic choice to prioritize epistemic or affective independence over smooth coordination. Thus, the timing of responses is a key interactional resource that participants use to navigate the delicate balance between structural and affective demands in conversation.

2.4.1. Cases of Alignment and Affiliation

In interaction, the opportunity for recipients to align with an ongoing activity is not always clear-cut. Alignment and affiliation are complex processes, and participants' orientations toward an activity may not always be immediately observable. It is important to note that no particular response or response type is inherently affiliative or disaffiliative. Rather, the affiliative or disaffiliative quality of a response emerges from how it is oriented to within the interaction and in relation to the specific action it follows. Thus, affiliative and disaffiliative stances are not fixed properties of particular utterances but are

contextually constructed and interpreted through participants' orientations and the sequential environment in which they occur. In addition, while speakers typically design their turns to make the next relevant action recognizable (Schegloff, 2007), recipients retain the agency to interpret or even reframe the activity in alternative ways. This fundamental flexibility means that alignment is not merely a matter of matching actions, but involves active interpretative work by participants.

Conversation analytic studies have emphasized that while some sequential environments (e.g., adjacency pairs like question–answer or offer–acceptance) create strong expectations for specific types of responses (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973), actual uptake can vary. For instance, Stivers (2008) highlights that even in sequences where affiliative responses are normatively preferred, recipients can display varying degrees of alignment or disalignment without necessarily breaching social norms. As such, both conversationalists and analysts must attend carefully to how a contribution projects possible alignments and how subsequent actions either ratify, resist, or reinterpret that projection (Schegloff, 2007). The sequential environment thus emerges not as a fixed template but as a dynamic negotiation of meaning. Below we will show different cases that (dis)alignment and (dis)affiliation may be built collaboratively under four subsections.

Alignment without Affiliation

Alignment and affiliation co-occurring represent the most interactionally cooperative stance participants can take in conversation. They occur in interactions where participants not only contribute to the structural progression of the activity (alignment) but also express emotional, evaluative, or social support for the speaker's stance or position (affiliation). This dual orientation reflects both the functional and relational dimensions of conversational cooperation. When responses are sequentially appropriate—such as timely answers to questions, acceptances of offers, or elaborations on narratives—and simultaneously convey empathy, endorsement, or shared stance, they exemplify both alignment and affiliation.

Participants display alignment by performing actions that advance the trajectory of the talk, such as answering questions, accepting offers, or continuing narratives. Participants display alignment by performing actions that advance the trajectory of the talk, such as answering questions, accepting offers, or continuing narratives. When these structurally fitting contributions are accompanied by affiliative features—such as shared evaluations, empathic formulations, or prosodically warm delivery—they exhibit a convergence of both structural and emotional cooperation. For example, an agreement to a speaker's assessment delivered with heightened enthusiasm and matching lexical or prosodic emphasis can index both alignment with the activity and affiliation with the speaker's evaluative stance (Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984). This dual achievement is often evidenced not only through verbal content but also through embodied conduct. Nods, smiles, gaze orientation, and synchronized posture shifts can reinforce the speaker's position while maintaining the flow of interaction. Stivers et al. (2011) highlight that aligning responses typically accept the presuppositions and projected direction of prior actions, whereas affiliating responses mirror or amplify the speaker's affective stance. When these dimensions co-occur, the interaction moves forward seamlessly with a high degree of mutual investment. Responses that are both sequentially relevant and affectively supportive strengthen the social fabric of interaction by promoting both mutual understanding and relational solidarity.

Affiliation without Alignment

Alignment without affiliation appears in interactions where participants cooperate to advance the activity while abstaining from endorsing or emotionally supporting the speaker's underlying stance, intention, or affective position. This distinction emphasizes the subtle methods by which individuals may participate in dialogue while not entirely advocating the sentiments or implications present in the conversation. A listener may respond with a token of agreement that corresponds with the structural progression of the conversation, such as "yes" or "I see", thereby acknowledging the speaker's turn and facilitating a smooth interaction. This alignment may be lacking in an affiliative aspect if the listener fails to convey

empathy, endorsement, or shared enthusiasm regarding the speaker's emotional stance or position.

Sorjonen's (2001) research on Finnish response tokens exemplifies the distinction between the word *joo*, which indicates understanding, and *niin*, which conveys a more empathetic or supportive nuance. These distinctions highlight that alignment facilitates orderly and cooperative interactions, yet it does not inherently entail deeper emotional or relational validation. In addition to lexical selections, prosodic characteristics such as tone and pitch may indicate alignment independent of affiliation. Couper-Kuhlen (2012) examines the relationship between intonation variations and the structural alignment of a speaker's statement, noting that such variations may inadequately express warmth, support, or shared sentiment. Non-verbal cues, including gaze and posture, can synchronize through coordinated attention and interactional timing; however, they may also remain neutral or convey contradictory affiliative meanings.

Alignment and Affiliation

Affiliation without alignment occurs in conversational exchanges where participants emotionally or relationally support a speaker's stance or position without fully cooperating in advancing the sequential structure of the interaction. This phenomenon highlights the intricate ways in which individuals can demonstrate empathy, solidarity, or shared sentiment while simultaneously diverging from the immediate interactional goals or framework put forth by the speaker. For example, a listener may express agreement with the emotional essence or social intent of a speaker's statement by offering supportive comments, such as "I completely understand how you feel", or through nonverbal cues such as a nod or a sympathetic gaze. These affiliative responses convey emotional resonance and validate the speaker's affective stance. However, they may lack alignment if they do not adhere to the structural progression of the dialogue, such as failing to provide a relevant next action or response that advances the conversation in its intended direction. This distinction is important in understanding the interplay between emotional and structural dimensions in interactions. While

alignment ensures the smooth and cooperative flow of discourse by responding to the speaker's immediate conversational needs, affiliation adds a deeper layer of relational connection by addressing the speaker's underlying emotional or social concerns. Similarly, responses to questions can simultaneously affirm and affiliate with the speaker's emotional or social stance while challenging the assumptions or presuppositions embedded within the question itself. For instance, responses may highlight the inapplicability of a question (Heinemann, 2009), categorize it as "unaskable" (Stivers, 2011), or contend that it is based on flawed premises (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). Disaligning responses can serve affiliative purposes by expressing solidarity or shared stance at the affective or evaluative level, even if they diverge from the structural trajectory of the preceding turn. For example, repetition-based responses that assert greater epistemic authority than the initiating question may disrupt alignment, yet they can function to enhance affiliation by allowing the respondent to display greater agency or expertise (Heritage & Raymond, 2012; Heritage, 2002; Steensig, 2013). In such cases, speakers may deliberately prioritize affiliative goals over structural alignment—or vice versa—when the two orientations come into tension.

Disalignment and Disaffiliation

Disalignment and disaffiliation are critical concepts in conversation analysis, indicating forms of interactional resistance to cooperative engagement. Alignment and affiliation characterize cooperative mechanisms by which participants contribute both structurally and emotionally to interaction progression. In contrast, disalignment and disaffiliation reveal processes that indicate divergence, resistance, or lack of cooperation. Disalignment arises when participants deviate from the anticipated structural norms of interaction, not adhering to or furthering the expected sequential flow of dialogue. This phenomenon indicates insufficient cooperation with the anticipated conversational activity, frequently suggesting disagreement, interruption, or a recontextualization of the interaction.

Steensig (2019) illustrates instances in which conversationalists intentionally reject or resist the sequential trajectory established by a question or directive.

Participants exhibit disalignment by reframing actions or providing non-responsive utterances. These responses, although structurally dissonant, do not inherently violate social norms; instead, they represent alternative approaches to the interaction. Furthermore, disalignment may manifest in multiple modalities, including embodied actions like gaze aversion, defensive postures, or gestures that contest the established interactional framework. These multimodal signals demonstrate the manifestation of disalignment through both verbal and non-verbal communicative resources, highlighting the dynamic and multi-layered aspects of interaction.

Disaffiliation refers to participants' emotional or relational disengagement from the affective or social position expressed by a speaker. This type of resistance occurs when conversational participants do not endorse, empathize with, or validate the feelings articulated by the speaker. Disaffiliation can be identified through prosodic features, including flat intonation and clipped responses, which indicate a lack of affective commitment. Non-verbal cues, including neutral facial expressions and rigid body posture, can reinforce disaffiliation by indicating emotional detachment, despite verbal alignment. Disalignment and disaffiliation, though conceptually distinct, may co-occur, indicating a compounded resistance to both structural and emotional aspects of interaction. Their interactions illustrate complexities in which participants negotiate engagement, cooperation, and resistance.

2.4.2. Studies on Alignment and Affiliation

Alignment and affiliation have emerged as central concerns across a wide range of research fields, particularly within studies grounded in conversation analysis and interactional sociology. Researchers have extensively explored how participants display, negotiate, and manage alignment and affiliation in various interactional contexts, highlighting the crucial role these processes play in the organization of social interaction. There are special issues dedicated to alignment and affiliation (Discourse Studies, 2008 (Eds. Steensig & Drew); Journal of Pragmatics, 2016 (Eds. Lee & Tanaka)). This growing body of work spans diverse settings, illustrating the pervasiveness and versatility of alignment and affiliation practices. For instance, interview

(Koole, 2004; Romaniuk, 2013; Prior, 2017; Shalash, 2020); presidential press conference (Ekström, 2009), wellbeing of healthcare staff (Atkins et al., 2023), doctor/nurse/midwife/ therapist-patient interaction (Franzen et al. 2023; Jin, 2024; Muntigl, 2023; Muntigl et al., 2012; Muntigl et al., 2013; Petraki & Clark, 2016; Weiste et al., 2020), Interaction of people with Asperger Syndrome (Koskinen & Stevanovic, 2022; Peräkylä et al., 2021), healthcare multiprofessional-client interaction (Kalari, 2024), couple therapy (Janusz & Peräkylä, 2021), calls to health service (Benwell et al., 2024; Morgan & Muskett, 2020), humanitarian aid interaction (McKenzie, 2017), police-citizen interaction (Kidwell, 2021), business consultation calls (Hao, 2024; Huma et al., 2018), parent child interaction (Jin et al., 2022), dance rehearsals (Krug, 2022), and social media (Georgakopoulou-Nunes, 2016; Nurmikari, 2023).

Recipients in interaction utilize a diverse array of resources to express affiliation or disaffiliation. These resources encompass various lexical and grammatical elements, phonetic and prosodic features (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Walker, 2013), nonlexical items such as laughter and inbreaths, and body behavior (Heath & Luff, 2013). The resources utilized for constructing any given response are influenced by at least the following factors: (i) the order in which affiliation should be presented, (ii) the nature of the action required for the response, and (iii) the broader context of the ongoing activity (Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013). Clayman (2002) examines how interactional structures—such as pre-sequences, question-answer formats, and politeness strategies—are systematically organized to promote affiliation and social cohesion. He suggests that a key mechanism here is preference organization: preferred responses like agreement are typically prompt and straightforward, fostering affiliation while dispreferred responses such as disagreement are often delayed, mitigated, and elaborated to preserve face and reduce interactional tension. These practices help participants manage relational dynamics by supporting affiliation and minimizing disruption. Found across both everyday and institutional settings, such patterned responses reflect deeply institutionalized norms that sustain social solidarity.

Etelämäki et al. (2021) examine how conversational participants negotiate cooperation, alignment, and affiliation through interactional practices such as

reporting, listing, and anticipatory completions. Drawing on conversation analytic data from Finnish, Danish, and Estonian interactions, the study demonstrates that anticipatory completions—where one speaker finishes or projects the utterance of another—can function either cooperatively or non-cooperatively, depending on their sequential positioning, intonation, and the relational context. These completions can affirm shared understanding and stance (affiliation) or, alternatively, challenge the speaker's trajectory, asserting independence or resistance. The authors conceptualize cooperation as a multi-layered phenomenon involving not only structural alignment (e.g., turn-taking organization) but also emotional and epistemic affiliation, which participants negotiate dynamically across sequences. By highlighting the subtle interplay of timing, context, and interactional goals, the study underscores the complexity of conversational coordination and the importance of considering resources for alignment and affiliation alongside structural aspects of interaction. Shvidko (2021) explores the role of affiliative interactional resources in classroom settings especially during feedback giving sessions for students' writings. The study emphasizes how teachers use strategies such as expressing empathy, playful behavior, and compliments to foster positive rapport, reduce face-threatening feedback, and create supportive learning environments. These strategies are examined through multimodal microanalysis and conversation analysis, highlighting their effectiveness in maintaining interpersonal solidarity, encouraging student engagement, and promoting relational dynamics over time. The research underscores the importance of embodied behaviors, nonverbal communication, and longitudinal approaches in understanding and enhancing teacher-student interactions for improved pedagogical outcomes.

Rodrigues (2022), using an interactional and interpersonal pragmatics approach, analyzes how speakers in Spanish family and friendship contexts manage face and negotiate affiliation during indirect complaints. The study shows that participants use a range of affiliative resources—such as co-complaints, sympathy, second stories, mirroring, shared slang, and response cries—to build intimacy, express empathy, or selectively affiliate. These practices, including matching assessments, stance shifts, and even silences, are shown to be context-sensitive and relationally calibrated, shaping social

bonds and emotional alignment. The findings highlight the dynamic, nuanced ways affiliation is constructed in everyday complaint sequences.

According to Heritage (2011), responses to reports of personal experience show considerable variation. He identifies a range from ancillary questions, which often avoid offering empathic engagement, to "my side" or parallel assessments that display affiliation without fully entering into the other's experience. More engaged are "subjunctive assessments", where recipients provisionally align with the teller's emotions. Full empathic engagement, however, occurs primarily through "response cries" and "into-the-moment" responses. Heritage also notes that the structure of the reports themselves significantly influences the opportunities they offer for empathic responses. Antaki (2012) examines how conversational responses, particularly those formulated as candidate understandings, play a key role in managing social relationships through displays of affiliation or disaffiliation. Affiliative responses are typically timely, supportive, and aligned with the speaker's intended meaning, facilitating smooth interaction and mutual understanding. In contrast, disaffiliative responses tend to be delayed or marked, often signaling resistance, disagreement, or questioning of epistemic or deontic authority. These responses can surface underlying tensions or assert alternative stances, making them important resources for negotiating social dynamics and authority in interaction.

Thompson et al. (2015) systematically examines the relationship between syntactic formats and interactional functions, including affiliation and disaffiliation, in response to various first actions and activities. They show that in constructing second assessments, speakers draw on a range of semiotic resources—such as gaze direction, intonation, and the presence or absence of laughter—to establish affiliation. Second assessments typically follow an initial evaluation and function as responsive turns that assess the same target as the first, consistent with Pomerantz's (1984) definition. While grammar plays a role, it is just one of several means through which speakers perform this interactional work. Producing second assessments involves navigating multiple interactional concerns, including how agreement and affiliation are displayed, who has the right or knowledge to assess, and how speakers

position themselves in terms of agency and authority (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Mondada, 2009). Kendrick and Drew (2016) investigate how recipients use "response slots" to calibrate their responses to delicate news deliveries, showing how even subtle variations in assessments (e.g., upgrading or downgrading a prior evaluation) can either strengthen or weaken affiliation. They demonstrate that assessments in response to troubles-tellings often undergo careful calibration to avoid minimizing the speaker's experience, an important dimension of empathic engagement.

Prior (2017) explores how empathic responses are displayed through "affiliative and emotive involvement". These responses range from minimal acknowledgments like "mm", "uhuh", and "yeah", characterized by short duration and unmarked prosody, to more expressive lexical outbursts like "Oops!" or "Oh my gosh!" (p. 7). Such "response cries" serve as both affiliative markers and devices for emotional calibration, enabling interactants to negotiate their relative stance positions and involvement dynamically (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 2011; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006, as cited in Prior, 2017). In another seminal book, Stivers (2022) offers a comprehensive analysis of how conversational responses—especially to polar (yes/no) questions—reveal and manage relational dynamics between speakers. Drawing on a large corpus of naturally occurring talk and grounded in conversation analysis, the book introduces a modular model of the response possibility space, structured around three key relational dimensions: alignment, affiliation, and autonomy.

Responses, Stivers argues, do more than convey information—they position speakers with respect to each other's actions, agendas, and affective stances. Through detailed analysis of response types, Stivers shows that interjections (e.g., "Yes", "Mm-hm") are typically highly aligned and affiliative; repetitional answers (e.g., "I did") assert greater speaker autonomy and often claim epistemic primacy; and transformative answers qualify the question's proposition, lowering alignment while preserving some level of cooperation. The book also examines non-answer responses (e.g., "I don't know", silence), which are often treated as disaligning or disaffiliative. Stivers' typology maps how responses function to manage interpersonal relationships, showing that

even routine question–answer sequences are central to the ongoing construction of social bonds.

Emmertsen & Heinemann (2010) explore how conversational tokens like "nåja" and "ja" function as interactional tools to manage social affiliation, realization, and understanding within everyday conversations. They analyze how delayed acknowledgments or realizations serve to repair misunderstandings, re-establish social bonds, and maintain social harmony by framing prior lapses as epistemic rather than relational issues. The study emphasize that these tokens are crafted interactional resources that help participants navigate and coordinate social and cognitive alignment, thereby preventing disaffiliation and fostering solidarity. Waring (2012) analyzes the function of the word "now" in conversation, particularly focusing on its use in negative or corrective turn constructions (NPUs) across various interaction contexts such as educational, familial, and conversational settings. She highlights that "now" delivered with a flat tone often signals disaffiliation, correction, or revision of prior talk, serving as a discourse marker that signals disalignment or re-evaluation. The research emphasizes that NPUs are versatile tools used to manage social dynamics of agreement and disagreement, often occurring after problematic or dispreferred talk to challenge, correct, or reject previous statements, thereby facilitating social and interactional affiliation or disaffiliation.

Weatherall and Keevallik (2016) investigate how participants in both institutional and everyday interactions employ linguistic formulations—such as "I understand" and "I mean"—to strategically manage affiliation, stance, and activity progression. Through the analysis of call-takers' responses to complaints and troubles-tellings, the study illustrates that these expressions often function as performative tools that signal attentiveness, empathy, or shared orientation, even in the absence of genuine understanding. These "pro forma" affiliative moves are shown to play a critical role in managing affiliation, bridging potential misalignments, and facilitating smooth interactional flow. The authors emphasize that such expressions are not merely reflective of internal states but are context-sensitive resources used to maintain rapport, navigate power dynamics, and ensure continuity in

institutional tasks or everyday conversation. Their findings underscore the socially strategic nature of affiliative language in guiding interactional trajectories and relational positioning.

Humor is another context that alignment and affiliation have been studied in. In a recent study, Looney and Kim (2018) examine the role of humor in classroom discourse, particularly within the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) framework, emphasizing how both verbal and embodied actions contribute to managing pedagogical interaction and building social rapport. Through detailed conversation analysis, the study illustrates how participants—teachers and students alike—strategically deploy humor, including laughter, smiling, gestures, and prosodic cues, to navigate uncertainty, mitigate face-threatening acts, and maintain engagement. These multimodal resources not only serve to soften evaluative feedback and promote a cooperative classroom environment but also function as key mechanisms for achieving affiliation. The authors highlight that such embodied displays can index humorous stances and shared understanding, facilitating alignment in interaction and fostering interpersonal rapport. By focusing on micro-level interactions, the study underscores how humor operates as a relational and pedagogical resource that sustains both classroom authority and social cohesion.

In another study, Looney and He (2020) investigate the nuanced role of laughter and smiling as multimodal resources in managing classroom interaction, particularly during moments of delay, disalignment, or interactional trouble. Drawing on conversation analytic methods, the study demonstrates that these embodied behaviors do not function in a strictly affiliative or disaffiliative manner but rather operate along a spectrum, contingent on their sequential positioning and embodied design. Through detailed analyses, the authors show how laughter, gaze, gesture, and smiling collectively serve to negotiate affiliation, mitigate interpersonal tension, and maintain cooperative engagement in instructional settings. These multimodal cues assist participants in balancing pedagogical demands with relational concerns, helping to regulate institutional roles and preserve social harmony amid disruptions or sensitive moments. The study contributes to an expanded

understanding of alignment and affiliation in classroom discourse, highlighting the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of embodied interactional practices.

Sumruk, Durmuş, & Balaman (2025) analyze the role of humor and laughter in online and classroom language teaching, emphasizing their pedagogical, social, and interactional functions. The research highlights how humor can facilitate engagement, reduce anxiety, and strengthen teacher-student interactions in digital environments. The authors assert that when used sequentially and culturally appropriately, humor not only increases participation but also promotes trust and rapport, which are essential for language learning. The research underscores that leveraging humor in digital settings can lead to more cohesive and connected learning communities, ultimately enriching the educational experience and facilitating deeper social and linguistic bonds. In another study, Sumruk and Jenks (forthcoming) explore the multifaceted role of humor in classroom interactions, particularly within online and language learning environments. It highlights how teachers use humor strategically—through playful questions, self-deprecating remarks, and exaggerated claims—to foster student engagement, build rapport, and transform minimal or ungrammatical responses into extended, meaningful exchanges. The research emphasizes the social and pedagogical functions of humor in creating a relaxed, supportive atmosphere that encourages active participation, reduces face-threatening situations, and enhances the overall learning experience. Additionally, the studies examine the linguistic features of Turkish and other languages, demonstrating how humor interacts with language structure and digital communication dynamics to promote effective teaching and social presence.

Although it has not traditionally been a prominent area of research, there is a growing body of studies focusing on alignment and affiliation in second language classrooms. For example, Hoi Yee Lo (2019) investigates how experienced ESL teachers navigate the dual demands of instruction and interpersonal engagement in response to learner-initiated personal stories. Based on ten hours of classroom video data, the study identifies three key practices: (1) sequencing linguistic feedback and affiliative responses

consecutively, based on the nature and placement of learner errors; (2) embedding reformulations within understanding displays to simultaneously correct language use and support learners' affective stances; and (3) using stepwise topical disengagement to guide conversation back to instructional content without dismissing student contributions. These resources demonstrate that pedagogical and interpersonal goals can be effectively integrated, positioning classroom discourse as both a site of learning and authentic social interaction.

Stephenson and Hazel (2024) explore how participants in group-based L2 oral assessments manage disagreement and affiliation through specific interactional resources, notably noun-copula constructions such as "the thing is" or "the problem is". Using conversation analysis, the study demonstrates how these linguistic resources allow speakers to articulate divergent views without direct contradiction, thereby softening the face-threatening potential of disagreement and preserving group cohesion. The authors draw a distinction between disagreement—as a dispreferred turn involving a contrast in stance—and disaffiliation, which reflects a broader withdrawal or distancing that may occur independently of differing opinions. The study reveals that affiliation can be maintained even during disagreement when speakers use mitigated, non-confrontational forms that project space for subsequent collaborative talk. Such resources uphold epistemic delicacy and L2 interactional competence, especially in assessment contexts where social harmony and cooperative dynamics are consequential. The findings underscore the pedagogical relevance of teaching L2 learners how to negotiate disagreement without compromising affiliation in peer interaction.

Wang et al. (2025) investigate the interactional role of side sequences—brief, unplanned deviations from main instructional activities—in fostering affiliation within L2 classroom discourse. Through CA of video-recorded interactions from a university-level English grammar course, the authors demonstrate how teachers and students use a diverse range of resources to manage moments of disalignment, negotiate epistemic stances, and co-construct humorous exchanges. These resources include embodied behaviors such as smiling, laughter, gaze, gestures, and facial expressions, as well as

prosodic cues like smiley voice, intonation shifts, and response cries (e.g., "really", "wow") that align affectively with prior turns. Additionally, verbal resources such as partial repeats, reformulations, and upgraded assessments are used to acknowledge student contributions and foster emotional resonance. Side sequences often emerge around moments of uncertainty, hesitation, or vulnerability—such as when a teacher admits unfamiliarity with content or when student participation falters—and provide opportunities to restore interactional harmony and build relational trust. Rather than treating these sequences as pedagogical digressions, the study frames them as interactional spaces that facilitate affiliation, support engagement, and enhance the affective climate of the classroom. The findings underscore the pedagogical value of attending to these moments as a means of cultivating rapport, managing instructional facework, and encouraging meaningful student participation.

In a recent study, Batlle and Seedhouse (2022) explore how language teachers navigate peer observation feedback, particularly when delivering negative assessments. Their study shows that teachers use various resources—such as referencing shared expertise, using inclusive language (e.g., "we"), and drawing on common teaching experiences—to maintain rapport and reduce the face-threatening nature of critique. These resources often rely on invoking membership in an epistemic community, enabling the observer to position the feedback within a shared professional framework. Importantly, affiliation typically follows the observee's alignment with the assessment, after which the observer may further emphasize solidarity to preserve collegial relationships and support professional development.

Dings (2014) presents a longitudinal conversation-analytic study of a U.S. student studying abroad in Spain, focusing on the development of alignment activities—such as assessments, collaborative completions, and contributions—as core components of L2-IC in a second language. Analyzing six video-recorded interactions across an academic year, Dings traces the learner's progression from minimal alignment tokens to increasingly sophisticated, co-constructed participation. While alignment is the central focus, the study also highlights how affective affiliation—emotional

attunement and interpersonal rapport—supports and intensifies alignment, particularly in collaborative storytelling and the evaluation of personal or ideological content. The findings support a view of IC not as individual linguistic knowledge, but as emergent, co-constructed performance shaped by growing linguistic fluency, social comfort, and interactional agency.

Recent multimodal conversation analytic research has shown that participants use not just verbal but also embodied resources to signal alignments or disalignments, often making the process even more complex (Mondada, 2016c), refining our understanding of alignment and affiliation. For example, gaze, gesture, and body posture can reinforce or undermine verbal displays of alignment, and these multimodal cues may not always be straightforwardly coordinated with the verbal stream. Thus, the interactional work of establishing alignment and affiliation is a dynamically negotiated achievement, requiring analysts to attend closely to sequential, multimodal, and affective dimensions of action. Lindström and Sorjonen (2013) also highlight the multimodal nature of affiliative displays. Building on the broader interest in the interplay of semiotic resources for action formation, they show how embodied actions like head nods function differently from vocal continuers. Phonetic and prosodic cues are crucial in displaying affiliation as well. As Couper-Kuhlen (2012) demonstrates, prosodic matching or upgrading often accompanies verbal affiliation, whereas downgrading tends to co-occur with disaffiliation. These sounds are frequently followed by verbal elaborations that clarify the affiliative position.

Affiliative displays often involve more than verbal expressions. Prior (2017) and Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2006) document how participants also use non-lexical tokens (e.g., whistles, gasps) and even strategic silences to exhibit surprise, empathy, or emotional resonance. For instance, a prolonged gasp following bad news functions not only as an affiliative act but as an empathic embodiment of the speaker's emotional experience (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). Silence, too, can serve affiliative functions, particularly when it occurs in a place where an immediate response would otherwise be expected; the delay can index heightened emotional processing and a deeper engagement with the speaker's news (Heritage, 2011).

In addition, Stivers's (2008) seminal paper investigates the intricate functions of conversational response tokens, specifically head nods and voice continuers, in storytelling encounters. Nods are examined as strategic indicators that assert access to the teller's perspective and promote affiliation, particularly when they occur within the narrative and are accompanied by elaborate descriptions or implicit cues. While vocal continuers only align with the ongoing activity, nods additionally assert access to the teller's perspective on the events, either directly or indirectly (see also Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013). She finds out that the timing and design of assessment responses, finding that immediate, enthusiastic assessments promote affiliation, while delayed or mitigated assessments may signal disaffiliation or a nuanced stance. In one of the few studies including online interaction, Oittinen (2017) examines how alignment and affiliation are managed in technology-mediated meetings, with a focus on the role of physically co-present participants during moments of interactional disruption. The study highlights how embodied actions (e.g., gaze, gestures, posture, facial expressions), verbal cues, and material tools (e.g., screens, shared documents, keyboard) are coordinated to address issues like silence, confusion, or technical trouble. The analysis shows that co-located participants often create parallel interactions to handle these moments, using subtle behaviors—such as whispering, shared glances, or facial expressions—to build local affiliation and manage disalignment. While these practices enhance group cohesion, they can marginalize remote participants, exposing unequal access to interactional cues. Oittinen argues that such meetings comprise multiple layered interactional spaces, shaped by both technological mediation and embodied presence, where alignment and affiliation are fluid, context-sensitive achievements.

In a study by Greer (2022) it is highlighted that alignment and affiliation are central in storytelling interactions within family and intercultural contexts. Participants use verbal and embodied cues—such as gaze, laughter, and tailored responses—to display understanding and maintain narrative flow. Affiliation is managed through adaptive talk that fosters social connection, particularly in diverse settings like homestays. The study emphasizes that successful storytelling is co-constructed through mutual alignment, while

moments of disalignment are negotiated through repair resources to sustain interactional cohesion.

There are studies focusing on disalignment and disaffiliation in varying contexts. For example, Kappa (2016) critically examines the assumption prevalent in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research that interactions among ELF speakers are inherently affiliative and characterized by solidarity and consensus. Drawing on conversation analytic methods applied to informal, naturally occurring ELF interactions at a dinner party, the study reveals that interlocutors often navigate moments of (dis)alignment and (dis)affiliation, particularly when divergences in social norms or discursive frames become salient. Through detailed analysis of laughables and laughter, Kappa shows that while humor can serve affiliative purposes, it may also function disaffiliatively, enforcing social boundaries or exerting subtle social control. The findings underscore that surface-level alignment (e.g., joint laughter) does not necessarily indicate deeper interpersonal affiliation, and consensus may remain unachieved. The study challenges overly harmonious portrayals of ELF communication and emphasizes the need for contextualized, micro-analytic approaches to better understand the relational dynamics of ELF interactions. Jenks (2012) challenges the prevailing view in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research that emphasizes the mutually supportive nature of ELF interactions.

Through an analysis of multi-participant voice-based chat rooms, Jenks demonstrates that ELF interactants do not always seek to build consensus or avoid communication difficulties. Instead, they sometimes highlight misunderstandings or problematic utterances through laughter, ridicule, and other reprehensive practices. These findings underscore the fluid and context-dependent nature of ELF interaction and call for greater attention to the situational and technological factors that shape communicative behavior. Jenks argues that interactional practices such as "doing being reprehensive" are not inherently unique to ELF but emerge from the specific dynamics of the communicative setting.

In another study, Jenks (2018) highlights the multifaceted nature of uncooperative interaction, emphasizing that it can emerge across various

social contexts and relationship types, including both institutional and informal settings. Such interactions may arise from underlying hostility, playful conviviality, or even spontaneously without an apparent cause. Importantly, Jenks argues that uncooperative behavior is not confined to a specific environment or motivation, but rather reflects a complex social phenomenon shaped by context, relational history, and communicative intent. This underscores the need for further exploration of uncooperative discourse as a meaningful and dynamic aspect of human interaction. Chalfoun (2024) explores the use of disaffiliative accounts in conversation, which are explanations that criticize or challenge others to shift responsibility or highlight transgressions. These accounts serve strategic functions beyond maintaining social harmony, often used to criticize, justify requests, or escalate action by disaffiliating from others. The analysis includes examples from natural interactions, emphasizing how such accounts reveal complex relational dynamics, social control, and morality in interaction, especially when responses are resistant or requests are unmet. Overall, disaffiliative accounts are shown to be tools for managing social tensions, justifying actions, and challenging others in conversational settings.

Overall, the management of alignment and affiliation is foundational to the maintenance of interactional order and social relationships. Failures in alignment can disrupt the flow of activities, while failures in affiliation can damage interpersonal solidarity. Both dimensions are thus crucial to participants' demonstration of L2 interactional competence (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). The concepts of alignment and affiliation illuminate how participants organize interaction both procedurally and affectively. Alignment reflects cooperation at the structural level, as speakers facilitate the projected activity by accepting its terms and sequential design. Affiliation, meanwhile, captures affective cooperation, with participants displaying shared stance, empathy, or support toward their interlocutors. While often intertwined, these dimensions can diverge, allowing for complex forms of cooperation and resistance, particularly through practices such as epistemic assertion, delayed responses, or transformative answers. Managing alignment and affiliation thus involves balancing competing interactional demands: the need for sequential progressivity, face work, and the negotiation of epistemic and moral rights.

Conversation analytic research demonstrates that these practices are fundamental to maintaining the coherence of interaction and to constructing and sustaining social relationships. As such, a close examination of how participants align and affiliate—or fail to do so—offers critical insight into the interactional foundations of social life.

2.5. L2 Interactional Competence

Interactional competence (IC) is defined as a "relationship between the participants' employment of linguistic and interactional resources and the context in which they are employed" (Young, 2008, p.101). Kasper and Wagner (2011) state that "language acquisition can be understood as learning to participate in mundane as well as institutional everyday social environments" emphasizing the interactional perspective of learning (p. 117). He and Young (1998) offers five key interactional resources that constitutes second language interactional competence (L2 IC): (i) management of turn taking, (ii) topic management, (iii) rhetorical scripts, (iv) lexical and syntactic structures, and (v) means for signaling boundaries of an interactive practice.

First component reveals the importance of rule-governed locally managed turn-taking system of an interaction. Turn-taking management is acknowledged as a fundamental element of IC (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; He & Young, 1988; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Jenks, 2014; Markee, 2008; Wong & Waring, 2020). Dings (2007) addresses this point as "the interactional resources that a speaker must have include the ability to select self, to select another speaker, and to be selected by another speaker" (p.11). Jenks (2014) asserts that turn-taking presents some challenges for L2 speakers in Computer-Mediated Interactions (CMI) because they must watch the discourse and discern suitable opportunities to contribute without interrupting the flow. Topic management is another element of L2 IC. However, they approach topic management from only topic initiation and topic change notions. By acknowledging that topic initiation and change are also constructs of IC, this study focuses on alignment and affiliation within topic management to document IC of L2 learners.

Maintaining topics, effectively managing transitions between them, and suitably introducing new topics are essential components of locally co-constructed and context-sensitive IC (Gan, Davinson & Hamp Lyons, 2009; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; He & Young, 1988; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon Berger, 2015). The next element of L2 IC is rhetorical scripts have been defined by He and Young (1988) as "sequences of speech acts that help define a particular interactive practice" (p. 6). Airport script, for instance, includes sequence of acts and resources that a passenger may have in an airport. Lexical and syntactic structures, on the other hand, refer to resources needed for a successful interaction as well as revealing the roles adapted for an interaction (e.g. speaker and listener) (Young, 2003). Lastly, signaling boundaries of an interactive practice includes opening and closing moves of an interaction (e.g. thanking somebody as a result of their service) (Young & Miller, 2004).

He and Young (1998) argue that intersubjectivity, regarded essential for co-constructing IC, is vital for participants to attain a mutual understanding of their identities, desires, and emotions. Interaction enables individuals to connect on multiple levels, potentially resulting in intersubjectivity, which underpins the co-construction of L2 IC (Dings, 2007; Ohta, 2001b). Seedhouse (2004) describes this process as the reciprocity of perspectives, in which mutual understanding is attained on an ongoing topic. Interactants cooperatively construct L2 IC by achieving mutual understanding through aligning and especially affiliating with each other. Markee (2008) also puts forward three elements of L2 IC: "(i) language as a formal system (includes components such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar), (ii) semiotic systems, including turn-taking, repair, sequence organization, and (iii) gaze and paralinguistic features" (As cited in Sert, 2013, p. 232).

Embodied actions (gaze, gestures, facial expressions) are crucial in face-to-face IC. In a recent study, Uyar and Balaman (2024) examine the assessment of second language (L2) speaking and L2 IC, emphasizing the importance of multimodal interaction, including verbal and embodied behaviors such as gaze, in structuring and signaling social actions during assessment tasks. They highlight how gaze behaviors, particularly looking at role-cards, play a

systematic role in initiating, managing, and closing interactions, reflecting participants' understanding and engagement. The research advocates for incorporating detailed multimodal analysis into assessment practices and rubrics to better evaluate L2 interactional skills, demonstrating that embodied actions are integral to effective communication and assessment outcomes. In online contexts, however, their visibility is often partial or fully absent given the constraints of camera frames and variable screen engagement, embodied conduct in online settings is reshaped. Research shows that participants in video-mediated interaction rely more heavily on prosodic cues, facial expressions within limited visual fields, and even chat tools to compensate for missing multimodal signals (Licoppe & Morel, 2012; Mondada, 2016c). This alters how participants achieve intersubjectivity and manage affiliation, which can be particularly consequential for L2 learners who may depend more on visual support (Balaman & Sert, 2017b). Jenks (2014) emphasizes the co-constructed essence of L2 IC, asserting that L2 IC is not confined to the minds of individual learners, but are collaboratively constructed by L2 speakers and inherently linked to context (p. 129) (see also Pekarek Doehler, 2019). In addition to the turn-taking challenges outlined by Jenks (2014), recent CA-informed studies emphasize that the technological affordances and constraints in online platforms (e.g., latency, lag, screen layout) influence how participants display and perceive alignment and affiliation (Licoppe, 2017; Mondada, 2021). These affordances can delay turn transition or weaken embodied signals (e.g., gaze, posture) that are typically used to signal recipiency or stance in face-to-face interactions (Heath & Luff, 2000; Jenks & Brandt, 2013).

Recent conceptualization of L2 IC is proposed as the systematic procedures or "members' methods" employed by L2 speakers to achieve intersubjectivity in social interaction, with an ongoing development over time. The process encompasses the utilization of diverse verbal and non-verbal resources, incorporating linguistic components such as grammar and lexis, alongside established, context-specific methods for managing turn-taking, repair, and other interactional practices (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015; Skogmyr Marian & Balaman, 2018). Pekarek Doehler (2019) scrutinizes the development, characteristics, and pedagogical implications of second

language L2 IC, highlighting its social, contextual, and procedural dimensions. She emphasizes that L2 IC is acquired through genuine social interactions, including storytelling, repair, and turn-taking, and that it develops with proficiency, transitioning from fundamental to more sophisticated, context-sensitive conduct. The findings emphasize the necessity of including learners in authentic, meaningful social practices, both within and beyond the classroom, to promote the diversification of interactional resources and improve their ability to navigate turn-taking, disagreement, and other social actions. She identifies preference organization (articulating disagreements, assessments, etc.) as a domain to monitor for the progression of L2 IC. Affiliation is intricately linked to preference organization, while not being explicitly referenced in the work. This highlights the need for inclusion of affiliation as one of the components of L2 IC. She acknowledges that incorporating these findings into teaching methods and curricula continues to be a significant issue for enhancing L2 IC.

Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2011) examines how L2 speakers of French, across two proficiency levels and age groups, navigate disagreements, offering insights into the management of preference organization among L2 speakers. The authors observed that advanced students utilized a broader range of linguistic resources to present their dispreferred actions, aligning more closely with the patterns documented for L1 speakers compared to their less advanced counterparts. The advanced students utilized fewer turn-initial polarity markers and more initial agreements, employing “yes-but” prefaces, compared to their less advanced counterparts. Additionally, post-disagreement accounts were observed exclusively within the advanced group.

Konzett-Firth (2020) analyzes an in-class language learning environment, focusing on the development of teacher questions and student responses over time to enhance linguistic and L2 IC. The study indicates a transition from structured, text-oriented interactions to more open-ended, meaning-focused dialogues that promote student agency and resourcefulness. Longitudinal data demonstrate the adaptation of pedagogical resources to foster learners' growing autonomy, highlighting the significance of interactional

contingencies and linguistic resources in this developmental process. The research highlights the interaction between teacher practices, student engagement, and the improvement of interactional skills in second language acquisition. The findings may have significant consequences for online L2 interaction as well, implying that educators should promote open-ended, meaning-focused dialogues in virtual settings. The shift from text-based communication to dynamic and interactive exchanges can be enhanced by employing virtual exchanges and digital tools that enable both synchronous and asynchronous interactions. Teachers can enhance student engagement and autonomy by focusing on L2 IC and utilizing the flexibility of online environments, reflecting effective practices seen in traditional classroom settings. One of the most significant findings of Skogmyr Marian (2022) is that L2 French speakers at both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels are capable of making 'successful' complaints, which are complaints that elicit sympathetic or affiliative responses from participants. The greater success observed in the complaints of upper-intermediate and advanced speakers is evident in their tendency to more frequently initiate overt exchanges of affiliation, sympathy, and joint complaining compared to elementary speakers.

Havadar and Balaman (2023) examine the significance of story-prefaces and preliminaries in initiating and maintaining storytelling and role-play interactions within a second language (L2) assessment context. These preliminary actions function as turn design features that assist learners in seamlessly engaging in task-based conversations, thereby demonstrating their L2 IC. The study highlights the use of these practices convey social acts, promote mutual understanding, and demonstrate oral proficiency, with consequences for assessment and instruction in L2 classrooms. They suggest that paired role play tasks can serve as an avenue for fostering co-participation and facilitating L2 learners' creation of context-sensitive and recipient-designed contributions.

Konzett-Firth (2023) examines the development of second language L2 IC, emphasizing learners' practices for initiating and managing turns in both classroom and peer interactions over time. The findings illustrates the

evolution from tentative, scripted replies to more independent, context-aware, and adaptive turn-taking practices, underscoring the significance of interactional resources including discourse markers, fixed expressions, and multimodal cues. The study highlights the importance of sequential context, social actions, and pedagogical practices in developing L2 IC, demonstrating how learners progressively acquire the ability to manage turn-taking, express agreement or disagreement, and convey their intentions in different interactional contexts. The data analysis indicates a developmental trajectory characterized by initial significant restrictions, both linguistically and sequentially, in the participant's practices for constructing turn beginnings. The progress from minimal to non-minimal and from vocal to verbal turn starts, aligns with research indicating that verbal and non-minimal expressions of affiliation or disaffiliation can show greater L2 IC (cf. Burch & Kley, 2020), as they demonstrate increased engagement (Mundwiler & Kreuz, 2018). This is closely related to the learner's developing ability to oversee ongoing interactions for possible transition points, topic maintenance, and action formation, enabling them to perform more appropriately timed and suitable actions in their responses, as well as demonstrating greater independence from linguistic and sequential signals.

The development of L2 IC is understood as the growing diversification and adaptation of methods to fit particular interactional contexts and audiences, indicating a progressive improvement in the learner's ability to perform suitable and effective social actions over time (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011, 2015). Development of L2 IC has been successfully tracked in language classrooms (Hall 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Berger 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger 2011, 2015; Watanabe 2017; Young and Miller 2004). However, as has been previously stated, IC is not a term that is only valid and available for institutional contexts, instead it is a necessary construct of any daily or institutional conversations. Development of IC within a wide range of contexts has been tracked by micro-genetic (Fasel Lauzon & Pekarek Doehler, 2013; Markee, 2008; Pekarek Doehler, 2010, 2013; Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010) or longitudinal CA studies (Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017a; Hellermann, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon Berger,

2011; Sert & Balaman, 2018) through focusing on expanded responses (Lee, Park & Sohn, 2011), engagement in storytelling (Ishida, 2011), task disengagements (Hellermann, 2008), disagreements in the classroom (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon Berger, 2011), repair sequences (Balaman, 2016; Hellermann, 2011; Kitade, 2000; Kley et al., 2021), change in participation over time (Cekaite, 2007; Dings, 2007; Nguyen, 2011), active listenership and recipient responses (Dings, 2014; Ishida, 2011; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Sert, 2019; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2019), alignment (Ohta, 2001a), turn construction (Cekaite, 2007; Nguyen, 2019; Taguchi, 2014; Watanabe, 2016; Young & Miller, 2004), epistemic progression (Balaman, 2016; Heritage, 2012a, 2012b; Sert & Balaman, 2015), topical organization (Ducasse & Brown, 2009; Hellermann & Lee, 2021; Hall, 1995; Kim, 2017; Kley, 2019; König, 2020; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Melander & Sahlström, 2009; Nguyen, 2011), request and refusals (Al-Gahtani and Roever 2012, 2014, 2018), and intersubjectivity (Gonzales Lloret, 2011). These studies demonstrate a longitudinal diversification of interactional methods for achieving the examined actions or activities, a complexity in methods (such as longer turn-constructional units, TCUs), and an enhanced ability over time to adapt these methods to the interactional context and the recipients.

Findings of the present study suggest that alignment and affiliation resources used by participants in managing topics and tasks in a virtual task-based environment creates opportunities for language learning as they facilitate further contributions on a current topic without making a claim on development of L2 IC. Jacoby and Ochs (1995) define IC as "the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality", suggesting that alignment and affiliation might be important components in the L2 IC (p. 171). This conversation analytic study is significant, then, in terms of uncovering contextual features of online dyadic peer interaction and reveals how alignment and affiliation enhances topic maintenance and how they can be accepted as components of L2 IC.

IC findings (Balaman, 2016; Hall, 2007; Hellermann, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011; Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Markee, 2008; Pekarek Doehler, 2010; Pekarek

Doehler & Fasel Lauson, 2015; Seedhouse, 2004; Waring, 2008) obtained through conversation analytic studies have increasingly informed L2 teaching, testing and assessment (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; He & Young, 1998; Hırçın Çoban, 2017; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2011; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Young, 2000), and also teacher education programs (Bozbıyık, 2017; Sert, 2010, 2015; Walsh, 2011, 2013).

The current dissertation also informs L2 learning and teaching. When L2 speakers learn various alignment and affiliation resources and employ those in their turns-at-talk in a sequentially appropriate way, they can collaboratively construct intersubjectivity on an ongoing topic with their co-participants. The important thing here is that L2 learners keep producing topical items upon use of alignment and affiliation resources which allow both of them to share their ideas, feelings and perspectives on an ongoing topic. Conversation analytic research shows that peer interaction especially in an online platform, where face issues are less threatening, has a very different sequential organization from classroom interaction which is generally controlled by teacher and is characterized as teacher's initiation; student(s) responses; teacher provides feedback/evaluation (IRF/E) (Markee, 2000).

IC is not an individual construct; rather, it is collectively achieved by participants who contribute to the continuing topic at different levels and responsibilities, thus co-constructing IC within a local context (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011). While IC has been extensively explored in many institutional or daily-life contexts, online settings necessitate context-sensitive adaptations of IC. Context here is not merely institutional or informal but technologically mediated, redefining participant roles, turn-taking norms, and the availability of semiotic resources (Satar, 2013; Gibson, 2020). Thus, a pressing need arises to reconceptualize L2 IC to account for these dynamic, multimodal, and often asynchronous interactional landscapes. In the expanding digital ecosystem, understanding the principles of topic management, alignment, and affiliation is essential.

Although topic management, which includes initiation, maintenance, transition, and termination, has been thoroughly examined in various contexts (Drew & Holt, 1998; Fraser, 2009; Holt & Drew, 2005; Jeon,

2012; König, 2013; Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Melander & Sahlström, 2009; Riou, 2015; Zellers, 2013), there is a paucity of research that links L2 IC with topic maintenance (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). The current study focuses on interactional aspects of topic management, alignment and affiliation and accepts those constructs as an indication of L2 IC through examining their co-construction across turns-at-talk and what action they perform. Analyses of the data have sequentially documented how an alignment and affiliation resources used in a virtual task-based interaction to co-construct topics. Based on these findings it is suggested that the ability to build and deepen alignment and affiliation as well as maintaining a topic are part of L2 IC. In this sense, the study fills the gap highlighted by Skogmyr and Balaman (2018) by investigating an online interactional environment documenting L2 IC. Although no claims about learning have been made, this study has provided illuminating evidence of L2 learners' deployment of interactional resources for alignment and affiliation to manage a topic.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The third chapter of the dissertation outlines the methodological framework of the study, introducing the research context and participants. Adhering to the methodology employed (Conversation Analysis), this chapter will detail the research phases, data collection procedures, validity and reliability considerations, and ethical concerns. The chapter is organized into nine sections, starting with an introduction about the content of the chapter. The research context is then depicted based on the Digitask4IC project as well as the Student Module on the DigiTask web application, with a brief introduction to Teacher Module. This is followed by a description of the participants and phases of the larger research (task design, task implementation, reflection (for task designers; pre-service teachers). The data collection procedures are then discussed, including the steps followed and tools used. The remaining sections provide procedural information on handling data from a CA perspective, including an overview of CA as the research methodology, steps for transcribing data, and the process of preparing data for analysis. A section on building collection explains how the collection of cases was built and what it includes. Then validity and reliability in CA research and in this research specifically is discussed. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations followed throughout the study.

3.2. Research Context and Research Questions

This study examines multinational virtual interactions between BA in English Language Teaching students from a university in Türkiye and Master of Arts

in Department of English Studies students from a university in Tunisia, utilizing the DigiTask web tool, developed within the scope of the Erasmus+ Digitask4IC project. The current study investigates resources for alignment and affiliation used within topic management in Virtual Exchange using collaboratively developed global citizenship and intercultural communication tasks. Participants collaborated in pairs to accomplish nine tasks over five meetings, devised by an international cohort of pre-service teachers in the Digitask4IC project. Zoom served as the platform for video-mediated meeting space, and DigiTask (www.digitask.app) functioned as the portal for task access and completion. Participants' interactions were recorded and stored. The recordings were uploaded to Google Drive, providing researchers with substantial video data to analyze these virtual interactions. Using Conversation Analysis as the methodology, the study analyses micro-level interaction data to ascertain how individuals establish and sustain alignment and affiliation throughout both on-task and off-task encounters.

How is alignment and affiliation built and maintained in on-task and off-task topical talk in dyadic video-mediated virtual exchange interactions? This pivotal question directs the examination of participants' conversational practices as well as tools to (re)establish alignment and affiliation within topic management. This study analyses on-task and off-task conversations to identify unique and common resources for alignment and affiliation across different conversational contexts guided by the following inquiry:

1. What are the resources for alignment and affiliation used within on-task topic management in video-mediated virtual exchange?

2. What are the resources for alignment and affiliation used within off-task topic management in video-mediated virtual exchange?

Thus, the study seeks to how participants utilize conversational tools and resources to promote social connection during on-task discussions. The research used line-by-line microanalysis to investigate student collaboration and the formation of social connections. The study also investigates resources for alignment and affiliation used specifically during *off-task* encounters, which shift the focus from task performance to socializing. There is an

emphasis placed on the significance of social discourse and the preservation of affiliation outside institutional contexts through the examination of off-task talk during virtual exchanges. It also emphasizes that these resources might be part of participants L2 ICs. The study examines both on-task and off-task interaction to enhance understanding of affiliation in topic management, L2 IC and L2 language learning environments, affecting task-based online interaction and the design and facilitation of virtual exchanges.

3.2.1. DIGITASK4IC Project

The Erasmus+ program funded the Digitask4IC initiative (Project 2020-1-TR01-KA226-HE-098066), which ran from June 1, 2021, to November 30, 2022. This collaborative effort involved 22 researchers from four universities across three countries. The project's primary goals were threefold: (i) developing a digital task catalogue, (ii) creating a digital task generator, and (iii) providing training on these outputs. More information can be found on the project's website (https://digitask4ic.com).

A key focus of the project was the compilation of open educational resources (OER) repositories, with the aim of basing the task generator exclusively on OERs. UNESCO defines OERs as educational materials in various formats that are either in the public domain or openly licensed, allowing free access, use, adaptation, and redistribution. The project's centerpiece was the development of DigiTask, a web application designed to enable educators to create and share tasks. There are two distinct group of participants in DigiTask4IC project. First group, pre-service teachers (PSTs) from the participating universities had a role of task-designers, using the Teacher Module to design tasks. First group, pre-service teachers (PSTs) from the participating universities had a role of task-designers, using the Teacher Module to design tasks. Second group of participants from different universities and countries had a role of task engagers and completed these tasks through the Student Module. This dissertation primarily examines task engagers' experiences with DigiTask during task-based virtual exchange meetings they held in pairs. The following section will provide a detailed overview of the design interface available in the Teacher and Student Module of the DigiTask application.

3.2.2. Modules on DigiTask Web App

The DigiTask web application is designed to support teachers in creating and assigning tasks efficiently and sustainably. It consists of two main modules: one for teachers and one for students. The Teacher Module allows educators to create their own tasks or modify and use tasks created by other educators, known as task designers. Additionally, DigiTask offers pre-uploaded Open Educational Resources (OERs) such as text, audio, video, and images, which teachers can incorporate into their tasks or supplement with materials from other OER repositories. Student Module on the other hand is developed for language learners who are supposed to accomplish online tasks assigned to them.

Teacher Module on DigiTask App

The main interface of DigiTask Teacher Module offers several key functions, including task creation, sequence creation, material management, and group management. These features are accessible through buttons and drop-down menus, allowing teachers to organize their tasks, sequences, materials, and student groups efficiently (see Figure 2).

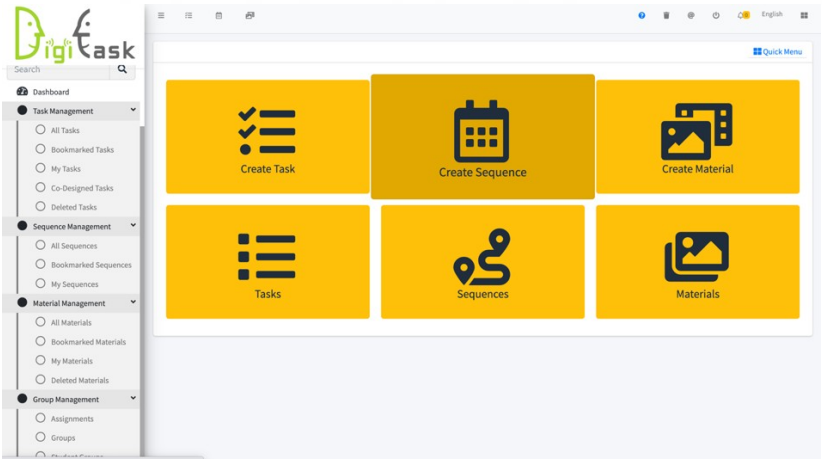


Figure 2. *Homepage for Teacher Module*

The task creation process involves several steps:

1. **Material Creation:** Teachers can upload new materials or use existing ones on the platform. They must name the material, specify its type (audio,

image, text, mixed, or video), and provide links to OER repositories or use shortcuts for embedded content (e.g., YouTube videos or Soundcloud audios) (see Figure 3).

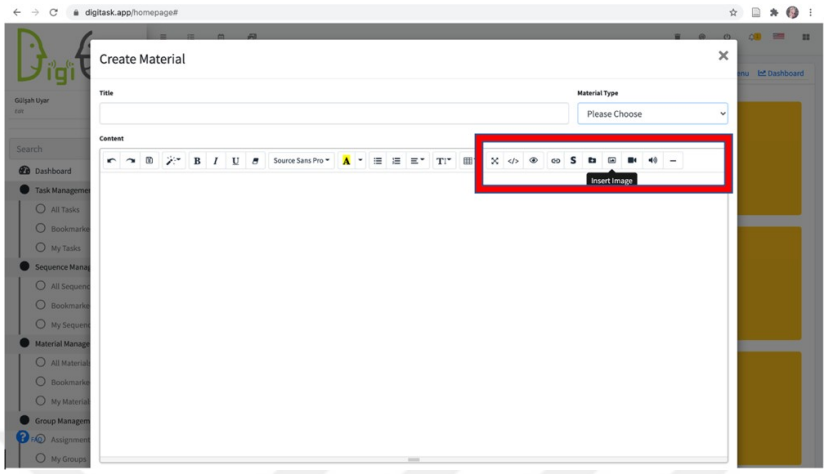


Figure 3. *Material Creation on DigiTask*

2. Task Creation: On the "create task" page, teachers go through four subsections: "basic information", "task design", "completion options", and "preview and confirm" (see Figure 4).

2.1. **Basic Information:** Teachers provide essential details about the task, including title, co-designers (if any), task type, information gap, target skills, objectives, target languages, proficiency level, and keywords. These are selectable from drop-down menus, offering options such as brainstorming, collaborative writing, and various proficiency levels according to the CEFR framework.

2.2. **Task Design**: This section includes task instructions and student assignments. Teachers can embed materials, determine the number of students per group, assign specific materials to individual students, and set instructions for each student. They can also control when materials appear during task engagement and decide which students can submit answers.

2.3. **Completion Options**: Teachers can set various completion criteria, such as exact value answers, word limits, time restrictions, or combinations of these options. After setting the completion criteria, teachers can preview and save their tasks, generate QR codes, and publish them for student use.

2.4. **Preview and Confirm**: The final step allows teachers to review their task, generate QR codes, and publish the task.

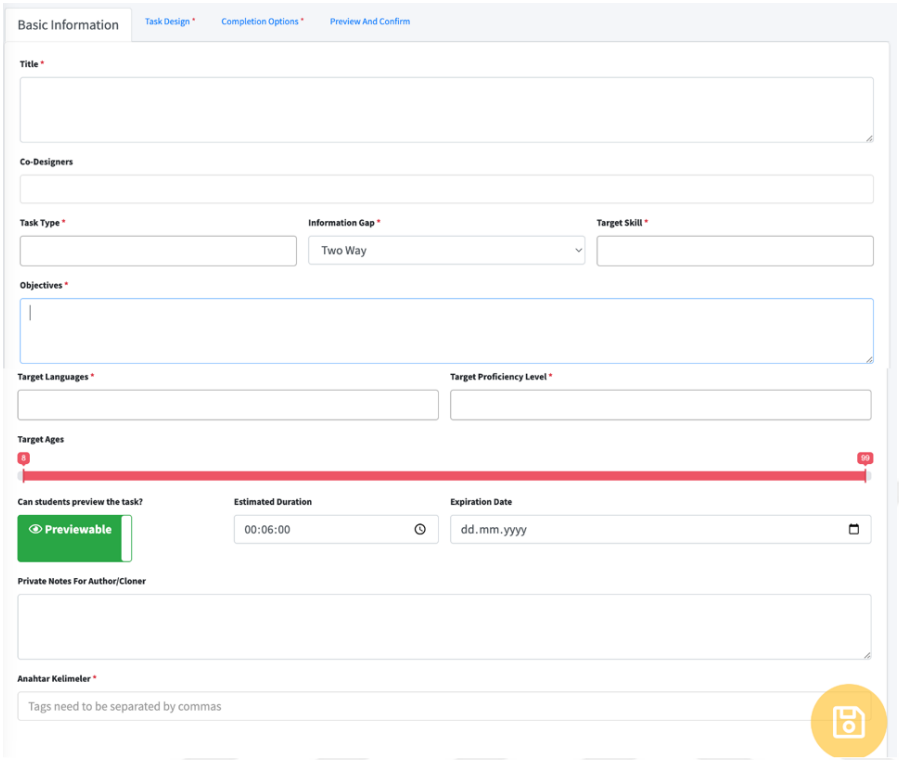


Figure 4. *Task Creation on DigiTask*

This detailed overview of the DigiTask web application and its functionalities highlights how it facilitates task creation, management, and assignment, offering a robust platform for educators to design and implement effective learning tasks.

Student Module on DigiTask App

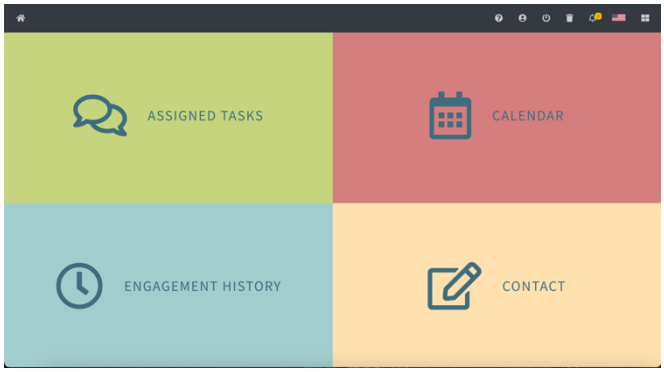


Figure 5. *Homepage for Student Module*

Student module is deliberately designed a lot simpler than the teacher module so that it enables participants to navigate and organize/reorganize their screen easily. The homepage for Student Module is an easy-to-understand screen divided into four color-coded sections: "Assigned tasks", "Calendar", "Engagement History", and "Contact" (see Figure 5).

1. Assigned Tasks

When learners click on anywhere in the "Assigned Tasks" area (see Figure 6), they can easily access all the tasks assigned to them. Title of the task, teacher who assigns the task, target language(s), planned starting and end date/time of the tasks are displayed here. All the tasks are ordered according to planned start time. Learners can click on "Materials view" to see a comprehensive overview of a task including the task title, task designer, task instructions, target topics, objectives of the task, target languages, skills, ages, proficiency level, and estimated duration, group range, and completion options. This pop-up page can be printed as well (see Appendix A).

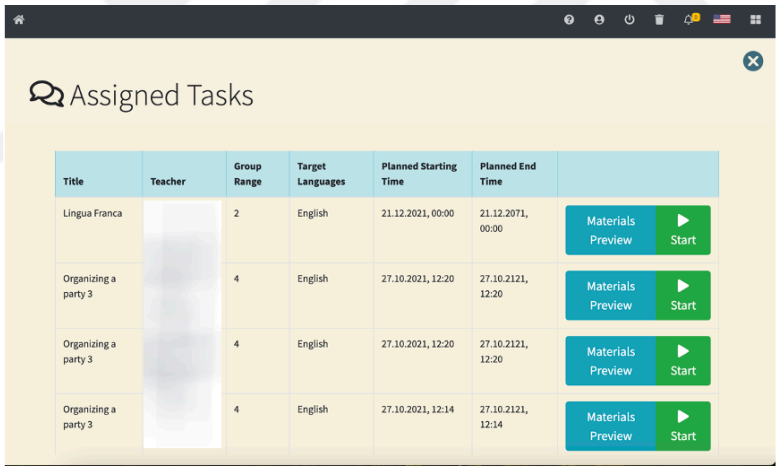


Figure 6. *A sample view of "Assigned Tasks" button*

1.1. Task Screen

When a learner clicks on "Start" button the task screen appears. If the task is a pair or group work, the learner needs to wait for the other participant(s) to start the task as well to initiate the task. Once the task is initiated, task title and task designer's name, complete options, information on task (step by step instructions) are displayed on the left-hand-side of the screen (see Figure 7).

Completion options can include i) an exact value answers (e.g. matching activities), ii) word limits (minimum and maximum values), iii) time restrictions (specific task duration, e.g. 30 mins.), iv) a combination of these (e.g. time relevant and word limit), or iv) none (complete on click). There are no tasks in the study though having "none" as a completion option. Task engagers can navigate "Info" button to list the instructions, have detailed explanations of them and adjust the screen size. In the center, textual, visual, audio, or video materials are displayed. Task engagers can make this screen full screen (see Figure 7). As mentioned earlier in "Teacher Module" each learner might have different materials scheduled to appear at specific times. For example, a visual material might be used for pre-task phase of a task while a video material is used for the task phase. So, they appear on the assigned task engager's page only at the assigned time.

Learners are supposed to wait for the next material(s) to be shown even if they finish early.

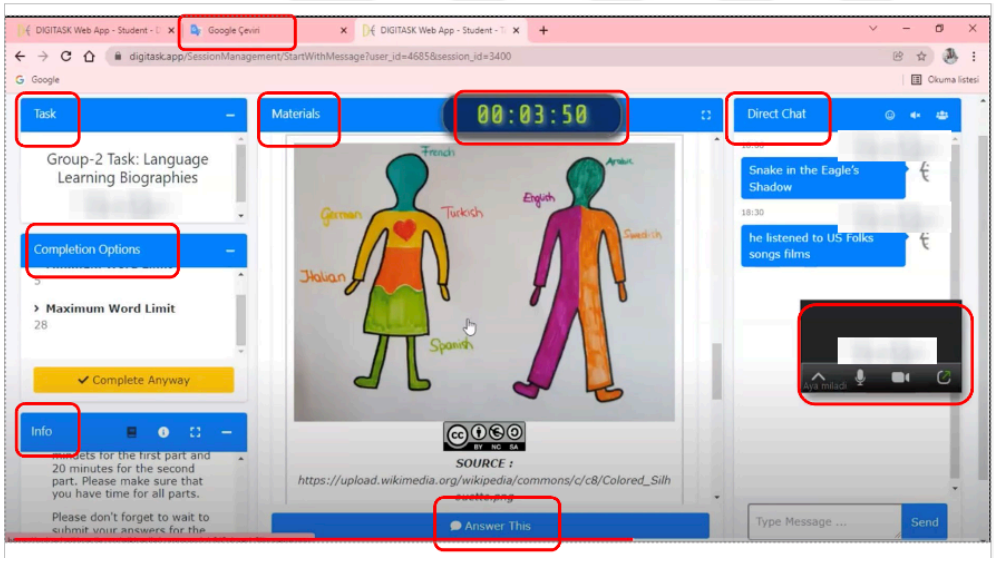


Figure 7. *A sample task screen on DigiTask*

At the bottom of the center, "Answer this" button is available. Task engagers can make various adjustments to their answers such as changing the font, making selected text bold, italic or underlined, highlighting, bulleting and numbering, inserting tables, visual, embedding links etc. (See Figure 8).

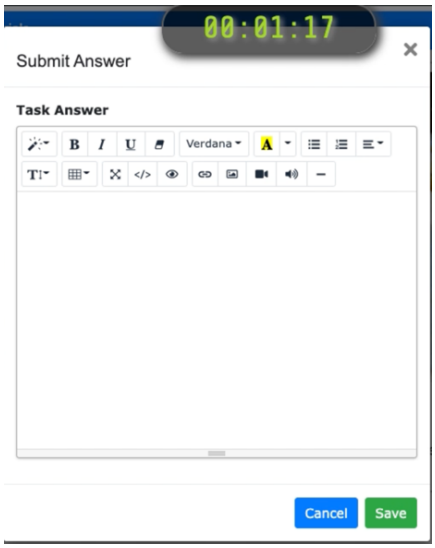


Figure 8. *Answer This Button on DigiTask*

Task engagers can provide individual answers or a shared answer with their pair, as prescribed by task designers. Information about this can be seen from "completion options" section. Shared answer is usually preferred for the writing tasks by the designers. More information on tasks will be given below (see 3.4.1). When a shared answer is expected, both participants can make changes to the same "answer this" screen.

At the top center, a countdown is available throughout the task accomplishment (see Figure 7). When the time assigned for the task is over, a pop-up screen appears saying "Time is up!". If the task engagers do not save their answers before this, they return to main screen and need to start the task all over again. On the right-hand-side "Direct Chat" button is available as soon as the task starts, allowing task engagers to chat through this feature. A minimized Zoom screen on the right-hand-side of the screen can be seen as the task engagers have video-mediated conversation on Zoom while they are accomplishing the tasks. They can navigate through the Zoom and DigiTask screens, sometimes using them in separate windows in full screen, side-by-side on the same window, by minimizing Zoom (as in Figure 7), or vice versa. Open tabs on the top of a task engager's screen can also be seen, as task engagers are free to use the internet and their devices. They are also free to navigate through different pages and screens.

2. Engagement History

One of the main four tabs on the main screen is "Engagement History", designed to enable task engagers track the tasks they have already finished, tasks assigned to a future time and date (shown as "planned") or tasks they have started but not completed yet (shown as "not completed"). Task title, Assignment date and time right below that, other task engagers for a specific task (as participants), status of the task (not completed, completed, planned), and results of tasks (answers provided) (or task details based on the completion status of a task) can be seen from this page (see Figure 9). Task engagers can print out, copy or export their answers to Word or Excel from "Results" button.

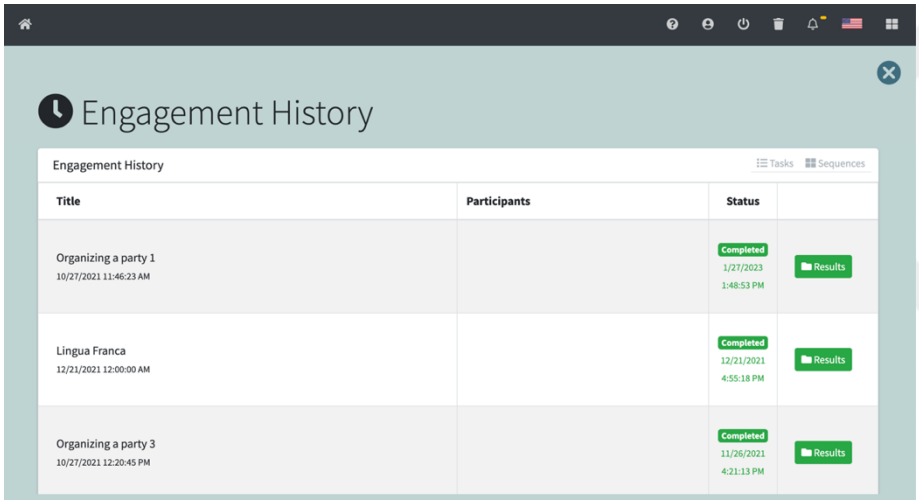


Figure 9. *A sample Engagement History page*

3. Calendar

Calendar tab is on the top left of the main screen for task engagers. They can see the assigned tasks (previously accomplished and assigned for a future time). They can view the calendar by month, week or current day. When they click on the task, they are automatically taken to the task page to start it (see Figure 10).

4. Contact

"Contact" button is the last of four on the home page. Task engagers can communicate with software designer and project manager from here. They

need to enter a subject and add their opinions or complaints, then send their message. Throughout the project, a technical and content assistant is assigned for participants from each partnering university, and their contact details are shared with them so they can reach support as soon as possible.

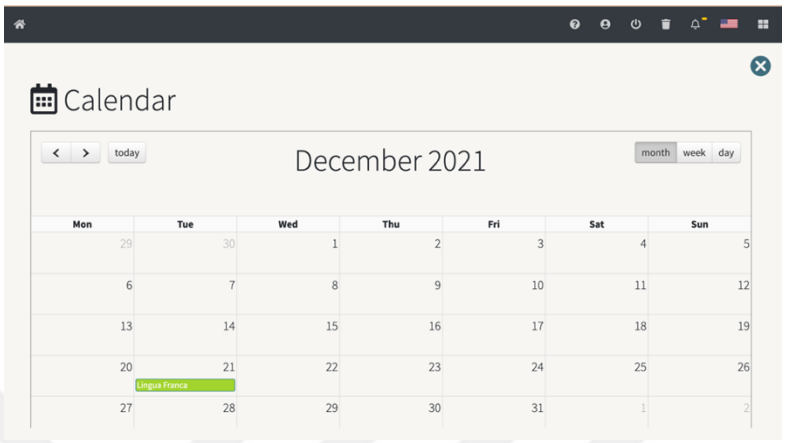


Figure 10. *A sample Calendar Page*

3.3. Participants

The study investigates the data coming from video-mediated, task-based, dyadic interactions of a transnational virtual exchange between BA in English Language Teaching students from a university in Türkiye and Master of Arts in English Studies students from a university in Tunisia, utilizing the DigiTask web tool developed through the Erasmus+ DigiTask4IC project (see 3.2.1 and 3.4.1 for more information on the project). Data of the study comes from the second phase of the three-phase project, namely task design phase, task implementation phase, and reflection phase. Participants of the first and last phases are the same and they are an international group of pre-service teachers (PSTs) from Türkiye, Austria, and Spain (see 3.4.1. for more information about phases). PSTs from Türkiye are from a different university and level of study than the ones attending the second phase of the project from which data of this study comes from (see 3.4.1 for more information on participants of first and second phase, task designers). Task designers were not included in this study as participants since the study do not focus on the task design process (first phase) or the designers' reflections on task

implementation (third phase). Although we acknowledge that the tasks designed by the task designers have a huge effect on task implementation, task design process and reflection on task implementation are beyond the scope of this study. The study focuses on investigating video-mediated online interactions of transnational pairs during task implementation phase (second phase).

Considering participants' self-declared proficiency levels and context of classes they enrolled, 30 first year bachelor's degree students from a university in Türkiye and 30 first year Master of Arts students from Tunisia were recruited for the task implementation phase of the project. Participants from Türkiye were freshman students from Department of English Language Teaching enrolled in the "Language and Society" course while participants from Tunisia were master's degree students in Department of English Studies enrolled in "Communication Skills" course. Common aims of the courses are discussed as developing learners' online L2 interactional competence, intercultural communicative competence, and understanding global citizenship. Thus, tasks are designed accordingly having a general theme of intercultural communication and global citizenship (see 3.4.1 for more information on task design phase).

A total number of 30 dyads are created to work together, one from each country. For practical reasons, the dyads were divided into three clusters throughout the project. Participants in the same cluster completed the same tasks designed by the same group while clusters have different tasks from each other. More details on the process of dividing participants into clusters may be found in section 3.4. Each dyad had five meetings during each of which they completed two tasks, making up to nine tasks in total. Given the extensive volume of data collected during the second phase, which comprises over 100 hours of video-mediated interactions, it was necessary to narrow the focus of this study. To make the dataset more manageable and conducive to in-depth analysis, we selected data from a single cluster for our actual dataset. The justification for this data selection process is detailed in section 3.5.1 of this study. This approach allows for a more thorough examination of the chosen subset while maintaining the integrity and relevance of the research.

In the following subsection, the research procedures of the larger study are presented to have a better understanding of the study.

3.4. Research Procedures

As mentioned previously, the present study is part of a larger project called Digitask4IC. The project aimed to achieve three key objectives: the development of a digital task catalogue, the creation of a digital task generator, and the provision of training on these outputs. It consists of two distinct group of participants. The initial group consisted of pre-service teachers (PSTs) from the collaborating universities who were responsible for designing tasks using the Teacher Module. The second cohort of participants, coming from two different countries, assumed the role of task engagers and successfully accomplished these tasks using the Student Module. This study focuses on the experiences of task engagers during task virtual exchange meetings using DigiTask. However, to provide a better understanding of the research processes that impact the study's emphasis, an overview of the entire project flow is presented below under three headings: i) Task Design Phase, ii) Task Implementation Phase, iii) Reflection Phase.

3.4.1. Task Design Phase

The first phase of the project is task design. Participants of this phase are transnational pre-service teachers (PSTs) from Türkiye, Austria and Spain who are responsible for creating a virtual exchange task and engaging in group discussions through video-mediated interaction. To prepare the PSTs for their role, they received comprehensive training through video lectures delivered by teacher educators. They were introduced to the Digitask4IC project, Open Educational Resources (OERs), interactional competence, computer-assisted language learning, technology-mediated task-based language teaching, telecollaboration and virtual exchange, and task design principles through video lectures by the teacher educators.

After attending the theoretical lectures, participants engaged in practical exercises on the Digitask web program with the supervision of their teacher educators. In addition to designing solo and collaborative tasks and engaging

in collaborative reflective conversations, they were also expected to produce individual reflections. The training sought to provide pre-service teachers with practical experience and comprehensive knowledge of task-based language instruction across various levels and languages.

To ensure clarity and consistency in the collaborative task design process, task designers (PSTs) were provided with a document titled "Collaborative Task-Design Guidelines", outlining the primary requirements they needed to meet for collaborative task design. The requirements included:

- watching the training video created by the project team for the DigiTask web application,
- registering for the Teacher Module on DigiTask,
- watching videos created by lecturers of task-engagers to have an understanding about their prospective students and their needs,
- familiarizing themselves with the task design criteria,
- watching the instructional video on how to use SoM, registering on the platform, and conducting a test recording,
- communicating with group members via email to schedule video-mediated task-design meetings.

The guidelines also provided task designers with a calendar for the data collection procedure, detailed instructions for each meeting, task design criteria, topic distribution across transnational PSTs groups, and Microsoft Teams meeting links for each group. According to the task design criteria, Task designers were expected to design an online task on topics assigned to their group, incorporating two or three real-life related learning objectives. Additionally, the task should facilitate social interaction, integrate various language and interaction skills, be suitable for online settings, engage two or three students, and last approximately 30 minutes.

The topics of tasks were developed through collaborative efforts amongst project researchers and with feedback from the lecturers of task-engagers. The titles of the topics were as follows: Getting to know each other, Language Learning Biographies, Language in the Public Space, Language Varieties, Lingua Franca, Communication styles, Multilingualism, Inclusive Language,

and Final Reflection Task (see Table 2 for topic distribution to groups). While the topics of "Getting to know each other", "Lingua Franca", and "Final Reflection Task" were allocated to individual PST groups, the remaining topics were distributed to three separate PST groups.

Table 2. Topic distribution to transnational task-designer groups

Topics	Assigned Task - Designer Groups
1. Getting to know each other	Group 1
2. Language Learning Biographies (e.g., linguistic repertoires, personal language learning history, episodes, portraits)	Group 2 Group 10 Group 16
3. Language in the Public Space (e.g., linguistic landscapes, linguistic choices)	Group 4 Group 12 Group 18
4. Language Varieties (e.g., registers, dialects, styles)	Group 6 Group 14 Group 20
5. Lingua Franca (e.g., vernacular languages, globalization, languages with special roles)	Group 8
6. Communication styles (e.g., individual differences, importance in business communication, how to improve)	Group 3 Group 11 Group 17
7. Multilingualism (e.g., bilingualism, codeswitching, translanguaging)	Group 5 Group 13 Group 19
8. Inclusive Language (e.g., gender sensitive language, sensitive to minority groups)	Group 7 Group 15 Group 21
9. Final Reflection Task	Group 9

Task designers held five meetings to design their tasks (one task per group). The initial meeting focused on introductions, warming up for the task design process, and discussing instructions and criteria. In the second meeting, they brainstormed task ideas, selected Open Educational Resources (OER) materials, and bookmarked these resources on DigiTask. The third meeting involved finalizing the first draft of their task designs on DigiTask and sharing the links with teacher educators. After reviewing the tasks, educators from Türkiye, Austria, and Spain provided feedback in various formats. Turkish PSTs received feedback in a whole-class video meeting, while

Austrian and Spanish PSTs received written feedback. The fourth meeting was dedicated to discussing the feedback and revising the task designs accordingly. In the fifth and final meeting, task designers finalized their task designs. In the fifth and final meeting, task designers finalized their task designs. Once the tasks were completed on DigiTask, the teachers of the task-engager groups assigned these tasks to the task-engagers on behalf of the task designers who originally designed them (see Table 3).

Table 3. Task Design Phase (Phase 1/3)

Participants	Meeting Number	Task Design Procedure
Task Designers (PSTs)	**Meeting 1**	• Warm-up activity to build rapport • Discussing the instructions and criteria for the task design provided to the team • Investigating possibilities for cooperative task development.
	Meeting 2	• Brainstorming and discussion on design ideas • Deciding on Open Educational Resources (OERs) materials • Bookmarking OERs on DIGITASK. • Designating a team member to create the task in the DIGITASK app.
	Meeting 3	• Completing the design of the task on DIGITASK and distribute the task link to the researchers.
Teacher Educator		• Each lecturer of PSTs provides feedback to their respective students.
Task Designers (PSTs)	**Meeting 4**	• Revising/modifying the design • Analyzing the differences and similarities between various pieces of feedback provided by different lecturers.
	Meeting 5	• Completing the design and publishing the task on the DigiTask app.

Information on Task Designers

The Digitask4IC project brings together transnational pre-service teachers (PSTs) from three partner universities across Türkiye, Austria, and Spain. This diverse cohort comprises 72 PSTs specializing in various languages, including

English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese. The distribution of PSTs is as follows: 42 PSTs from the Turkish university (bachelor's degree students), 17 PSTs from the Austrian university (master's degree students), and 13 PSTs from the Spanish university (master's degree students). These PSTs were divided into 21 sub-groups, with 9 groups consisting of four participants and the remaining 12 groups consisting of three participants each to collaboratively design a task. Each group was carefully composed to ensure collaboration and diversity, with two PSTs from the Turkish university and one from either the Austrian and/or Spanish university, depending on the group size.

The Turkish PSTs, third-year students, are enrolled in an online course called "Analysis of Discourse and Language Teaching". This course aims to develop their skills in using digital resources to enhance L2 learners' interactional competencies (IC) through material development and pedagogical activities. Austrian participants are enrolled in a seminar course focused on teaching various languages, particularly Italian and Spanish. Their curriculum requires them to create assignments for future pupils in different languages. Additionally, these PSTs must complete a collaborative activity to improve their English language skills. The Spanish cohort consists of pre-service teachers pursuing an M.Sc. degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. They are enrolled in a teaching methodology course designed to equip them with the necessary skills for their future careers. The course emphasizes task-based language teaching, and participants are required to create two task sequences for teaching Chinese to Spanish speakers.

This heterogeneous group of PSTs brings together individuals with diverse backgrounds, proficiencies in various foreign languages, and aspirations to teach at different levels in their future careers. Thus, the project provides a unique opportunity for these pre-service teachers to collaborate across borders, share experiences, and develop innovative approaches to language teaching. By engaging in this international collaboration, the PSTs are exposed to diverse perspectives and teaching methodologies. This experience not only enhances their own language skills but also prepares them for the increasingly globalized field of language education.

Information on Tasks

As stated before, overarching theme of the designed tasks are intercultural communication and global citizenship and aim to develop L2 interactional competence of the participants. The tasks incorporate elements of information exchange, opinion sharing, and collaborative problem-solving, which are crucial for developing interactional skills (Hellermann et al., 2019). A total number of nine tasks are designed for each cluster making up to 21 in total. Nine tasks completed by the participants of this study can be found in Appendix A. A comprehensive overview of these tasks is provided below.

Proficiency Levels: Most tasks target intermediate levels (B1-B2), with some extending to A2 or C1.

Task Types: The tasks range from information gap activities to collaborative writing and discussions. Some tasks follow a linear structure (e.g., watch video, discuss, write). Others use more complex structures with multiple steps or activities. This variety is beneficial, as Seedhouse and Almutairi (2009) note that different task types elicit different interactional patterns.

Language Focus: Tasks vary in their emphasis on different language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). Some tasks integrate all four skills, while others focus on specific skills. Some tasks, like the "Inclusive Language" task, have a specific linguistic focus, while others, like the "Getting to Know Each Other" task, are more open-ended. Balancing these approaches can cater to different learning needs and styles.

Use of Multimodal Resources: Several tasks incorporate videos or images, which aligns with Balaman and Sert's (2017) findings on the importance of multimodal resources in online task-based language teaching. Given the video-mediated nature of the interactions, particular attention was paid to capturing multimodal and screen-based actions. Mondada's (2018) conventions were used to represent embodied behaviors.

Cultural and Linguistic Awareness: Tasks like "My Emotional Language" and "Lingua Franca" promote intercultural awareness, which is crucial in virtual exchange contexts (O'Dowd, 2018).

Conversation Analysis (CA) provides valuable insights into the development of L2 interactional competence in language learning, particularly in virtual exchange and online interaction contexts. The tasks described encompass a wide range of activities that align with the properties of L2 interactional competence as informed by CA research and foster the development of crucial communicative skills. These activities create authentic communication scenarios, mirroring real-world interactions and promoting genuine exchanges, which is emphasized as essential for language acquisition (Hellermann, 2008; Markee, 2000).

Information gap activities and collaborative problem-solving tasks encourage learners to negotiate meaning, a process that Kasper (2006) identifies as central to developing L2 interactional competence. The incorporation of cultural awareness elements in tasks such as "Multilingualism" and "Lingua Franca" aligns with Kramsch and Whiteside's (2008) emphasis on the importance of symbolic competence in intercultural communication. These activities help learners navigate the complex interplay of language and culture, enhancing their ability to interact effectively across diverse contexts.

Online interaction presents unique challenges and opportunities for language learners. As Tudini (2010) notes, virtual exchanges can provide a platform for spontaneous language use and the development of digital literacy skills. The tasks described, which incorporate elements of peer feedback, self-reflection, and diverse interaction patterns, align with Gonzalez-Lloret and Ortega's (2014) findings on the benefits of technology-mediated task-based language teaching. These activities not only promote language acquisition but also foster the development of 21st-century skills crucial for effective online communication. Additionally, the incorporation of visual interpretation and creative summarization tasks aligns with Mondada's (2016c) research on multimodality in interaction, highlighting the importance of non-verbal and paralinguistic features in meaning-making processes.

These tasks were well-suited for dyadic virtual exchange, offering several key benefits. Firstly, they promote active participation by ensuring both participants have ample speaking time, which is crucial for developing L2 interactional competence, as noted by Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger

(2015). Secondly, the tasks effectively utilize technology, aligning with Hampel's (2006) emphasis on task design that exploits the affordances of online mediums. Additionally, many of these tasks foster intercultural communication by encouraging learners to share personal experiences and cultural perspectives, which O'Dowd and O'Rourke (2019) identify as a key benefit of virtual exchange. Lastly, by requiring learners to navigate various online platforms, these tasks contribute to the development of digital literacy skills, which Helm (2015) recognizes as an important outcome of virtual exchange.

Overall, the tasks demonstrate a strong understanding of language learning principles and provide learners with meaningful, interactive experiences. The variety of topics and approaches ensures that different learning styles and interests are catered to, while the focus on real-world communication makes the tasks relevant and engaging for learners. They demonstrate a comprehensive approach to developing L2 interactional competence, grounded in CA principles and adapted for online learning environments. By integrating authentic scenarios, cultural awareness, and diverse interaction patterns, these activities provide learners with the tools to navigate complex communicative situations in both virtual and face-to-face contexts, which promotes "socially distributed cognition" (Markee, 2008). However, there are notable weaknesses: (i) some tasks may be overly ambitious for the time available, leading to rushed interactions; (ii) reliance on various online tools, such as Whiteboard apps, can create technical challenges that detract from the focus on language learning, (iii) some tasks could benefit from more defined outputs, final products or assessment criteria, (iv) a few tasks might be in need of additional follow-up activities to reinforce learning, and more consistent integration of all four language skills across all tasks. Although learner autonomy is vital throughout the task Although learner autonomy is vital throughout the task accomplishment process, many tasks are highly structured, potentially limiting opportunities for learner-directed exploration. In conclusion, we acknowledge that while these tasks demonstrate many strengths for dyadic virtual exchange, there is room for refinement to fully exploit the potential of this learning context for developing L2 interactional competence.

3.4.2. Task Implementation Phase

The second phase of the project is "Task Implementation" phase, the focus of the present study. Participants of this phase are engaged in a transnational video-mediated dyadic virtual exchange (between BA in English Language Teaching students from a university in Türkiye and Master of Arts in English Studies students from a university in Tunisia (see 3.3. for more information on participants)). Participants of this phase are referred to as task-engagers, and they were assigned tasks, designed in the previous phase, to complete using the DigiTask web application. To familiarize the participants with the Digitask4IC project, and DigiTask app a face-to-face lecture was given detailing the project outline and application features. Introductory videos for video recording and uploading were recorded and shared with participants via an informatory email. After obtaining written informed consent, participants were strategically paired into dyads, each comprising one student from each country.

To facilitate communication, contact information was shared between paired students, allowing them to arrange their online meetings independently. Once the dyads were established, they were organized into three clusters: Cluster 1: Dyads 1-10, Cluster 2: Dyads 11-20, Cluster 3: Dyads 21-30. Such an organization was crucial for the structured and manageable reflection for PSTs as they are supposed to watch the recordings of task-engagers completing the task they have designed. If all 30 dyads were in the same group doing the same tasks that would be a lot of work for the task designers. That is, now they only need to watch 10 dyads who are in the cluster doing the task they designed.

Following this, participants were asked to make a trial recording before actually starting to do the tasks. Each dyad was scheduled to have five meetings, during which they would complete a total of nine tasks using the Student Module of DigiTask app. Each dyad was scheduled to have five meetings, during which they would complete a total of nine tasks using the Student Module These tasks were previously created by Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs) in the first phase of the study. Task assignment to the clusters was done by the researchers of the project and followed a careful planning:

Table 4. Task Implementation Phase (Phase 2/3)

Meeting	Tasks	Cluster 1 Tasks	Cluster 2 Tasks	Cluster 3 Tasks
Meeting 1	• Getting to know each other		Group 1	
Meeting 2	• Language Learning Biographies • Communication Styles	Groups 2 and 3	Groups 10 and 11	Groups 16 and 17
Meeting 3	• Language in Public Space • Multilingualism	Groups 4 and 5	Groups 12 and 13	Groups 18 and 19
Meeting 4	• Language Varieties • Inclusive Language	Groups 6 and 7	Groups 14 and 15	Groups 20 and 21
Meeting 5	• Lingua Franca • Final Reflection Task		Groups 8 and 9	

As seen in Table 4 all clusters performed a task on the topic of "getting to know each other", which was created by PST Group 1 during the first meeting. In the second meeting, the tasks focused on "Language Learning Biographies" and "Communication Styles", with Cluster 1 working on tasks from PST Groups 2 and 3, Cluster 2 on tasks from PST Groups 10 and 11, and Cluster 3 on tasks from PST Groups 16 and 17. The third meeting addressed the topics of "Language in Public Space" and "Multilingualism", with Cluster 1 handling tasks from PST Groups 4 and 5, Cluster 2 from PST Groups 12 and 13, and Cluster 3 from PST Groups 18 and 19. The fourth meeting focused on "Language Varieties" and "Inclusive Language", with tasks distributed to Cluster 1 from PST Groups 6 and 7, Cluster 2 from PST Groups 14 and 15, and Cluster 3 from PST Groups 20 and 21. Finally, in the last meeting, all clusters performed tasks on "Lingua Franca" created by PST Group 8 and a "Final Reflection Task" created by PST Group 9. This structured approach ensured that each task was performed by at least 10 dyads, providing a robust and diverse dataset for analysis. The design allowed for a comprehensive

exploration of various language-related topics while maintaining consistency across the participant groups.

3.4.3. Reflection Phase (For Task Designers)

The third phase of project, Reflection Phase, began once task designers (PSTs) received videos showing their own tasks being implemented by 10 pairs of task-engagers (one cluster of three) rather than the whole dataset (around 100 hours for the task implementation phase). There are pedagogical, practical, and research-oriented benefits of organizing the task-engagers into clusters:

- Manageable Reflection Process (Phase 3): By limiting each task designer group (PSTs) to observing and reflecting on 10 dyads doing their own task, the project ensures a manageable workload for them. This structure allows for in-depth analysis without overwhelming the observers, as they can focus on around 5 hours of task implementation data (phase 2).
- Diverse Task Creation: The cluster system enables the creation of a wider variety of tasks. With multiple clusters, different groups of PSTs can design distinct tasks, contributing to a richer and more diverse task catalogue for the platform.
- Broader Participation: This structure allows for the inclusion of PSTs in transnational task design groups, providing valuable experience to a larger number of future language teachers.
- Cross-Cultural Interaction: The cluster system facilitates focused cross-cultural interactions between participants from different countries, enhancing the intercultural aspect of the project.
- Manageable Data Collection and Analysis: From a research perspective, having clearly defined clusters makes data collection, organization, and analysis more structured and manageable.
- Controlled Comparative Analysis: Having distinct clusters allows for comparison between different tasks and implementation practices, potentially yielding insights into effective task design and execution.

This phase consisted of two main activities: Individual Analysis during which PSTs independently reviewed recordings of task-engagers' video-mediated interactions. And Group Reflection during which PSTs participated in data-driven group discussions via video-mediated platforms. The group reflection component was structured around two meetings (see Table 5).

Table 5. Reflection Phase (Phase 3/3)

Meeting	Participants	Reflection Procedure
Meeting 1	• Task Designers (PSTs)	• Watching the recordings of task engagers and sharing observations via guiding questions
Meeting 2	• Task Designers (PSTs)	• Collaborative assessment of the partnership via guiding questions

Initial Reflection Session: Participants shared and discussed their observations, guided by prompts such as:

- How was the task executed?
- Did learners' behavior align with expectations?
- Were there any unexpected learner actions?
- How successful was the task overall?

Final Reflection Session: This closing meeting allowed task designers to evaluate the entire partnership experience. They reflected on questions including:

- What were the key learnings?
- What changes would you implement in future collaborative task designs?
- How valuable was this project for your future career as a language educator?

3.5. Data Collection and Data Selection

3.5.1. Data Collection

Based on the larger dataset (more than 400 hours) coming from all three phases (namely Task Design, Task Implementation, and Reflection) of the Digitask4IC project (https://digitask4ic.com/), this study focuses on the second phase, task implementation. As Project flow has already been discussed under the "Research Procedures" section (see 3.4), this discussion will concentrate specifically on the data collection methodologies employed

during the task implementation phase. During the second phase, pairs of students from Türkiye and Tunisia met five times to do language, culture and society related tasks previously co-designed by another group of students from universities in Türkiye, Austria, and Spain. Spoken exchanges during these meetings were accomplished through a synchronous voice-based video chat service, Zoom. To be able see the tasks assigned to them, participants registered and later logged into their Digitask4IC accounts (https://www.digitask.app/). This platform served as the central hub for task dissemination and participant engagement. It is one of the outcomes of the project and designed by the project partners. Lastly, a screen capture software (Screencast-o-Matic, now Screenpal) has been used to capture screen activities of the participants during their spoken interactions on Zoom. Premium version of Screenpal was purchased by the project partners so that participants can record their screen as long as their tasks continue, and their device storage allows. These recordings have been uploaded to Screenpal portal by each participant after their interaction is over and later Google Drive by the researchers so that video-based spoken data can be stored.

Prior to the commencement of the second project phase, participants received comprehensive guidance, including a detailed instructional list and a video tutorial created by the project researchers. These resources elucidated the processes for screen recording and subsequent upload to the designated platform. Before initiating the data gathering process, the DigiTask web application underwent several preparatory steps. The project team conducted initial testing, which was followed by evaluations from various educators and instructors during project-organized events. After finalizing the app preparations, the partner institutions involved in the project gathered multiple times to jointly plan and coordinate the data collection process.

The task implementation phase, which forms the focal point of this study, involved 30 dyads, each comprising one student from Türkiye and one from Tunisia. These dyads were systematically divided into three clusters of 10 pairs each (see 3.4.3 for the reason having clusters in the study), yielding a total of more than 100 hours of screen-recorded data of video-mediated interaction (see Table 6).

Table 6. Collected data in the task implementation phase (Phase 2)

Cluster	Dyad	Meeting					Duration (min)
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	1	15.29*	52.40	72.60	ND**	ND***	140.29
	2	22.03	42.44	ND	ND	ND	64.47
	3	10.34	47.08	34.49	ND	ND	91.91
	4	34.47	61.37	51.47	50.26	55.13	252.70
	5	23.31	56.11	56.16	52.42	44.24	232.24
	6	31.08	81.10	108.46	76.39	91.23	388.26
	7	10.35	33.34	37.54	33.05	57.58	171.86
	8	30.07	38.02	56.31	57.16	63.35	244.91
	9	24.17	63.29	72.34	ND	ND	159.80
	10	32.47	36.23	48.04	50.35	65.19	232.28
2	11	37.51	62.37	78.35	57.13	67.12	302.48
	12	16.22	34.36	55.23	45.42	ND	151.23
	13	23.00	29.56	61.02	44.44	61.27	219.29
	14	ND	49.29	115.55	ND	115.55	280.39
	15	34.22	49.29	ND	ND	ND	83.51
	16	41.56	136.25	126.20	59.07	85.03	363.08
	17	23.20	ND	54.16	46.43	ND	123.79
	18	14.33	77.27	ND	39.17	66.05	196.82
	19	13.10	81.29	90.28	90.28	79.47	354.42
	20	13.29	ND	ND	ND	ND	13.29
3	21	2.44	9.00	11.16	5.19	5.57	33.36
	22	21.54	64.05	65.35	77.20	77.20	305.34
	23	24.12	43.37	60.03	29.33	78.09	234.94
	24	ND	45.14	42.15	37.11	28.17	152.57
	25	26.13	27.24	ND	ND	ND	53.37
	26	18.30	84.30	79.07	68.11	96.43	346.21
	27	40.45	87.51	57.46	65.48	61.53	312.43
	28	26.53	65.05	96.36	52.12	ND	240.06
	29	42.52	91.40	65.47	32.44	68.50	300.33

Cluster	Dyad	Meeting					
		1	2	3	4	5	Duration (min)
	30	52.40	46.45	112.12	85.38	85.56	381.91
Total Duration		704.44	1594.57	1707.37	1153.93	1267.23	**6427.54 (107 h)**

*All figures under meeting numbers refer to minutes.

**ND (means no data received from dyad)

*** Red color is used to highlight ND.

Table 6 presents the distribution of 107 hours of video-mediated data collected during task implementation phase across three clusters. This data forms the core of the study.

However, the data collection process posed some challenges in terms of completeness and quality. Several dyads were excluded from the final dataset due to irregular or incomplete submissions. Specifically, dyad 2 from cluster 1, dyads 15, 20, and 21 from cluster 2, and dyad 25 from cluster 3 were removed because they failed to submit more than three meetings. Dyad 21, while submitting regularly, only recorded portions of their tasks, making their data insufficient for comprehensive analysis. Additionally, some dyads had technical issues that resulted in missing or unusable recordings. In cluster 1, dyads 1 and 3 each missed two recordings, dyad 8's recording lacked sound, and dyad 9 had two missing recordings. In cluster 2, dyads 14 and 17 each had two missing recordings, as did dyad 18. Cluster 3 had fewer issues, with only dyads 24 and 25 missing one recording each. After accounting for these exclusions and missing data, approximately 102 hours of usable data remained for analysis. Cluster 3 had fewer issues, with only dyads 24 and 25 missing one recording each. After accounting for these exclusions and missing data, approximately 102 hours of usable data remained for analysis. However, this volume was still considered too much to deal with within the scope of a single PhD thesis. Therefore, the dataset for the dissertation was decided based on recordings from all meetings of 9 remaining dyads from cluster 3. The subsequent section explains the methods used to further narrow down the data set to a more manageable size for an in-depth micro-analytic examination.

3.5.2. Data Selection

The selection of cluster 3 for in-depth analysis in this PhD dissertation was based on several factors: Primarily, cluster 3 demonstrated the least data loss among the three clusters, ensuring a completed and more consistent dataset for analysis. This cluster maintained a higher level of data integrity, with only two dyads (24 and 25) missing one recording each, compared to the more substantial data gaps in clusters 1 and 2. Quantitatively, cluster 3 offers a robust dataset, with a total duration of 2360.52 minutes (39.34 hours) of recorded interactions across its dyads. This volume provides a substantial yet manageable corpus for the detailed analysis required in a PhD study. Additionally, cluster 3 exhibits a more consistent pattern of engagement across its dyads, with most dyads completing all five stages of the task, as evidenced by the fewer 'ND' (No Data) entries in Table 6. This consistency allows for a more comprehensive examination of the full task cycle and interaction patterns throughout the project's duration. By selecting cluster 3, the study maintains a balance between data richness and analytical feasibility, while also ensuring the highest possible data quality and completeness within the constraints of the overall dataset.

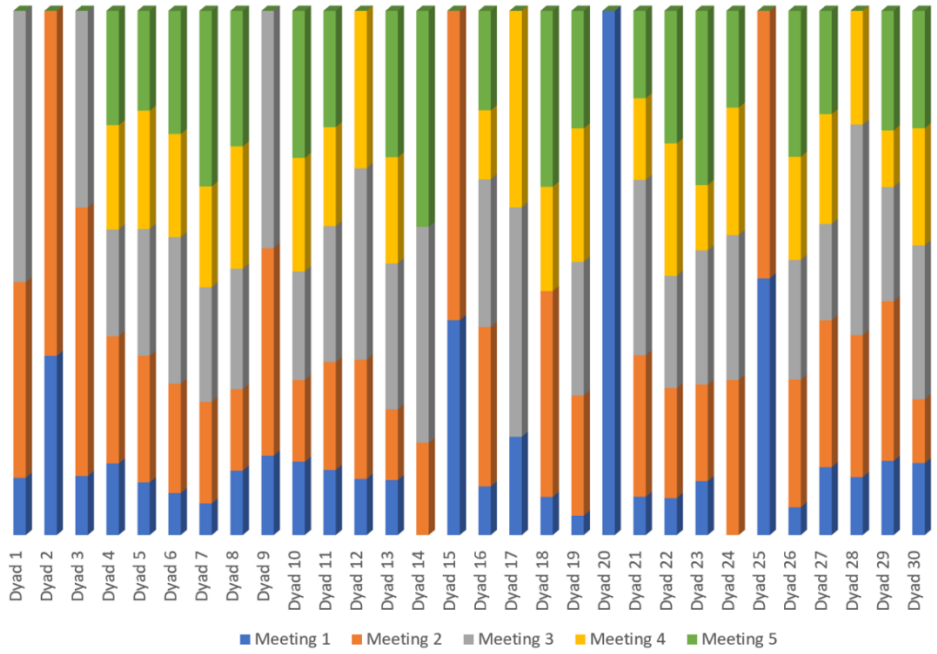


Figure 11. *Distribution of Meeting Durations Across Dyads*

The stacked bar chart above (Figure 11) provides a visual representation of the data distribution across 30 dyads, divided into three clusters of 10 dyads each. Each bar represents a dyad, and the colored segments within each bar represent the duration of individual meetings, with five meetings per dyad. The chart clearly illustrates the varying levels of data completeness and consistency across the clusters. Cluster 1 (dyads 1-10) and Cluster 2 (dyads 11-20) show noticeable gaps in data, represented by missing colored segments in several bars. In contrast, Cluster 3 (dyads 21-30) demonstrates a completer and more consistent dataset, with fewer gaps and a more uniform distribution of meeting durations across all five meetings for most dyads. This completeness allows for a more comprehensive examination of interaction patterns across all stages of the task implementation phase.

The decision to focus on a single cluster aligns with the qualitative nature of this study, allowing for a deep, context-rich exploration of participant interactions within a consistent task environment. By selecting dyads who engaged in identical tasks, the research design enhances the trustworthiness and dependability of the findings. This approach supports the study's validity by ensuring that observed variations in interactions are more likely attributable to participant dynamics rather than differences in task structure, a key consideration in CA research (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). This methodological choice reflects a commitment to thick description and nuanced understanding of participant experiences, characteristic of This methodological choice reflects a commitment to thick description and nuanced understanding of participant experiences, characteristic of Conversation Analytic research inquiry (Ten Have, 2007). By minimizing the variability introduced by differing task structures across clusters, the study can more authentically capture the essence of participant interactions and collaborative processes within a specific context, adhering to CA's focus on the detailed analysis of social actions in situ (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Having addressed various aspects of the research design, research process, including participant selection, research setting, and data collection, this section will now delve into the specific research methodology of conversation analysis employed in the current study to form a basis for data analysis and collection building sections.

3.6. Conversation Analysis: The Methodological Framework

Conversation Analysis (CA) emerged in the 1960s as a method to systematically examine the complex aspects of social actions in interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). Developed by sociologists Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson, CA draws on Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and Erving Goffman's concept of the interaction order to examine the systematic organization of talk-in-interaction (Sacks, 1992; Sacks et al., 1974). This innovative methodology has subsequently become a cornerstone mainly in the fields of linguistics and social sciences, offering researchers a powerful tool to uncover the hidden structures and mechanisms that govern human communication.

Initially focused on telephone conversations, CA has since expanded its scope to analyze a wide range of interactional contexts. These include face-to-face interactions (Goodwin, 1981; Schegloff, 1984), technology-mediated communication (Negretti, 1999; Tudini, 2003), and various institutional settings such as classrooms, courtrooms, and medical consultations. In the field of SLA, CA has been particularly influential in addressing critical issues raised by Firth and Wagner (1997). These scholars highlighted several problematic aspects in traditional SLA studies, including a disparity between the cognitive and social dimensions of language acquisition, prevalence of native speakerism, a deficit view of language learners, and prevalence of etic (external) viewpoints in research. The versatility of CA has led to its widespread use in various fields, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, and notably, second language acquisition (SLA) research (Stivers & Sidnell, 2005).

CA's unique approach, with its focus on naturally occurring interactions and emic (insider) perspectives, has contributed significantly to what has been termed the “social turn” in SLA research. CA thus easily collaborates with other socially oriented methods, including sociocultural theory, complexity theory, and identity theory (Atkinson, 2011; Lantolf, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Norton & McKinney, 2011). Together, these approaches have reshaped our understanding of language learning as a fundamentally social process, deeply embedded in the contexts and interactions of everyday life.

Principles and Analytical Focus

At its core, CA is guided by several key principles that shape its methodological approach and distinguish it from other forms of discourse analysis:

1. Order at all points: This concept suggests that interaction is consistently structured and organized, even in interactions that may appear dull or disorganized (Seedhouse, 2005). This approach promotes the exploration of patterns and structures in all elements of conversation, regardless of their original perceived insignificance.
2. Context-shaped and context-renewing contributions: The contributions made during the interaction are affected by the previous turns and at the same time, they also influence the setting for the next turns (Heritage, 1984). This micro-level perspective on context highlights the collaborative process through which meaning is created during communication.
3. No a priori dismissal of details: CA considers all interactional details potentially relevant, requiring close attention to micro-level phenomena This approach necessitates a thorough analysis of elements such as pauses, intonation, and even seemingly insignificant utterances based on detailed transcripts.
4. Bottom-up, data-driven analysis: Rather than imposing pre-existing theories or categories onto the data, CA builds understanding from detailed examination of the interactions themselves (Seedhouse, 2005). The utilization of this inductive methodology enables the identification of previously unobserved patterns and behaviors in (non)verbal communication (Seedhouse, 2005, p.166-167).

These concepts demonstrate CA's dedication to examining interaction from an emic standpoint, emphasizing how individuals personally interpret and collaboratively shape their social environment (Kasper & Wagner, 2014). By prioritizing the participants' own orientations and understandings, CA aims to avoid the imposition of analyst-driven categories or interpretations that

may not align with the reality of the interaction as experienced by those involved.

Guided by these principles, CA focuses its analytical lens on several key aspects of interaction such as turn taking, sequence organization, turn design, repair, and preference organization. These aspects are explained briefly below.

First, a key focus of research in Conversation Analysis (CA) is the turn-taking mechanism through which participants manage the allocation of turns. This includes the study of turn-constructional units (TCUs), which are the basic building blocks of turns, and transition-relevance places (TRPs), the points at which speaker change becomes relevant (Clayman, 2013; Sacks et al., 1974). CA research has revealed the remarkable precision with which speakers coordinate their turns, often with minimal gap or overlap. Second, sequence organization refers to the examination of how turns in a conversation are structured in an orderly way, particularly through the concept of adjacency pairs (e.g., question-answer, greeting-greeting) (Schegloff, 2007; Stivers, 2012). These paired actions are fundamental to numerous interactional sequences and serve as a framework for comprehending how participants establish and sustain intersubjectivity. CA considers how turns are constructed to perform specific actions in particular sequential positions and for specific recipients (Drew, 2013). Third, turn design involves analyzing the linguistic resources that speakers employ to construct their conversational contributions, as well as how these contributions are customized to the ongoing engagement and the presumed understanding of their conversation partners. Repair, on the other hand, is the practice by which participants address problems in speaking, hearing, or understanding, and it is a central focus of CA (Kitzinger, 2013; Schegloff et al., 1977). Repair processes are essential for preserving mutual comprehension and overcoming possible disruptions in communication. CA has identified various types of repair (e.g., self-initiated, other-initiated) and their organization within interaction. Lastly, preference organization refers to the analysis of how specific behaviors or responses are regarded as more desirable or less desirable in social interaction (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013). Preferred responses (e.g., accepting

an invitation) are typically delivered quickly and straightforwardly, while dispreferred responses (e.g., declining an invitation) often involve delays, hesitations, and accounts. This organization embodies the social and moral structure inherent in human interaction.

Another CA aspect to consider here is “Floor management” which is closely intertwined with several key aspects mentioned above. The floor is characterized as collaboratively established by a minimum of two participants, determined by the topic, communicative actions, and the shared understanding of the participants regarding the topic at hand (Simpson, 2005). Hayashi (1991) introduced the concept of “floor management” to describe how participants in a conversation negotiate the right to speak and manage the flow of interaction. The "floor" refers to the conversational space where one or more participants hold the right to speak or contribute. Managing the floor involves determining who speaks, when they speak, and how turns are allocated or shared. Thus, it encompasses the verbal and non-verbal contributions of all participants in steering the discourse toward a specific direction. It creates opportunities for engagement while involving the regulation of participation and interactional roles within the conversation (Jenks, 2007, p. 611).

In one of the foundational studies on “floor,” Edelsky (1981) examines the intricate nature of turns and floors in conversation analysis, highlighting that traditional models tend to oversimplify interaction by assuming strictly one-at-a-time turn-taking. In contrast, everyday conversations often feature overlapping speech, shared understandings, and the collaborative co-construction of ideas. Different conceptualizations of "turns" and "floors" are discussed, highlighting their context-dependent, multifaceted, and sometimes subjective nature, with particular attention to how gender, interactional context, and methodological choices influence conversational dynamics. The study by Wennerstrom & Siegel (2003) examines how speakers maintain or shift the conversational floor, highlighting the significance of intonation and grammatical structure. These resources can enable speakers to maintain the floor by "continuing" intonation, even when a syntactic clause

seems complete. The research emphasizes the significance of discourse markers and pauses, which can facilitate floor holding.

Jones and Thornborrow (2004) analyze in and out of classroom student interactions, focusing on how talk, activity, and authority are organized in different settings. They highlight the dynamic nature of conversational floors, which can vary from tightly controlled to more relaxed, overlapping, or simultaneous, depending on the activity and context. The analysis emphasizes that classroom talk is fluid, multi-layered, and activity-dependent, with shifts in participation, interruptions, and social interactions occurring naturally without explicit signaling. Out-of-classroom student interactions, on the other hand, typically exhibit a more relaxed structure of discourse, characterized by multiple floors and an emergent conversational state in which any participant may initiate a turn during pauses in conversation. The concept of the "conversational floor" is presented as a flexible continuum that reflects the complexity of classroom discourse, involving collaborative, self-selected, and overlapping contributions among pupils and teachers.

In another study on out-of-class interaction, Jenks (2007) examines how floor management functions in conversation, particularly during tasks involving shared or unshared information, highlighting a two-part sequence where the person with more information introduces a missing piece (the anchor) and the other responds to confirm understanding. The flow of conversation is governed by the distribution of information, with the person holding more knowledge controlling the anchor and the other signaling comprehension or clarification, which influences turn-taking and topic progression. In second language tasks, participatory structures and the distribution of information significantly impact who controls the floor, affecting participation, task flow, and pedagogical strategies for fostering effective communication and language development.

In a recent study, Willemsen et al. (2019) analyze classroom discourse practices, emphasizing the utilization of verbal, nonverbal, and multimodal strategies by teachers to manage turn-taking and enhance student responses in discussions. Authors examine the concept of the "floor" as a mechanism for

facilitating student participation in classroom discussions. In another recent work, Takahashi (2024) investigates the multimodal and embodied practices students use to self-select for participation in classroom interactions, emphasizing three key stages: doing registering, gearing up, and launching. These stages involve various embodied cues such as gaze, gestures, facial expressions, and posture, which signal students' awareness, readiness, and willingness to speak. The research highlights the importance of teachers recognizing these early multimodal signals to facilitate inclusive and timely participation, and it discusses variations like expedited processes where students skip or condense stages to take the floor earlier.

In one of the few studies focusing on online interaction, Simpson (2005) explores interaction patterns in synchronous, text-based online communities, focusing on how technological features influence discourse and the development of conversational floors in SCMC. Findings reveal that floor management in SCMC differs from conventional spoken interactions by prioritizing fluid, overlapping, and multi-threaded discourse structures. The lack of visible and audible signals, along with technology attributes and participant responsibilities, creates an environment where numerous layers can coexist, overlap, and re-emerge, illustrating the distinct organizational principles of virtual communication settings.

Previous literature explore the dynamics of floor management, turn-taking, and interactional practices across various communicative contexts, including classroom discourse and online communities. They examine how information distribution, multimodal cues, and technological features influence who manages the conversational flow, how participants signal readiness, and how interactional roles are negotiated. The studies highlight the importance of understanding the nuanced, interactional mechanisms that facilitate or constrain participation, whether in face-to-face settings or computer-mediated communication, emphasizing the pedagogical and social implications of these interactional patterns.

Conversation Analysis (CA) employs a distinct methodological approach characterized by several key features that set it apart in the field of linguistics, education, and more broadly social sciences. At its foundation, CA focuses on

analyzing naturally occurring data, captured through audio or video recordings of genuine, non-experimental encounters (Waring, 2019). This commitment to naturalistic data distinguishes CA from approaches relying on elicited or experimental data. The analysis process begins with meticulous transcription, using systems like Gail Jefferson's (2004), which capture not only words but also prosodic features, timing, and non-verbal elements, enabling the precise documentation of intricate interactional nuances.

CA's unique approach continues with "unmotivated looking", where initial data examination is conducted without predetermined hypotheses, allowing phenomena of interest to emerge organically (ten Have, 2007). This method helps analysts avoid imposing preconceived notions and remain open to unexpected discoveries. Once a phenomenon of interest is identified, similar instances are gathered into collections for comparative analysis, facilitating the recognition of recurring patterns across various interactions and circumstances (Sidnell, 2013). Each example within these collections undergoes rigorous case-by-case analysis, considering its unique sequential environment (Schegloff, 1996). This meticulous approach ensures that generalizations are based on a comprehensive understanding of individual circumstances. Throughout the analysis, CA maintains an emic perspective, striving to understand interactions from the participants' viewpoint rather than imposing external categories or interpretations (Pike, 1967; Seedhouse, 2005).

Analysts continually ask, "why that now?" to elucidate the fundamental reasoning behind specific actions at particular moments in the interaction (Wong & Waring, 2020). This inquiry serves to uncover the underlying organization of talk-in-interaction. Additionally, CA employs deviant case analysis, examining instances that deviate from identified patterns to refine and strengthen analytic claims. By carefully considering exceptions and variations, CA ensures the robustness of its conclusions and accounts for the complete spectrum of interactional practices.

This comprehensive approach, grounded in naturalistic data and meticulous analysis, allows CA to provide profound insights into the intricacies of human

interaction, making it a valuable tool in understanding the complexities of communication in various social contexts.

Multimodality and Conversation Analysis

In recent years, CA has experienced substantial growth with the development of multimodal conversation analysis. This approach extends traditional CA principles to incorporate the analysis of embodied actions, gaze, gestures, and material surroundings alongside talk (Mondada, 2016c). Multimodal conversation analysis acknowledges that the creation of meaning during contact is not restricted to spoken communication, but rather involves the intricate mechanisms involved in several forms of communication (Goodwin, 2000; Streeck et al., 2011).

Key aspects of multimodal CA contribute to its holistic nature including simultaneous attention to multiple modalities. Analysts consider how various communicative modes (e.g., speech, gesture, gaze) work together to construct meaning and action (Mondada, 2014). This holistic approach offers a more thorough comprehension of how participants employ various resources throughout interaction. Multimodal CA examines how different modalities are coordinated in time and how they relate to the ongoing sequences of interaction (Deppermann, 2013). This includes investigating how embodied actions are synchronized with speech and how they contribute to the overall structure of the interaction. Researchers investigate how participants use their bodies and the surrounding environment to establish and maintain engagement in interaction (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004). This involves examining how the placement of the body, the direction of the gaze, and the handling of items contribute to the creation and maintenance of interactional spaces. Specialized transcription systems have been developed to represent various modalities alongside verbal content (Mondada, 2018). These systems often incorporate visual representations, such as frame grabs from video recordings, to capture the complexity of multimodal interaction. Increasing attention is paid to how participants interact with and through technological devices and other material objects (Nevile et al., 2014). This focus has become particularly relevant in our increasingly digitally mediated world.

The recent shift towards multimodality in CA has broadened its analytical scope, recognizing the interplay between verbal and non-verbal communication. This development captures the embodied and situated nature of human interaction, acknowledging communication as a holistic process involving the entire body and its surroundings. CA's evolution, particularly in language learning and teaching contexts, makes it a powerful tool for understanding social action, intersubjectivity, and learning in interaction. Its methodological rigor and openness to emergent phenomena position it as a valuable approach for researchers studying human communication in diverse and technologically mediated environments. The ongoing advancement of CA, including its integration with other theoretical frameworks and application to new interactional settings, ensures its continued relevance in studying social interaction. As we face challenges in understanding communication in digital environments, multilingual settings, and diverse cultural contexts, CA's principles and methods provide a solid foundation for future research. In essence, CA promises to yield further insights into human sociality and the intricacies of everyday and institutional interactions, contributing significantly to our understanding of communication in an increasingly complex world.

3.7. Data Transcription and Collection Building

The process of data transcription and collection building is a crucial step in conversation analytic research, serving as the foundation for detailed analysis of naturally occurring interactions. This section outlines the methodological approach taken in transcribing the video-mediated interactions and building the collection of cases for multimodal CA analysis in this study.

Transcription in conversation analysis (CA) is not merely a preparatory step, but an integral part of the analytic process itself. As Jenks (2011) notes, transcripts serve multiple functions: they represent interactions, assist analysis, disseminate preliminary observations, and provide a means of verification in empirical studies. However, it is important to recognize that transcripts are not the data itself, but rather a complementary tool that enables and enhances analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Kasper & Wagner, 2014).

The study utilized a combination of transcription conventions to capture the complexity of video-mediated interactions: Jefferson (2004) conventions (Appendix B) to represent verbal and prosodic features such as intonation, stress, volume, speed, and overlapping speech; and Mondada (2018) (Appendix C) conventions to capture embodied actions, gestures, and gaze.

The transcription software Transana was used to assist in identifying prosodic details and timing of pauses. This tool allowed for more precise representation of the temporal aspects of the interaction. However, it is crucial to recognize that as stated by Jenks (2013, p.259), transcripts are inherently biased and do not offer completely precise depictions of spoken dialogue. Transcription requires making certain choices about how to portray an interaction. The representational decisions prioritize factors such as readability, granularity, accuracy, and research focus (Jenks, 2018). To enhance readability, non-verbal actions and screen activities were presented in separate lines without line numbers, using lighter colors to distinguish them from verbal production. To ensure granularity, detailed representation of prosodic features, pauses, and embodied actions was included to capture the nuances of the interaction. Efforts were made to represent the interaction as accurately as possible, including features such as cut-offs, restarts, and hesitations. Furthermore, given the study's focus on topic maintenance, alignment and affiliation particular attention was paid to turn-taking practices, sequence organization, and multimodal resources used in managing the interaction.

The transcripts were formatted using the following conventions:

- Courier New font was used for better line alignment.
- Sequential line numbers were given to verbal productions and gaps.
- Multimodal actions and screen activities were written in separate lines without line numbers, using lighter colors.
- Symbols were used to show the onset and offset of non-verbal actions, with different symbols for each participant.
- Translations for use of other languages were provided in bold in the following lines without line numbers.

In accordance with the information given above and adhering to CA principles, this study followed several key steps:

1. **Unmotivated looking:** The initial step involved watching the video recordings multiple times without any predetermined theoretical constructs or research questions in mind. This approach, known as "unmotivated looking" (ten Have, 2007), allows the data to speak for itself and enables the researcher to notice phenomena that might otherwise be overlooked.
2. **Orthographic transcription:** Following the unmotivated looking phase, a basic orthographic transcription of the entire dataset (all five meetings of cluster 3) was prepared. This step provided a written version of the verbal content, serving as a foundation for more detailed transcription.
3. **Phenomenon identification:** Through repeated viewings and initial transcription, key phenomena related to the research focus began to emerge. In this study, particular attention was paid to instances of "alignment and affiliation" and their relation to topic maintenance and L2 interactional competence.
4. **Detailed transcription:** Once phenomena of interest were identified, selected segments were transcribed in greater detail using established CA conventions.
5. **Multimodal and screen-based details:** Given the video-mediated nature of the interactions, particular attention was paid to capturing multimodal and screen-based actions. Mondada's (2018) conventions were used to represent embodied behaviors.

Collection Building

Building a collection of cases is a fundamental step in CA research, allowing for the identification of recurrent practices and patterns across different interactions (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). The collection building process for this study involved several stages:

1. **Initial observations:** Through unmotivated looking and initial transcription, "alignment and affiliation in topic maintenance" emerged as one of the prominent phenomena in the study.
2. **Preliminary collection:** A preliminary collection of instances showcasing alignment and affiliation and its relation to topic maintenance was compiled alongside other recurring phenomena in the data.
3. **Data sessions:** Representative extracts were presented and analyzed in data sessions with other CA researchers. These sessions, held face-to-face or online with participants from various institutions, provided valuable insights and helped refine the analytic focus.
4. **Expansion of collection:** Based on the insights gained from data sessions and further analysis, the dataset was re-examined to identify additional instances of the selected phenomenon: alignment and affiliation in topic maintenance.
5. **Refinement of collection:** The collection was refined to focus specifically on instances of alignment and affiliation during on-task and off-task topic maintenance and the display of L2 interactional competence.

The final collection comprised over 100 extracts, with over 81 cases from on-task and 23 cases from off-task talk. From this collection, 15 representative extracts were selected for detailed analysis and presented in the study. 10 representative extracts are given from on-task talk. Five extracts are given to represent off-task talk, reflecting the relative availability of analytically rich cases within the dataset. These extracts were selected to illuminate recurrent features of action and interactional organization characteristic of each phenomenon.

Each extract in the study was assigned a simple code for easy identification, following the format:

- Extract number: Keyword (Dyad number/Participant pseudonyms/"M" standing for "meeting" and Meeting number/extract duration)

- For example: “Extract 1: University (D1/Beo-Ana/M3/1.05’)”

The keyword reflects the most significant aspect of the interaction. D stands for dyad and dyad number follows it without a blank space. M stands for “meeting” and meeting number is provided right after it without a blank space. Lastly, extract duration is given at the end as minutes and seconds.

The transcription and collection building process employed in this study aimed to provide a robust foundation for the conversation analytic investigation of L2 interactional competence and topic maintenance in video-mediated exchanges. By following established Conversation Analysis (CA) principles and conventions, while simultaneously adapting to the unique demands of video-mediated interaction, this study aims to provide a detailed and nuanced analysis of the phenomena under investigation. The resulting case collection offers a rich dataset for examining how participants navigate and sustain topics in online intercultural exchanges, thereby advancing our understanding of L2 interactional competence in digital environments. However, it is better to recognize that the transcription and collection building process faces several challenges and limitations that must be acknowledged. One significant issue is the transcriber effect, where the transcription process, despite efforts to maintain objectivity, inevitably involves some degree of interpretation and decision-making by the transcriber. Additionally, technical limitations, such as issues with transcription software and recording quality, occasionally impact the level of detail that can be captured. Furthermore, the process of data reduction, which involves selecting representative extracts from a larger collection, necessarily excludes some data, potentially affecting the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

In conversation analysis (CA), the concepts of validity and reliability are approached differently compared to traditional quantitative methodologies. This section will outline the measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of this study.

Validity in CA is primarily concerned with the "interpretation of the observations" to create integrity between the foci and the results of the study (Peräkylä, 2011). To address this, several strategies were employed throughout the research process. Firstly, the principle of "unmotivated looking" (ten Have, 2007) was adhered to during the initial stages of data analysis. This approach ensures that the data is not fitted into any pre-determined hypotheses, allowing for an unbiased observation of emerging phenomena. By adopting this stance, the study maintains an emic perspective, avoiding impositions on the data and reflecting the interactions as they naturally occurred. Secondly, the study employs the "next-turn proof procedure" (Schegloff, 1968), a fundamental aspect of CA methodology. This procedure involves examining how subsequent turns in an interaction display participants' own understanding of prior actions. By utilizing this approach, the analysis gains an emic validation (Clayman & Heritage, 2021), as it relies on participants' displayed orientations rather than the analyst's intuitions or external theories. Thirdly, the study incorporates deviant case analysis, which involves examining cases that deviate from identified patterns. This process helps refine and strengthen analytic claims (ten Have, 2007). By not ignoring deviant cases, but rather evaluating them according to structured criteria, the study enhances its internal validity. Fourthly, the study maintains transparency by providing detailed transcripts and data extracts, allowing readers to scrutinize and potentially challenge analytic claims (Peräkylä, 2011). This transparency is a fundamental aspect of CA research and contributes significantly to the study's validity.

In terms of reliability, which is generally associated with the repeatability and consistency of results (Bryman, 2016), this study has taken several measures to ensure a high degree of reliability. The data collection process utilized various software and modules to create a well-connected dataset comprising both the texts and talk-in-interaction of the participants. This approach supports the creation of a comprehensive and reliable data corpus. Additionally, the inclusion of similar representative transcripts in the study allows for exploring the phenomenon from diverse perspectives in a repeated fashion. To further enhance reliability, other prominent CA researchers analyzed some of the representative cases for this study. This was done

through multiple data sessions organized by (1) METU DISCORE (DIScourse and COrpus REsearch Group (https://discore.metu.edu.tr/), (2) TED University Conversation Analysis Research Group (TEDU-CAN; formerly Micro Analysis Network (https://microanalysisnetwork.com/), (3) MIND (Mälardalen INteraction and Didactics) (https://mindresearchgroup.org/), and (4) MARG (Micro-Analysis Research Group) (https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/alc/category/marg/). Preliminary findings were presented at two international conferences (56th BAAL Conference in York, ICCA 2023 in Brisbane). These sessions involved multiple CA scholars and graduate students who repeatedly watched recordings, examined transcripts, and analyzed data using CA terminology. Moreover, the representative cases were thoroughly discussed with the thesis committee members every six months. This regular review process ensured that the study results were prudently prepared based on different researchers' comments and observations, increasing the overall reliability of the findings.

In conclusion, this study has implemented a comprehensive approach to ensuring validity and reliability, grounded in the principles of CA methodology. By combining rigorous data collection and analysis procedures with multiple layers of peer review and expert feedback, the study aims to present findings that are both valid and reliable within the context of conversation analytic research.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, particularly studies involving video recordings of human interactions, ethical considerations are paramount. This section outlines the ethical procedures and considerations implemented in this study to ensure the protection of participants' rights, dignity, and privacy.

First, prior to commencing the research, ethical clearance was obtained from the university's Research Ethics Committee. This process involved submitting a detailed application form outlining every step of the research project, including participant recruitment, data collection methods, and data handling procedures (Cavan, 1977). Following approval, potential participants were invited to an introductory meeting where they were thoroughly informed

about the study's objectives, data collection processes, and their rights as participants. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation in the study. The consent forms clearly stated that:

- Participants were expected to screen-record their interactions.
- They should not share recordings with any third parties other than the designated researchers.
- They had the right to withdraw from the project at any time, resulting in the exclusion of all their data from the dataset.
- The study would employ multimodal conversation analysis as the research methodology.
- Their identities, names, and other personal information would be protected and not exposed in any way.

To safeguard participants' identities, a comprehensive set of measures was implemented throughout the research process. Firstly, pseudonyms were consistently used for all participants in both the analysis and presentation of data, ensuring that their real names were never disclosed. Secondly, any screenshots included in the transcripts were carefully blurred to prevent the identification of personal details. Lastly, the researchers meticulously reviewed all data to identify and either remove or alter any other potential identifying information. These steps align with the recommendations of Jenks (2011) and Mondada (2013), who emphasize the importance of protecting participant identities in video-based research.

It is crucial to note that while all participants were registered in university courses that included these activities as part of their coursework, their participation in the research study itself was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed that their decision to participate or not would not affect their course evaluation. Those who chose not to participate in the research still completed the course work, but their data was excluded from the study dataset.

All collected data, including video recordings and written outputs, were treated with the utmost confidentiality. Access to the data was restricted to the primary researcher and designated team members who agreed to comply

with the same ethical regulations. Data was stored securely on password-protected devices and encrypted cloud storage to prevent unauthorized access.

It is important to emphasize that the intention of this study was not to evaluate participants' language skills or performance. Participants were not graded based on their interactions, nor did they receive any credits for participation. The research aimed solely to explore naturally occurring interactions between participants who do not share the same L1, focusing on the characteristics of these interactions as they relate to the research questions. By adhering to these ethical guidelines, this study aims to contribute to the field of alignment and affiliation, topic maintenance and L2 interactional competence research while maintaining the highest standards of participant protection and research integrity.

This chapter introduced the research context, participants, research procedures, data collection, selection, transcription and collection building processes, and the research methodology used. Validity and reliability of the study and ethical issues were also discussed in detail. With the groundwork established, the next chapter focuses on micro analysis of representative extracts using Conversation Analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Analysis and Findings chapter presents a comprehensive exploration of the complex dynamics involved in how individuals create and sustain alignment and affiliation during both on-task and off-task interactions within a virtual environment. This study employs conversation analysis to examine micro-level interaction data in an emic way, providing a comprehensive exploration of resources for alignment and affiliation used within topic management in dyadic video-mediated virtual contexts. The first analytic section illustrates resources for alignment and affiliation utilized within on-task topic maintenance, based on ten representative extracts. The provided extracts illuminate the ways in which interactants maneuver and maintain alignment and affiliation throughout their on-task interactions. A summary of the findings section is given following this to provide a clear and concise overview of the results. The second analytic section exhibits resources for alignment and affiliation that are employed in the management of off-task topics, based on five representative extracts. These examples shed light on individuals' resources for fostering affiliation and maintaining alignment during off-task interactions, providing a thorough understanding of the conversational mechanisms that underpin virtual dyadic relationships. A summary of the findings section is given following this to provide a clear and concise overview of the results.

4.2. Resources for Alignment and Affiliation within On-Task Topic Management

This section presents ten representative extracts showcasing how participants maintain an on-task topic(s) collaboratively through alignment and affiliation. Extracts are chosen from the collection that exemplify the diverse resources employed by interlocutors to sustain and navigate topic management effectively through (re)building alignment and affiliation. The analysis of o-task talk through various extracts illustrates how participants skillfully use interactional resources to maintain topic and (re)establish alignment and affiliation which might show their L2 interactional competence. It underscores the significance of multimodal resources in enhancing L2 interactional competence and fostering effective communication within online learning environments.

Extract 1 comes from the first meeting of Dyad 27. Two participants (Aya and San) engage in the task titled "Getting to know each other" which was the only task for meeting 1 (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from the first minute of the interaction and lasts for 1.18 minutes. Prior to the extract, they engage in a tandem learning episode (Arabic and Turkish) (see Extract 11). They move on to the task again with Aya's question "what do you do in your free time?" which is prescribed by the task. In the extract, the dyad talks about school systems in Türkiye and Tunisia. Extract 1 illustrates the participants' collaborative management of the conversation via confirmations and examples, thereby sustaining alignment through mutual engagement.

Extract 1: School Systems (Dyad27/SAN-AYA/M1/1.18')

```
1  SAN: #what do i do in my ↑free TIME# #okay (0.2)
   san   #-----------looks left-----------#
   san                    1: head movements #---1---> line 2
2       %#i ↑teach (.)i teach# #small# #children#
   aya   %----3---> line 4 3: nods
   san    #---raises eyebrows---# #turns# both hands downward
   san         2: clasps both hands on air #---2---> line 4
   san   ----------------------------------------#
3       (1.3)%#
   aya   -----%
   san   ------#
4  AYA: like# (.) ↑which grade
   san       #---4---> line 11 3: hand movements
5       (0.7)
6  SAN:  #ten years old err.# t#he ↑#last grade then#%↑prep school#
   san   #lateral head movemen#ts#-------------diverse gaze--------------#
```

```
   aya                                                    %---3--->line 11
   san                                  #-----frowns------#
7        (0.6)
8  AYA:  %huh the% ↑last=
   aya   %slightly% leans back
9  SAN:  =↑six grade(0.7)↑six grade yeah
10 AYA:  it'a six grade↑% #the↑last# err.#class#
   san   ------------------#         #ties her han#ds together
   aya   ----------------%
   san                                      #--5--> line 12 5: leans fwrd
11       #in the#↑#primary %school%
   san  #---6---> line 15 6: raises her index finger
   aya                     %slightly leans back%
   san   -------#
12       (0.8)
13 SAN:  #↑yes >it is<# %we got from first% until sixth and the:e:n#
   san   ------------------------------------------------------------#
   san   #-leans twds--#
   aya                 %-------nods-------%
14       you go %to↑##middle school#(0.2)##seven##,eight,and nine,#
   aya          %-----3---> line 17
   san               #hand movement#.        #looks #down
   san                #sligh look on her upper right-#
   san           ((every time she counts))#puts her index f. on her palm#
15       and then you go to ↑high #school#%
   aya   ----------------------------------%
   san                               #leans #forwards
16       (0.7)
17 AYA:  err >%seven, eight, and ↑nine,<% #and ↑%high school% is#
   aya        %---looks his lower right---%        %-leans frwds-%
   san                                      #------leans frdws------#
18       ten, eleven, and twelve
19       (0.8)
20 SAN:  ↑#%yes# but we #don't#% count like that (.)
   san    #nods#
   aya     %---leans backwards---%
   san                         #slight head shake#


21       ##when we go to# ↑high school# (.) we start #counting from#
   san   #looks her right#
   san   #---slightly leans backwards---#.              #hand movement-#
22       one #so ↑the first year in high school is #first# %then
   san       #---------------number one gesture-------------#
   aya                                                      %-3->
                                                            line 27
   san                                       7: frowns #--7--> line 27
23       #second# then #third# and then #f-f-ourth#
   san #number #two gesture
   san                 #number #three gesture
   san                                     #number four#gesture
24       (0.7)
25 SAN:  #we graduate on ↑fourth%## #year#
   san   -------------------------#
   aya   -------------------------%
   san   #--taps on her ring finger--# #pulls# her ring finger
26       (0.5)
27 AYA:  <%humm:> (.) >it%-s -i[ts<
   aya    %--leans frwds--%
28 SAN:                    ##whe[re we have to# #sit for a## ↑national
   san                    #---hand movements---#
   san                     #---------looks upper left--------#
   san                                        #scratches #her hair
29 SAN:  #exam
   san   #--8--> line 32 8: headshake
30       (0.8)#
   san   -----#
```

```
31 AYA: #it is a little differ[rent#
   san   #--------looks down----------#
32 SAN:                          [#(inaudible)
   san                           #----9---> line 35 9: raises eyebrows
33 AYA: from turkey#(.) %in turkey #we have ↑four years% (0.2)
   san   ------------#               #----5---> line 45
   aya                %----------hand movements----------%
34      hh. in the primary school (0.6) until the #fhh.if-fourth#
   san                                                 #-----nods-----#
35      class (0.2) hh. #%and then% (0.3) until eighth class#
   aya                  %leans back% and forth
   san                  #---------looks down to the right------#
36      #it is ↑middle school#  #(0.3)# %and then (0.2)% #↑fourth
   san  #moves her head twrd rig#ht#looksup#                  #-3->line 40
   aya                                  %moves his head %right
37      err: (.)%class% in the# ↑high school(0.3)
   aya          %looks %down
   san   ----------------------#
38       like nine, ten, %eleven, and twelve%
   aya                  %-----leans back-----%
39      (1.1)
40 SAN: #↑uh huh#
   san   #looks at# the lower left
```

The extract starts with San reiterating Aya's inquiry to herself, “What do I do in my leisure time?” It serves as a preface to the upcoming narration of San, setting the stage for a more detailed account of her free time activities. Employing a direct question is a prevalent practice for initiating a topic, since it encourages the interlocutor to respond and express their viewpoint (Stivers & Rossano, 2010), as can be seen from lines 1 and 2. San's head movements and gestures, including leftward glances and elevated eyebrows, show a preparedness to interact and convey receptiveness to Aya's reply. Embodied actions are essential for regulating conversational flow and establishing mutual comprehension between participants (Licoppe & Morel, 2012; Markee, 2008; Mondada, 2016c; Pekarek Doehler, 2019).

San asserts, “I teach small children”, so offering a clear response to the original inquiry. Aya's nodding in response to San's comment demonstrates alignment with the topic at hand (Lindstöm & Sorjonen, 2013; Stivers, 2008). Nodding might serve as a nonverbal device indicating alignment, hence might strengthen the affiliative connection among participants. After a 1.3-second pause in line 3, Aya poses a follow up inquiry, “like which grade?” This inquiry prompts San to elaborate on the topic and provide more detailed information regarding the teaching context. Employing follow-up questions is a prevalent practice for sustaining interest and promoting more elaboration (Heritage, 1984). San's statement, “ten years old, the last grade, then prep

school", offers more information and elucidates her teaching background. In line 8, Aya requests clarity by reiterating San's phrase, "the last", with heightened tone and a small lean back. This gesture demonstrates a requirement for more clarification and demonstrates receptiveness to San's viewpoint. San's prompt explanation in line 9, "sixth grade, yeah", offers essential information and strengthens the alignment between participants. Utilizing repetition and explanation is an essential method for navigating intricate topics and ensuring mutual comprehension among participants (Schegloff, 1992). This underscores the need of mutual understanding in sustaining conversational flow and attaining intersubjectivity.

In response to Aya's request for clarification in lines 10 and 11, San elucidates the educational system in Tunisia by detailing the transition from primary to middle school. This elucidation offers significant background in education system in her country. Aya's nodding and subtle tilting back display agreement as well as engagement with the explanation. This corresponds with the notion of "recipient design" (Sacks et al., 1974), when interactants customize their discourse according to the perceived knowledge and comprehension of their interlocutor. Beginning at line 14, San elaborates on the transition from middle school to high school, employing hand movements and gestures to underscore significant themes. Aya's nodding and verbal confirmations suggest ongoing alignment with the topic at hand. The employment of embodied actions, including nodding and hand gestures, is a significant element of L2 interactional competence since it indicates attentiveness and agreement. In lines 17 and 18, Aya reiterates the middle school years (seven, eight, and nine) and thereafter concludes San's turn by specifying the high school years (ten, eleven, and twelve) as they are designated in Türkiye. In line 20, San acknowledges Aya's understanding with a minor disagreement and presents a comparable example from the Tunisian educational system, emphasizing the term "four years" to denote the duration of high school. This contrast reinforces the comparison between the two educational systems and illustrates participants' interest with the topic. Aya's recognition of San's example further underscores the collaborative essence of the conversation. This is called situated orientation to

interculturality, as in orienting similarities and differences across cultures (Önder & Balaman, 2025).

From lines 27 to 40, the conversation proceeds with Aya stating that the counting of years differs in Türkiye; while offering additional examples of the Turkish educational system, which San recognizes by nods and vocal confirmations. This mutual understanding is essential for sustaining conversational flow and ensuring that both participants are actively involved in the task. Embodied actions, such as nodding, are crucial for L2 interactional competence, indicating attentiveness and agreement (Licoppe & Morel, 2012; Markee, 2008; Pekarek Doehler, 2019). Subsequent to the extract, participants proceed to the next question in the task.

The analysis of Extract 1 has uncovered several significant conclusions concerning the participants' video-mediated interactions. The conversation's iterative nature is emphasized, as participants enhance their understanding by building upon one another's contributions. Practices like confirmation and clarification are utilized to manage a topic, ensuring both parties maintain alignment in their understanding (Heritage, 1984). The judicious employment of enquiries and illustrations enhances clarity, promoting a mutual understanding of the topic. Embodied actions, such as nodding and acknowledgement gestures, are crucial for sustaining conversational flow and assuring active participation from both interlocutors. Overall, the analysis has shown the participants' ability to navigate a conversation collaboratively and maintain alignment through mutual engagement.

Extract 2 comes from Dyad 23's second meeting. Participants do the task titled "Communication Styles" in this episode (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from the 27.12th minute of the interaction and lasts for 1.38 minutes. Before the extract, they complete the first two parts of a guided role play task. In the extract, Bac and Nir collaboratively manage a transition into the last role-play scenario in which they are supposed to act out an employer who wants to get a day off and an employee. Participants move onto a topic unrelated to the task-induced topic following the extract as they finish this task step early (see Extract 12). Extract 2 reveals how the participants build

and develop affiliation through a role play sequence by making use of multimodal resources including verbal, prosodic, and screen-based resources.

Extract 2: Pea Day (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M2/1.38')

```
 1  BAC:  #i think we should ↑try this ↑one [i think
    nir   #----1---> line 2 1: nods
    nir     ---2---> line 3 2: cursor movements
 2  NIR:                                          [<#huh hum>#
    nir                                           ------------#
    nir                                3: looks down #---3---> line 3
 3        (1.2)
 4  BAC:  like a ↑+role play#+ (0.4) err: okay (0.2) let's (.) you
    nir   ----------3---------#
    bac           +hand movement+
    nir   ------------------------------------------------------
 5        are my boss an::d i will ask you+ nicely so i can (0.5)
    bac                4: looks at the screen  +--4-> line 9
    nir                       ---2--->line 6
 6        ((inaudible (0.3) inaudible)) #(0.3)#
    nir   ---------------------------------------
    nir                                    #leans tw#ds the screen
 7  NIR:  #sorry↑#
    nir   #raises #eyebrows
 8        (1.2)
 9  BAC:  ↑pea day (0.4) ↑okay+
    bac   ----------------------+
10        (1.9)
11  BAC:  err ↑pea day (.) +no it's not cheese+ (.) #okay# (0.2)
    bac                      +-----leans back-----+
    nir                                    slightly #leans# back
12       ↑hey boss (.)+ er:::m (.) #today we have +a ↑lot of work+ to
    bac                 +----5---> line 16 5: lateral head movements
    bac                                              +raises eyebrows+
    nir                                  #-nods--> line 13
13        do (0.2) < erm># (.) an:d ↑#unfortunately# i can't
    nir   -----------------#            #-slighly nods#
14        °°because it's°° ↑+pea day+ and #everyone at +my place+ are
    bac                       +finger q+uotes           +hand move+ment
    nir                       6: diverse gaze #-------6------> line 15
15        ↑celebRAting the pea day (.) and i can't be here to#
   nir    ----------------------------------------------------------#
16        +d::::o+ #(0.7)# <err::::> err to d:::o (0.4) the ↑job+ so
    bac    +leans t+wds the screen
    nir              #sliglt#ly leans twds the screen
   bac    ------------------------------------------------------------+
17        >could you-< could you please ↑+#help me#+ an::d (0.7)
    bac                                    +hand movem+ent
    nir                                     #raises e#yebrows
18        #do:: my tasks# for ↑you today
    nir   #moves her head# up
19        #(0.4)
    nir   #looks upper right--> line 20
20  NIR:  ER#::m[::
    nir   --#

21  BAC:          [+please+
    nir            +folded+ hands gesture
22  NIR:  ↑YES (0.2) $i can ↑help #you#
    nir                              #loo#ks at bac
23        (0.9)
```

```
24 NIR:  ↑we can do it (0.3) #it's really# ↑sp[ecial$
   nir                        #looks her ri#ght
25 BAC:                                          [$you are already$
26 NIR:  $#day# for ↑you$ (0.4) ↑so
   nir    #look#s down
          #(0.2) +i don't want to:: break your+
   nir    #----6----> line 27
   bac             +------------looks down------+
27        +#heart## (0.3) we can do it
   Bac    +-----7-----> line 33 7: scratches his head
   nir    #bowed# her head
   nir    --------#
28        #(1.7)#
   nir    #-nods-#
29 BAC:  yeah +>i would die< i would die (.) if: if- you if you
   bac         +----3---> line 30
30        °don't allow me° [to go+
   bac    ------------------------+
31 NIR:                     [↑#okay#
   nir                       #nods-#
32        (1.2)
33 BAC:  $everyone is ↑waiti[ng$+
   bac    -------------------------+
34 NIR:                       [↑it's #okay#
   nir                              #nods#
35 BAC:  +$yeah its ↑pea day aft[+er all$+
   bac    +--------------claps------+
   bac              8: rubs his hands together+-8--> line 36
36 NIR:                            [no ↑problem+
   bac                              ------------+
37        #+(3.0)#
   nir    #-nods--#
   bac     +-puts his hands together--> line 38
38 BAC:  $yeah eheh (0.3) you are ↑super nice$+
   bac    ---------------------------------------+
39        +↖ #(4.6)#
   bac    +----6----> line 44
   nir     ↖---2--> line 40 ((scrolls the task))
   nir        #makes #a face
40 NIR:  #<ER::m>↖
   nir    --------↖
   nir    #----3---> line 42
41        (2.6)
42 NIR:  ↖ERmm (0.4)↖ #should i click the# ↑answer (0.2)# #↑this#
   nir    ↖places the ↖cursor on 'answer this'
   nir    ------------------------------------------------------#
   nir                  #-------frowns-------#                #looks twds
                                                                 bac#

43        (1.9)+
   bac    --6--+
44 BAC:  +maybe+ but (0.3) yeah erm i ↖think it's changin:g (.)
   bac    +puts +his hand on his head
   nir                                  ↖moves the cursor on the task->
                                                              line 47
45 NIR:  #<hum>#
   nir   #looks# at bac
46 BAC:   ↑by time↖ ↖i me:an (0.2) we have (0.4) ↑+a minute+
   nir    ---------↖ ↖--2--> line 48
   bac                                              +hand move+ment
```

```
47 BAC:  (0.4) and then it's (0.5) [staying((inaudible))
   nir   ------          places the cursor on the left side
                          of the screen
48 NIR:                                  [#okay#
   nir                                  #leans# back
```

The interaction begins with a carefully constructed opening sequence where Bac initiates the task through a suggestion: “i think we should ↑try this ↑one”. This initial turn exemplifies a “pre-sequence” (Schegloff, 2007), which aims to prepare for the next action while concurrently soliciting alignment from the co-participant. This pre sequence is described as pre-sequential practice called “pre-pre sequence” by Havadar and Balaman (2024) in which participants move into the task by paving way to topicalizing the task topic. The ascending intonation (shown by ↑) functions as a “try-marking” device soliciting engagement and verifying comprehension. This corresponds with Sert's (2017) results about how learners begin task-based sequences in classroom settings. This is promptly followed by Nir's alignment in line 2 via both verbal (“huh hum”) and embodied actions (nodding). Bac's following elaboration in lines 4 and 5, “like a ↑role play...you are my boss”, delineates the role-play structure for the encounter. The intervals between turns may be viewed as opportunities for mutual comprehension and alignment, exemplifying “interactional rhythm” in an online conversation (Steensig, 2012). This turn construction exemplifies an intricate interactional effort, integrating several resources such as prosody (increasing intonation), gesture (hand movement), and deliberate pausing to contextualize the next activity. Lines 9-16 present an interesting sequence in which Bac introduces the notion of “pea day”, accessible to both students via their screens. This elaboration fulfils multiple interactional functions: it sets the contextual framework for the role-play, illustrates learner agency in task manipulation, and paves the ground for prolonged conversations.

A particularly significant sequence emerges starting from line 12 where participants enter acting out, when Bac constructs a complex request: “could you please ↑+help me+ an::d...do:: my tasks for ↑you today” in line 17 and 18. This turn exemplifies complex interactional efforts utilizing diverse linguistic and prosodic elements. The request sequence illustrates “entitlement and

contingency" in request formulation (Curl & Drew, 2008), wherein the speaker weighs their entitlement to make the request against the recognition of possible impositions. Nir's response in line 22, "↑YES...i can ↑help you", demonstrates strong alignment and affiliation through a "stance-aligned response" (Stivers, 2008), incorporating both verbal and prosodic elements to show support and understanding. The prompt "↑YES" with ascending intonation, followed by the affirmative elaboration in lines 24 and 26 "↑we can do it (0.3) it's really ↑special day for ↑you", exemplifies "multimodal alignment practices" (Steensig, 2013). The use of prosody, gaze, and embodied actions fosters a robust interactional environment that facilitates collaborative achievement of the task at hand. Nir's enthusiastic "↑YES" in line 22 is accompanied by gaze direction changes and embodied movements that enhance the affiliative work and invoke embodied participation frameworks wherein many semiotic resources collaborate to facilitate social actions.

Nir's reply "YES...i can help you" (line 22) demonstrates strong affiliation via: i) immediate acceptance, ii) enthusiastic prosody (indicated by rising intonation), and iii) supportive stance-taking. The sequence in lines 29-31 is very intriguing. Bac's statement "I would die...if you don't allow me" exemplifies an "extreme case formulation" (Pomerantz, 1986) which is an upgrade to the original request. Thus, Bac makes an "affective stance marking" (Cekaite, 2016) via the integration of prosodic elements (increasing intonation), verbal reiteration, and physical gestures. The softening of voice (shown by "°") in line 30 collaborates with embodied actions to create what an "epistemic downgrading" (Heritage, 2011), rendering the request more tentative and thereby increasing the likelihood of a favorable answer. The participants' utilization of online affordances is especially apparent in lines 33-38. Bac's statement of thanks ("you are ↑super nice") accompanied by "affiliative laughter sequences" (Glenn & Holt, 2013). These sequences fulfil many roles in online interactions: they preserve social cohesion, indicate successful task advancement, and mitigate possible face-threatening behaviors. The prosodic characteristics, shown by ascending intonation and stress enhance prosodic orientation in interaction.

A crucial transition point occurs in line 42 when Nir asks "should i click the ↑answer". This inquiry illustrates "modal switching" in online language learning contexts (Seedhouse, 2020), wherein interactants must maneuver between distinct participation frameworks—specifically, in this case the role-play framework and the technical stipulations of the task. Nir's inquiry in line 42 is accompanied by cursor movements and facial gestures, exemplifying a "multimodal ensemble" in digital engagement (Streeck et al., 2011). The ascending intonation and stress on "↑answer" indicate an awareness of both the current task demands and the ongoing social context of the encounter. The closing sequence (lines 44-48) demonstrates competent management of various interactional requirements. Bac's reply, "maybe...it's changin:g", along by the temporal reference "we have (0.4) ↑a minute", exemplifies "temporal coordination" in engagement (Markee, 2015). The participants exhibit careful attention to both the immediate interactional requirements and the overarching institutional context of the task.

Throughout the engagement, participants interactionally manage the online learning environment. They skillfully maneuver various participation frameworks while preserving task focus and social cohesion. The utilization of diverse semiotic resources, such as prosody, gesture, and digital affordances, fosters a robust interactional environment that advances both educational and social objectives. This is especially apparent in their navigation between the role-play framework and technical requirements of the task.

A closer look at Extract 2 shows numerous important aspects of online task-based interaction that enhance our comprehension of digital language learning contexts. Initially, it illustrates how participants effectively integrate "technical-pedagogical competence" (Hampel & Stickler, 2012) with L2 interactional competence. The fluid transition between the role-play framework and task management demonstrates a nuanced comprehension of "digital interaction management" (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2018) which might be indicative of their L2 interactional competence (Balaman, 2018). The participants' utilization of multimodal resources boosts our understanding of "embodied participation" in digital contexts (Mondada, 2019). The combined

use of verbal, prosodic, and screen-based resources fosters a robust interactional environment that facilitates both task fulfilment and social cohesion. The interaction exemplifies complex management "epistemic territories" (Heritage, 2012) as interactants maneuver between different roles as interactants and role play actors. This corresponds with Balaman and Sert's works (Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017b; Sert & Balaman, 2018) on digital interaction that underscores the significance of multimodal resources in online learning contexts and dual progressivity of task and talk.

Extract 3 comes from Dyad 26's second meeting. The same with Extract 2, participants do the "Communication Styles" task in the extract (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from the 28.33rd minute of the interaction and lasts for 1.36 minutes. The dyad acts out two role play scenarios before the extract. In the extract, Bel and Con engage in another guided role play which requires one of them to get permission from her boss to go home to celebrate her dog's birthday with many invited people and the other dyad acting out being the employer. Different from earlier extracts, Extract 3 shows how participants employ humor to build affiliation following disaffiliation.

Extract 3: Dog Birthday(Dyad26/BEL-CON/M21/1.36')

```
1  BEL: %okay (0.3) first of all <err:> (0.8).hh if i was <err::>
   con  %---1---> line 2 1: puts her left hand under her chin
2       (0.5) in the situation %i %would <err::>↑%definitel:::y%
   bel  cursor moveme nts
   con  ----------1---------------%   %-------leans backwards--------%
   con             2: hand movements around the mouth %--2--> line 3
3       %say my% boss% %that %<err::>.hh ↑can i (0.3) <err::> work
   con  ---2----%        %---3---> line 6 3: looks closely at the 12
   con  %leans forward%        %-4-> line 8 4: places her left hand on
                                          her mouth
4       at hom:e and $take these papers with me: hh.$
5       %(0.3)
   con  %-head movements—> line 6
6  CON: $YEahhh. yeah$%%
   con  ----------------%
   con  --------3--------%
7       (0.6)
8  BEL: .hh %err:: the- an:d then% %i would >go%% %to the-< (.)
   con       %----leans backwards---% %leans forward%
   con  --------------------4----------------------%   %--5--> line 10
                          5: places her left hand around her chin
9       because i-i hav-have a party and al-l all the-se people
10      i invited and %they are waiting%%for me% .hh (.)% %<↑A::nd>
   con                 %-raises eyebrows-%%--------nods-----% %-4->line
   con  ----------------------5-------------------%                 12
11      (0.5)
12 BEL: %%>i would> i would <err::>%(0.2)%make the party%%<an:d>%%
   con   %-------leans forward--------%     %-----------nods-----------%
```

```
   con   %-----------------------looks down-------------------%%-6->line
   con                                                      6: smiles    13
   con   -------------------------4-----------------------------------%
13       err %(0.8) >i dont know< (.) %work% u-ntil the ↑morning%
   con       %--5--> line 20            %head%shake
   con   ------------------------------6----------------------------%
14       %(0.9)
15 CON:  $yeahhh.$% %(0.2) %↑o<kay>%% ye:ah %that %makes sense%
   con   %leans bac%kwards   %looks twr%ds left
   con              %-leans forward--%         %-----leans back----%
   con                                 7: looks left %--7--> line 16
16       (0.2) okay% ↑for me %i think (.) <err::> (0.4) i% %would
   con   ----7------%          %-------looks towards left-----% %looks
   con                                              downwards--> line 18
17       find
18       (1.7)%
   con   ------%
19       %↑more %convenient% excuse% (0.2) you know (0.4) %<↑and>
   con   %---lateral head movements---%                        %raises
   con           %looks down-%                          eyebrows--> line 20
20       i would% %take your <err:>(0.4)% your %idea %by%(0.2)%%
   con   --------% %------leans left-------%       %slightly leans ba%ck
   con                                                    %looks upper
                                                            left%

   con   ------------------------5--------------------------%
21       %%taking papers with me% at% %hom::e (0.2) %but err::% i
   con   %-lateral head movements-%      %--5--> line 22
   con    %--------hand movement-------%              %looks upper% left
22       think i-a-m err::% %find the (0.5) another %convenient%
   con   --------5----------% %---8---> line 24 8: hand movements
   con                                          slightl%y leans back%
23       %↑not% >i am<%↑NOT% saying% that ↑lying (.) ↑but% (0.6)
   con   %looks% up    %looks% up     %-------looks down------%
24       %hh.(0.2)% %i will try another excuse(.)% %>i dont know<%%
   con   %slightly %leans back
   con              %-------------lateral head movements---------------%
   con   ----------------------8--------------------%  %touches her
                                                              glasses%
25       %(0.7)% in order to /convence/ him (0.3)↑
   con    %slight%ly leans right
26       %%with the papers%[%inaudible%%
   con    %---leans right---% %leans backwa%rds
   con   %---------hand movements--------%
27 BEL:               $%may[behh. pretend hh.% %%pretending%
   con                 %------leans forward-----%  %leans forwa%rd
   con                                          %--clasps hands->line
                                                              28
28       %to be ↑sick$ [eheh%
   con   ---------------------%
29 CON:                [%%ehe (0.4)%% [%%%↑no (.) not% exactly
   con                 %touching her% bottom lips with her thumb
   con                   %leans forwa%rd%---9---> line 31 9:looks upper
   con                                  %--headshake--%            left
   con                                   %--8---> line 30
30 BEL:                [%ehehheh%%
   con                  %leans fo%rward
   con                  ----------%
31 CON:  %↑but i don't <↑kno::whh.>%% (0.2) %heh
   con   ------------9---------------%         %--10--> line 36 10: clasps
   con   %---lateral head movements---%                          her hands
32 BEL:  i would do ↑thathh. $by the way$ (0.3) [eheh
33 CON:                                          [%yeah]
   con                                            %leans her right-->
34       ehe yeahhh.%                                        line 34
   con   ------------%
35       (1.7)
   bel   cursor movements
```

```
36 BEL:  i-i% have %a terrible toothache and >i will<
   con   -10%       %---5---> line 38
37       i have to go to %dentist (.) heh heh🖵 heh%
   con                    %--------6------------------%
   bel                                          🖵 a new scenerio appears
38 CON:  %$yeah  yeah% %  %that kind of  excuses% >%you know%<$
   con   %leans forwards%
   con   ----------5------%   %------hand movements----%  %leans back%
   bel          cursor move ments          ((clicks))
   bel                                      ----cursor movements-----
```

Bel initiates the interaction with a hesitant introduction, employing fillers such as “err” to regulate the conversational flow. Bel's employment of “okay” and her hand gestures (line 1) accompanying hand gestures indicate a change in attention, setting the stage for the subsequent scenario; thus, her preparedness to shift to a new topic. This is consistent with the use of transition markers to facilitate topic shifts (Riou, 2017; Tůma, 2022). This also demonstrates her control over topic management. The shift between topics (this one and the preceding scenario) is indicated by clear verbal signals and embodied actions.

In line 2, Bel proceeds with the narrative, employing “definitely” to reinforce her stance. The employment of hypothetical language enables her to investigate alternatives without committing to a definitive course of action, so promoting open dialogue and interaction (Holmes, 2000; Kardaş İşler et al., 2024). Bel's proposal to telecommute and bring documents with her deepens the details of the situation in lines 3 and 4, soliciting Con's feedback. This comprehensive proposal establishes a specific framework for the discussion, promoting alignment and engagement (Satar, 2015). Con replies with “yeahhh” in line 6, signaling alignment and understanding. This acknowledgement token functions to sustain the ongoing topic.

In line 8, Bel further advances the scenario, use “and then” to indicate the progression in her narrative. This sequential organization of events facilitates conversational flow and invites more elaboration (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). In line 10, Bel's reference to visitors awaiting her introduces urgency to the situation, fostering a feeling of immediacy and involvement. Bel's reiteration of “I would” in line 12 demonstrates her investment in the situation, strengthening her position and soliciting Con's perspective. This

reiteration functions to sustain the topic and invite more discussion (Heritage, 1984). This is succeeded by a proposal to work until morning and a possible clash between personal and professional commitments (line 13). This self-disclosure prompts Con to contemplate the intricacies of the situation and interact with the topic more profoundly (Holmes, 2000). Con's reply to Bel's first assertion (line 6) with 'yeahhh' and the subsequent elaboration (lines 15-16) illustrates alignment and is helpful in the progression of the topic.

In line 15, Con's repeated agreement and recognition of Bel's situation demonstrate alignment and understanding. The use of acknowledgement tokens facilitates conversational flow and strengthens the affiliative connection between participants (Stivers, 2008). In line 16, Con expresses her viewpoint, employing “for me” to personalize her statement. This change in focus encourages Bel to contemplate Con's perspective, fostering an environment for alignment and engagement. Con's suggestion to seek a more convenient reason presents a novel perspective beginning at line 16, prompting Bel to explore alternate resources. This broadening of the topic promotes more contribution and involvement (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020) while also indicating a possible disaffiliation. Con's recognition of Bel's idea in lines 20 and 21, along with an idea of alteration, illustrates both alignment and disaffiliation.

Bel's suggestion to take documents home, together with a hesitation marking, illustrates Con's cautious attitude towards the situation. In line 22, Con's ongoing investigation of alternative justifications illustrates three things. First, her involvement with the topic, her alignment to but disaffiliation with Bel's earlier suggestions, and her openness to contemplating multiple perspectives on the same scenario. And lastly, Con explains that she is not endorsing deception between lines 23 and 26; the subsequent silence demonstrates a deliberate contemplation of the moral implications of the situation. This intricate reply invites Bel to go into the topic more profoundly and contemplate the complex nature of the circumstances (Heritage, 1984). Bel's proposal for pretending illness (lines 27 and 28), accompanied by laughing, adds a humorous aspect into the situation. The employment of humor decreases the possibility of any face-threatening actions and

strengthens the affiliative bond among participants (Holmes, 2000; Sumruk et al., forthcoming).

Con's response in line 29 is notable for demonstrating disaffiliation. It is characterized by laughter and a rejection, displaying a humorous yet straightforward disagreement from Bel's offer. This humorous interaction illustrates the function of humor in resolving a conflict (Stivers, 2008). Con's acknowledgement of uncertainty in line 31, accompanied by laughter, demonstrates a readiness to approach the topic playfully and bypass any potential face concerns. The utilization of humor sustains an affiliative tone and promotes further contribution on the scenario (Holmes, 2000). This is precisely what occurs in the subsequent line. Bel's acknowledgement of faking illness, accompanied by laughing, underscores the light-hearted essence of the exchange. The utilization of humor sustains an affiliative tone and promotes more investigation of the scenario (Stivers, 2008).

Con's minimal recognition of Bel's admission, characterized by laughing, demonstrates alignment and understanding. Nevertheless, it may be asserted that the affiliation has not yet been re-established. The 1.7-minute inter-turn silence serves as evidence for the ambiguous situation regarding the affiliative bond, indicating that none of the participants is inclined to take the turn or contribute more to the continuing discussion. What follows is an exemplification of this lie. Bel's imagined toothache and her reference to a dental appointment in lines 36-37, accompanied by laughing, introduce a humorous aspect to the scenario. The application of humor alleviates any face-threatening actions and strengthens the affiliative connection between the participants (Holmes, 2000; Sumruk et al., forthcoming). Con's recognition of Bel's situation in line 38, accompanied by laughter, demonstrates alignment and the re-establishment of affiliation. It strengthens the affiliative connection among the participants (Stivers, 2008).

The analysis of Extract 3 elucidates the intricate dynamics of topic management, alignment, affiliation, and online task-based interaction. The participants collaborate to attain a mutual understanding of the topic, while showcasing their ability to manage intricate conversations and sustain alignment and affiliation. The maintenance of topics is accomplished via

reciprocal exchanges and the employment of enquiries to prolong the discussion. This interactional practice corresponds with the notion of "rolling the ball back" (RBB) as described by Çimenli, Sert, and Jenks (2022), wherein participants alternate turns to maintain topic progression. Participants demonstrate alignment through vocal affirmations and non-verbal actions. Affiliation is established via shared experiences and mutual understanding. Bel and Con's discussion about personal preferences and hypothetical situations (lines 9-13) functions as a medium for expressing (dis)affiliation. The employment of humor and laughter (lines 27-29) enhances their affiliative connection and preservers interactional harmony through affiliative actions (Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025).

Extract 4 below is taken from Tun and Jen's second meeting. They do the "Communication Styles" task in the extract (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from the first minute of the interaction and lasts 1.33 minutes. In the extract, dyad 29 discusses the following warm-up question: "Before watching the video, discuss the following phrase "Tailor your communication to suit where you are" with your partner (approx. 2 minutes)". Tun shares her screen throughout the interaction and this extract because of the voice problem Jen has. Extract 4 shows how participants achieve and maintain alignment and affiliation via timely acknowledgements and strong confirmations although they contribute to the interaction at varying levels.

Extract 4: Totally agree(Dyad29/TUN-JEN/M2/1.33')

1	TUN:	🖵**i guess ↑that's right (0.2) you canNOT say the sa err: use**
		🖵 ((screen is on 'Task Instructions'))
2		**↑the same <erm> (0.3) communication tool with a ↑friEND like**
3		**with the ↑teacher or someone who is (0.4) err [other than**
4	JEN:	**[yeah**
5	TUN:	**↑you in a company for example:**
6		**(1.8)**
7	TUN:	**hh. with ↑friends you will: (0.3) use ↑more informal**
8		**language**
9		**(2.0)**
10	TUN:	**even at** ↖**↑CHATting at the level not only**↖ **er:m speaking**
	tun	↖------slight cursor movements-----↖
11		**but even ↑WRIting**
12		↖ **(1.2)** ↖
	tun	↖cursor movements↖

13 JEN: 🖵↑**%yeah%**🖵
tun 🖵 two tabs appear ((official Zoom page and jen's Zoom video)) 🖵
jen %-nods-%
14 TUN: 🖵**when**🖵 **(.) [y-**
tun 🖵 clicks on the jen's Zoom video🖵
15 JEN: ↑🖵 **(.) [%%total%ly agree**
jen 🖵 jen's Zoom video appears on the whole screen🖵
jen %removes %his right hand under his chin
jen %---1---> line 21 1: looks lower left side
16 TUN: **%(0.2) #whe- whe-# ##when you ↑chat you just (.) err:%**
jen %---------------leans forward to the screen---------------%
tun #moves back# and forth
tun #---2---> 19 2: looks down
tun #---3---> line 19 3: leans below
17 **%say %whatever you ↑wa::nt sometimes you mak>e sp<elling**
jen %---4---> line 19 4: leans his right side
jen %---5---> line 18 5: slightly nods
18 **mistakes (.) like% i hh. ↑do #gramma°r°>mis-<# ↑even**
jen ----------5-------%
tun #-slight headshake#
19 **wi°th°## in your ↑#%own %%LANguage% (0.3) ↑oKAY (0.2)#**
tun ---2---#
tun ----3---# #---------touches her head-------------#
jen ----------4---------% %---6--> line 21 6: covers his mouth
jen %slightly %leans back
20 **#but# #%when you# ↑write to your teacher it's% more#**
tun #rai#ses eyebrows #----------hand movements----------#
tun #----------makes a face----> line 21
jen %-----------------nods--------------------%
21 **formal# #and# (0.9)%#<erm>##%(0.7)##high% level# of#**
San ------# #look#s twrds left
tun #looks rig#ht #--hand movement--#
tun #-leans back and forth--#
jen --------6----------% %---7-->>>> 7: puts his hand
tun #looks #down under his chin
jen ----------1---------%
22 **↑forMA:lity #i guess (0.3) #so:#%**
tun #-8-> line 23 8: puts her hand on her cheeks
tun looks twrds left & #lean#s backward
jen %---9--> line 25 9: nods
23 JEN: **↑yeah#**
tun --8---#
24 **#(0.7)**
tun #---leans forward-----> line 25
25 TUN: **#i guess t-there** ↑**IS% difference** **between##** 🖵 **both of**
tun #----------makes a face----------#
tun ----------#
jen ----------9----------%
tun -cursor movements- ((clicks))
tun ((The screen changes to 'Task Instructions'))🖵
26 **↑them (0.6) <erm> (0.2) ↑let's say that we are in erm**
27 **(1.5)**

```
28 TUN:  a ↑company for example,
29       (1.3)
30 TUN:  it's not the same (.) not like you (0.2) talk to your (0.2)
31       ↑colleague
32       (2.4)
33 TUN:  [and
34 JEN:  [↑yeah
35 TUN:  and ↑your manager (0.3) what do you think JEN (0.2) what
36       do you ↑have
37       (1.2)
38 JEN:  i totally agree with you
39       (0.9)
40 JEN:  and:: (0.4) ↑yeah
41       (3.7)
42 TUN:  it's <err:> i guess it's like that
```

Tun initiates the interaction by voicing tentative agreement, prefacing her statement with "I guess". This hedging demonstrates a cautious method for initiating a topic, commonly employed to navigate the transition into potentially intricate or unfamiliar topics (Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025). The employment of hesitation markers indicates a careful opening of the conversation, which helps alleviating any face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This opening move establishes the groundwork for an extended discussion of register differences. The presence of task instructions on the screen, available for both participants through TUN's screen, offers a visual context for the interaction, grounding the conversation within a task-oriented framework (Hauck & Satar, 2018).

TUN methodically develops the topic via a series of contrasting instances, first with the essential distinction between communication with friends and teachers (lines 2-5), use rising intonation to underscore the difference. This disparity establishes a foundation for a discussion on communication styles, prompting Jen to participate in the topic (Satar, 2015). In lines 3 and 5, Tun elucidates the disparity by referencing teachers and other formal interlocutors, emphasizing the diversity in communication styles. This explanation contextualizes the conversation within a familiar framework, promoting alignment and engagement (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). The topic maintenance adheres to Schegloff's (2007) concept of "stepwise

progression", transitioning from fundamental categorical distinctions to intricate instances related to organizational hierarchy and styles of written communication.

JEN exhibits constant alignment via well-timed confirmation tokens, starting with the overlapping 'yes' in line 4. This acknowledgement token functions to maintain the ongoing topic and illustrates Jen's involvement in the scenario (Stivers, 2008). His comments starting from line 4 exemplifies "concurrent feedback" (Stivers, 2008), culminating in more significant affirmations like "totally agree" (line 15). The timing of these alignment displays demonstrates meticulous attention to turn-taking organization, with JEN delivering responds at transition-relevant places that facilitate TUN's topic maintenance without disrupting the pedagogical flow.

After a notable pause of 1.8 seconds, TUN presents the initial difference in lines 7-8: "with ↑friends you will: (0.3) use ↑more informal language". This statement has been carefully composed with ascending intonation highlighting essential phrases and a micro pause facilitating processing. The 2.0-second break after this (line 9) allows for potential uptake from JEN while emphasizing the importance of this categorical differentiation. Lines 10-11 illustrate TUN broadening the argument's scope with "even at ↑CHATting" and "↑WRIting", accompanied by cursor motions. This multimodal composition exemplifies "complex multimodal gestalts", wherein verbal and visual resources together generate meaning (Mondada, 2014). The cursor movements function as digital pointing gestures, adapting conventional embodied resources to the online context to facilitate the progressivity of talk (Olbertz-Siitonen & Piirainen-Marsh, 2021). Tun's utilization of writing in the discussion highlights the diversity of communication methods, prompting Jen to reflect on the ramifications.

This expansion of the topic promotes more inquiry and involvement (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020). Jen's delayed agreement, denoted by 'yes' in line 13, demonstrates agreement with Tun's assertion. Jen's prompt agreement in line 15, denoted by 'absolutely agree', indicating robust alignment with Tun's assertion. This acknowledgement token strengthens the affiliative bond between participants (Stivers, 2008). The sequence in lines 15-19

demonstrates intricate affiliation efforts in several modalities, encompassing postural alignment (leaning movements) and facial expressions. The screen transitions appear to be purposefully timed to support topic maintenance, as illustrated in lines 13–15, where changes in the video windows seem to correspond with key points in the dyad's discussion.

Lines 14-19 illustrate advanced coordination of technical and interactional resources (Balaman & Sert, 2017a). TUN's engagement with JEN's video (line 14) aligns with JEN's enhanced affirmation "totally agree" (line 15). Beginning at line 16, Tun further elaborates on the topic by employing "when you chat" to personalize the discussion. This self-disclosure personalizes the encounter and encourages Jen to engage with the topic more intimately (Holmes, 2000).Tun's reference to spelling errors provides a novel aspect to the discourse, prompting Jen to contemplate the implications of it. This broadening of the topic promotes more exploration and involvement (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020). Tun's reference to errors in one's own tongue in line 19 underscores the universality of the issue, prompting Jen to contemplate its implications. This alignment of technical and verbal actions exemplifies "coordination of action in technology-mediated interaction" (Balaman & Sert 2017a, 2017b, 2017c).

Beginning with line 20, Tun delineates the distinctions between casual and formal writing styles, using the phrase "when you write to your teacher" to underscore the contrast. This juxtaposition encourages Jen to engage with the topic at hand (Satar, 2015). Register awareness arises as both a topic of discourse and a demonstrated competence. Beginning at line 26, Tun presents a hypothetical scenario concerning a corporation, prompting Jen to contemplate its implications. The utilization of hypothetical language facilitates the investigation of alternatives and promotes further engagement (Holmes, 2000). Tun's reference to a corporation (line 28) establishes a specific setting for the discourse, encouraging Jen to interact with the topic on a more intimate basis (Holmes, 2000). Jen's prompt agreement in lines 23 and 34, denoted by "yeah", demonstrates agreement with Tun's assertion. These acknowledgements assist in maintaining the current topic and illustrate Jen's engagement in the scenario (Stivers, 2008). In line 35, Tun rolls the ball

back (Çimenli, Sert, and Jenks, 2022) and prompts Jen to express her viewpoint by employing the phrase “what do you think” to personalize her response. This change in emphasis allows Jen to contemplate Tun's perspective, fostering alignment and engagement (Çimenli, Sert, and Jenks, 2022). Jen's strong agreement in line 38, denoted by 'completely agree', demonstrates alignment with Tun's assertion. This acknowledgement token strengthens the affiliative bond between the participants (Stivers, 2008). Tun's cautious agreement, characterized by “I guess”, demonstrates a provisional consensus on concluding the topic as well. This hedging indicates a prudent resource to terminate the topic, maybe without gaining substantial insight from Jen into his viewpoint, despite his ongoing demonstration of attentiveness and the use of explicit alignment resources (absolutely agree).

Throughout the extract, we see how participants successfully integrate multiple interactional demands - managing topic, maintaining alignment and affiliation, and navigating technical requirements - while achieving their pedagogical goals in an online environment. Screen management serves as a vital interactional tool, with TUN effectively incorporating cursor movements and tab navigation into their elucidation of register distinctions. The participants exhibit “digital pointing practices” (Mondada, 2014), modifying conventional deictic gestures for the online context. This is especially apparent in lines 10-13, where cursor movements enhance vocal explanations. Their success in incorporating these elements indicates the ability to adapt conventional conversational patterns to digital educational contexts.

Register awareness arises as a predominant theme, both as a topic of discussion and in the language choices of the participants. The interaction illustrates multiple categories of formal and informal communication environments, substantiated by many real-world instances (e.g., emails to managers, academic writing, familial discussion). The participants' metalinguistic awareness is evident in their careful manipulation of register during the conversation, demonstrating alignment with the task's institutional nature while preserving rapport. Affiliation in this encounter transcends basic structural alignment, exhibiting profound emotional and stance-taking agreement. This is apparent in JEN's physical behaviors,

especially the synchronized nodding that complied with vocal affirmations (line 13). In accordance with Stivers' (2008) examination of nodding as an affiliative resource, it is evident that JEN's non-verbal behaviors actively reinforce TUN's perspective on register disparities. The lack of any dissent or opposition throughout the interaction further solidifies this robust affiliative framework. The analysis also demonstrates advanced topic management resources, with TUN effectively employing contrast structures, exemplification, and stepwise topic transitions. The careful organization of turns, including strategic pauses and discourse markers, facilitates the coherent progression of ideas while preserving interactive involvement. JEN's continuous alignment through vocal and non-verbal replies facilitates topic maintenance, promoting a collaborative learning environment.

Extract 5 comes from the third meeting of Dyad 30. Participants do the task titled "Linguistic Landscapes" (see Appendix A for the task). The extract comes from 27th minute of the interaction and lasts for 1.30 minutes. Before this episode, Han and Zel engage in a tandem language learning episode which is not predesigned by the task (see Extract 13). Then, Han reads the task instructions aloud: "Discuss your countries' linguistic landscapes" and the dyad moves onto this episode. Extract 5 shows how participants achieve alignment without affiliation while maintaining the topic-at-hand. The extract is divided into two to make it easier to follow.

Extract 5 (*Segment 1*): Linguistic Landscape (Dyad30/HAN-ZEL/M3/1.30')

```
1  HAN: ##↑mention your# ↑countr>y in< linguistic landscape
   han    #head movement-#
   han   #----1---> line 2 1: lateral head movements
2       #mention your ↑SIGNS (.) ↑sign boards#
   han   #---2---> line 4 2: diverse gaze on screen
   han   ----------------------------------------#
   han                              cursor movements
3        (2.3)
   han    cursor movements---> line 4
4  ZEL: *should* we write or just talk about# #↑that
   han   ---------------------------------------#---------
   zel   *slight* head movement to the right
   han                       ((3: looks twds zel)) #-3-> line 8
5       (0.5) ↑i don't *think that
   han   cursor movements
```

```
   zel                          *--4--> line 10 4: makes a face
   han            5: cursor movements ---5---> line 6
6  HAN: [no- (.)
   han   --------
7  ZEL: [we should write
   han              ---5---> line 12 ((highlights the 'discuss'))
8  HAN: #↑no we should# just ↑discuss#
   han           ---5---> line 11
   han   #-----------headshake------------#
   han   -----------------#
9        (0.7)
10 ZEL:  #>**uh okay<**
   han    #--looks twds zel--> line 12
   zel      *leans back*
   zel    --------------*
11       (1.7)
   han    ---5--
12 ZEL   ↑*so#  >#what about*# them<#(0.2) hh. ↑$do #you know$#
   zel    -*-----looks up-------*
   han    ----#  ((clicks))
   han             #slightly lea#ns back   #------looks twd screen-----#
   han     -------((unhighlighted))-5---                  #---6--->
                                                      line 13 6: smiles

  13       #(2.7)#
     han   ---6---#
     han   #----3--> line 15
  14 HAN: hh. err
  15       (2.0)#
     han   ------#
  16 HAN:  $#what did you say↑hh.$# #eheh.#
     han    #-leans twds the screen-# #leans #back
  17       $*(2.8)*
     zel    *laughs*
  18 ZEL: *specifically* (0.4)*just* (0.5) err *be specific*$ (.)
     zel   *looks upper *left   *leans* back       *looks upper r*ight
  19       ↑what should i (0.6) <erhm:> (0.2) ↑*talk about*
     zel                                    *slight head movement*
```

Han opens the discussion by presenting the topic "linguistic landscapes", employing an approach that centers the discourse. This explicit topic introduction establishes the framework for the discussion and encourages Zel to participate in the task. The use of directives in on-task interactions facilitates the regulation of conversational flow and guarantees that participants maintain their focus on the assigned task (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). In line 2, Han elaborates on the topic by specifying "sign

boards", providing a concrete focus for the discussion. This specificity grounds the debate in a concrete setting, promoting alignment as well as engagement (Satar, 2015). Nonetheless, Zel refrains from engaging and contributing to the discussion during the 2.3 pause in line 3. In the next line, Zel requests clarification on the task requirements by posing a question to Han's directive. This request for explanation illustrates Zel's active involvement in the work, emphasizing the significance of mutual understanding in on-task interactions (Çimenli, Sert, & Jenks, 2022) and may also elucidate her delay in taking the turn earlier. She subsequently articulates her viewpoint about her clarification request in lines 5 and 7, encouraging Han to consider her standpoint. Han's prompt reply, marked by "no", demonstrates her comprehension of the task requirements, simultaneously validating Zel's inquiry and her assumption. In line 8, Han reaffirms her directive to engage in discussion and uses emphatic language to reinforce her position. This repetition sustains conversational focus and ensures that participants adhere to task requirements (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). This exchange underscores the cooperative essence of on-task interactions, when participants negotiate the terms of involvement (Satar, 2015).

Zel's recognition of Han's directive in line 10, signified by 'oh alright', demonstrates alignment and understanding. This acknowledgement token functions to sustain the ongoing topic and illustrates Zel's involvement in the task (Stivers, 2008). Zel, among prolonged silences, poses a clarification request and solicits further information regarding the inquiry in line 12. Han's pause in line 14, denoted by 'hh. err', may show a period of contemplation prior to her further elaboration. Han's request for clarification in line 16, followed by laughter, introduces a light-hearted element to the interaction. The use of humor alleviates any face-threatening actions and strengthens the affiliative connection among the participants (Holmes, 2000; Sumruk et al., forthcoming). In lines 18 and 19, Zel's plea for detail, denoted by "specifically", demonstrates a yearning for clarity and accuracy in the discourse. She requests further clarification on the task requirements, posing a query to interact with Han's directive. This request for explanation illustrates Zel's active involvement and engagement with the task,

emphasizing the significance of mutual understanding in on-task interactions (Çimenli, Sert, & Jenks, 2022).

Extract 5 (*Segment 2*): Linguistic Landscape (Dyad30/HAN-ZEL/M3/1.30')

```
20 HAN:  ##uh ↑you# should talk about #your# #cou::n#try's# (.)
   han   #leans back# & raises eyebrows  #leans twds the# screen
   han    #----------looks twds zel-----------#  #looks twds sc#reen
21       #linguistic landscape# ↑#for example (.) .hh.
   han   #--looks twds screen--#   #---7---> line 22 7: looks up
22       #what kind# of ↑signboards# do you #↑have#
   han   ----------#
   han   #-----leans on her right----#         #raises# eyebrows
23       #(1.8)#
   han   #make a# face & head movement
24 ZEL:  *oka:y*  #we have err. the ones# #(2.2)#
   zel   *looks*up#-------leans back-------# #leans# twds screen
25       *that (0.2)* tells *you (0.5)* **↑directions*
   zel   *-looks up-*.        *looks twr*ds right
   zel                                    *raises eyebrows*
   zel       ((facial expression, unsure))*---4---> line 27
26       (0.8)
27 HAN:  ↑#huh hum#*
   zel    ----------*
   han    #slightly# nods
28       *(1.2)
   zel   *looks upper left-> line 29
29 ZEL:  the *sto:p* si:gns*
   zel   -----------*
   zel       *slightly leans* twds screen
30       (0.5)
31 HAN:  ##is# there [any unique signboard (0.4) for ↑tunisia#
   han   #--------------------leans on her left------------------#
   han    #rai#ses her right eyebrow
32 ZEL:               [erm
33 HAN:  #(.)#*it's tunisia# ↑right* (.) i'm pronouncing it right#
   han   #--------------------leans on her right----------------------#
   han        #-----nods-----#
   zel         *-------looks up-------*
34       #(0.6)#
   han  #leans back#
35 ZEL:  $#*yes eheh hh*.$ err.# (.) *for example* (.)
   han    #---------nods---------#
   zel     *----nods---*              *--looks up--*

 36      #*th:e special ones* #are about * err.## (0.6)* erm:::
   han   #-----------turns on her right-----------#
   han                          #----------drinks-------#
   zel    *-raises eyebrows--*              *---looks up---*
 37      #adver#tising
   han   #looks# her right and forward
```

```
38       (0.7)
39 HAN:  ##hm#
   han   #sli#ghtly leans fwrd
   han    #---9---> line 40 9: mouth movements
40 ZEL:  advert*isement* err *(0.7) adver↑tising*#
   zel          *looks up*      *--looks her right--*
   han   ----------------------------------------#
41       (0.6)
42 ZEL:  *er:h. ↑fo:o:d*,#*clo::th* (0.4) uh# *fame-*
   zel   *---looks up---*  *leans back*           *looks* up
   han                     #-------nods---------#
43        (0.6) *just* showing #*↑famous  people*#
   zel           *looks*up & raises her eyebrows
   zel                            *--makes a face---*
   han                           #-------nods--------#
44        (.) *actresses (0.3) acto:rs*
   zel          *----looks on her left---*
45 HAN:  #yes=
   han   #---8--->>>
```

Beginning in line 20, Han issues a clear directive, delineating the topic of the discourse. This specificity grounds the discussion in a concrete setting, promoting alignment and engagement (Satar, 2015). She elucidates the issue by presenting an example and posing a question for Zel to contemplate while addressing the task question, encouraging Zel to interact with the task more effortlessly. The utilization of examples elucidates intricate topics and guarantees that both parties have a common understanding (Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). After a 1.8-second pause, Zel's affirmation of Han's instruction in line 24 with “okay”, demonstrates alignment and understanding. This acknowledgement token functions to sustain the ongoing topic and illustrates Zel's involvement in the task (Stivers, 2008). In line 25, she presents an example of signboards, stating “that tells you directions”. This is recognized by Han in line 27. Her acknowledgement of Zel's example with “huh hum”, demonstrates alignment and understanding. This acknowledgement token functions to sustain the ongoing topic and illustrates Han's involvement in the task (Stivers, 2008). In line 29, Zel presents a further illustration of signboards, namely “stop signs”. In line 31, Han's subsequent inquiry regarding distinctive signboards encourages Zel to elaborate on her viewpoint, fostering alignment and engagement.

Subsequent to the elucidation on the pronunciation of Tunisia from line 35, Zel presents an illustration of distinctive signboards, employing “the special ones” to delineate the topic of discourse. She mentions “advertising” as an additional instance of sign boards in line 37. Han's recognition of Zel's illustration in line 39, denoted by 'hm', demonstrates alignment and understanding. Han's engagement with the task is illustrated by this acknowledgement token, which functions to preserve the current topic (Stivers, 2008). In line 40, Zel seeks clarification, as indicated by the turn final rising intonation; yet this does not elicit a confirmation from Han. This may be due to her reading from the screen, as seen by her mouth movements. Zel thereafter presents another instance of distinctive signboards, listing “food, cloth, famous actresses and actors” as examples from her home country. Han's affirmation of Zel's instances in the concluding phrase, denoted by “yes”, demonstrates alignment and understanding. This acknowledgement token functions to sustain the ongoing topic and illustrates Han's involvement in the task (Stivers, 2008). Following this extract, the dyad continues talking about signboards in their own countries.

The analysis of Extract 5 underscores the strategic employment of interactional resources to navigate the discourse of intricate topics in virtual exchanges. The employment of instructions and enquiries to initiate new topics illustrates the participants' L2 IC in regulating conversational dynamics and facilitating a seamless transition into potentially intricate discussions. The participants collaborate to attain a mutual comprehension of the topic at hand, showcasing their ability to navigate a discussion and sustain alignment. The participants appear to achieve alignment but show limited affiliation in the provided extract. The interaction features smooth turn-taking and topic management, which may suggest a degree of structural collaboration. The absence of both viewpoints and the lack of an affective connection indicate that the participants fail to attain affiliation. Consequently, the analysis underscores the importance of distinguishing between these two dimensions of interaction in conversation analysis (see Chapter 5 for a discussion on this).

Extract 6 comes from the third meeting of Dyad 24 between Yop and Den. Participants do the task titled “Multilingualism” in this episode (see

Appendix A for the task). The extract begins at the 6th minute of the encounter and continues for 1.35 minutes. Prior to this episode, participants responded to the initial two questions of the first task step in a reciprocal manner. Yop reads the task instructions aloud for the third and final question of the initial task step: "Do you agree with the opinion that global problems can only be solved by global citizens?" The dyad then proceeds to discuss on the topic. Den takes the stage first and begins to elaborate on her views regarding the topic. Extract 6 begins with Den's comprehensive response to this inquiry. Extract 6 presents an example of how participants manage disaffiliation and (re)building it.

Extract 6: It Makes Sense (Dyad24/DEN-YOP/M3/1.36')

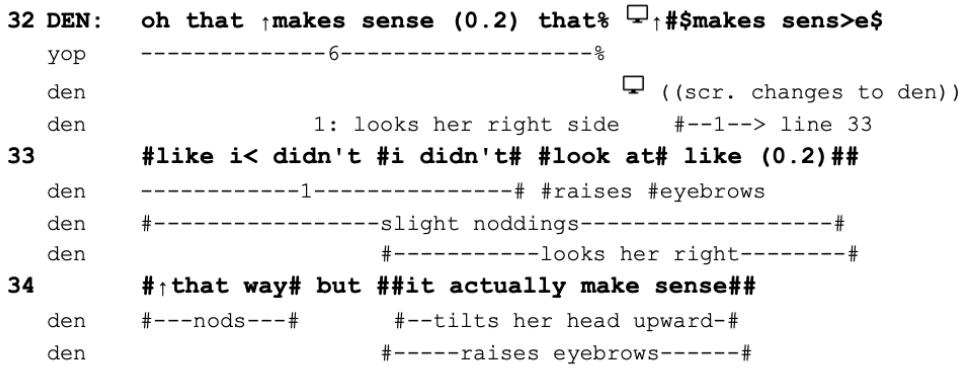
1	**DEN:**	**#to:: so:lve the# global problems**
	den	>>---looks right--#
	den	#---1---> line 2 1: hand movements
2		**#i think# (0.3)#<##WORLD>↑EVERYONE## should #be #aware**
	den	#--looks right--# #reciprocal hand mo#vement
	den	---------# #moves her head bac#k #---1-> line 3
	den	3: leans on her right #3-> line 4
3		**and then #they# ##should# like (0.3)# find a solution(.)**
	den	#------looks her right--------#
	den	-------1-------# #raises #her eyebrows
	den	#---4----> line 4 4: nods
4		**together i guess# #globally# (1.0)# ehe (.)↑$#that's it$#**
	den	-------4----------#---------3--------#
	den	#hand move#ment. #-headshake-#
5		**eheheh**
6	**YOP:**	**↑🖵i don't think like (.) %Ermm=**
	yop	🖵 ((screen changes to yop))%--5--> line 7 5:lateral head mov.
7	**DEN:**	**=>°what do you think%°<**
	yop	----------%%
8	**YOP:**	**🖵#i mea:n ↑global citizens:# <erm> #is not really#**
	den	🖵 ((screen changes to den))
	den	#--------looks down----------# #slight head mov#ements
9		**🖵a matter %of (0.3) <erm> (0.8)% i mean**
	yop	🖵 ((screen changes to yop))
	yop	%slightly looks on her %left
10		**%%↑each one can keep its own like% culture and all (0.2)%**
	yop	%------------nods------------------%
	yop	%-----------------moves her head back slowly-----------------%
11		**%but >i'l-l just say<% %at the END we all %agree on%%**
	yop	%---slight headshake---% %----lateral head movement----%
	yop	%looks twrds% left
12		**(0.2) %like ↑basics% %(0.5)% #<erm># %on gloBAL things%**
	yop	%leans twds the %screen

yop %leans ba%ck %slight head moveme%nts
den #nods#
13 **%%like it's not a global% it's more of (0.4)% <erm:> (0.3)**
yop %----------looks upper left----------%
yop %slightly leans on her ri%ght
14 **%there are ↑RULES% %that are ↑MAINLY set% for <err> for**
yop %leans twds the screen%
yop %looks at her upper left%

15 **each %culture% hh.(.) #↑so# %we don't have to% %like% (0.2)**
yop %leans t%wds the scr. %slight headshake-% %looks% down
den #nods#
16 **%gloBALIZE% %the whole %cultures%% %(0.4)%**
yop %lateral he%ad movement %slight he%adshake
yop %leans on her left side% %looks %up
17 DEN: 🖵**↑#OH >yeah yeah<# #su[re**
den 🖵 ((screen changes to den))
den #raises her e.b#row #---6---> line 18 6: leans forwards
18 YOP: **[↑we need DIFFERence (.)# we need**
den ----------#
19 **↑differences**🖵 **%(0.2) hh. <err> %differ[ences**
yop 🖵((screen changes to yop))
yop %-7--> line 28 7:lateral upper body movements
yop %-looks up->>>
20 DEN: **[↑sure**
21 YOP: **are% a source of::% %<ermhh.>**

14 lines omitted

22 YOP: **differences what %makes us like%**
yop loo%ks at her right%
23 **%%↑UNIQUE% %<erm>% %i mean% (0.3) we are ↑different**
yop %strong no%dding %looks up%
yop %sligthly% leans forwards
yop %should%er movement
24 **%but at the END% we %agree on% %highlight (.) on**
yop %--slightly nods-% %strongly %nods & leans forward
yop %--4--> line 25
25 **highlighted like (0.3)% %↑ethics% %<erm:> (0.2)%**
yop ----------4----------% %leans for%ward & looks twrds right
yop %looks twrds left%
26 **%↑moraliti>es% %and all<% %(0.3) hh. i think %that's (.)**
yop %leans forward% %headshake% %--3--> line 28 %---11--> line 11: looks left 28
27 **that's %more% important than:% like% %trying to globalize,**
28 yop %looks% up
yop ----------11----------%--3---% %----5---> line 29
29 **the whole thing hh.% %into one pattern%**
yop ----------5----------% %--leans forwards--%
30 **%%<erm>% (0.7)% %%that's my ↑opinion%**
31 yop %moves h%er head right
yop %-looks down--% %---6---> line 32
yop %-shoulder movement-%



Extract 6 starts with Den's response to the last question of first task step in a multi-unit turn. In lines 1-5, she expresses her ideas, culminating in a focus on collective effort to devise a worldwide solution with "WORLD> ↑EVERYONE" (lines 2 and 4). Her response is enhanced through embodiment, including hand gestures, rightward gaze shifts, and head movements. In the turn final position in line 4, she asserts that she has completed her response (that's it), indicating her readiness to yield the floor to her co-participant. Her laughter in lines 4 and 5 is not accompanied by her co-participant, which may indicate a forthcoming disaffiliation.

YOP begins a carefully constructed disaffiliation sequence in line 6 ("↑i don't think like"), utilizing several mitigation devices (Pomerantz, 1984). The disaffiliation sequence from lines 6 to 16 demonstrates advanced face-work through the employment of hesitation markers ("ermm"), multiple silences, and intricate embodied actions such as lateral head movements, body positioning, and gaze shifts. Her argument on cultural preservation as opposed to a singular global culture is articulated through multiple turns, with Den utilizing several resources to demonstrate alignment and convey her comprehension of Yop's perspective through embodied acts (lines 12, 15). This may indicate her preparedness to negotiate and restore affiliation in upcoming interaction.

DEN's change-of-state token "↑OH" (line 17), characterized by raised eyebrows and a forward lean, indicates active participation and strong alignment with YOP's standpoint (Stivers, 2008). She expresses a strong affiliation with Yop in lines 17 and 20. This sequence illustrates complex

interactional efforts in reconstructing affiliation. Beginning at line 18, Yop further articulates her perspective, underscoring the necessity for differences. In the omitted lines (see Appendix D), Yop and Den engage in a collaborative word search initiated by Yop in line 21. Yop asserts that diversity is a source of variation and further emphasizes the necessity of cultural preservation above the dominance of a singular culture. The sequence includes supportive backchanneling and multiple repair sequences.

The final part of the extract, lines 22-34, shows successful achievement of intersubjectivity and strong affiliation. YOP's extended explanation in lines 22-29 about cultural uniqueness employs multiple resources including embodied emphasis through nodding and gaze shifts, and clear stance marking. In line 30, she signals and expresses that she completed sharing her perspective. DEN's final acknowledgment "oh that ↑makes sense" (lines 32-34) demonstrates affiliation, showing both understanding and stance modification (Steensig, 2012). Thus, she strongly shows that they are on the same page now achieving affiliation once again. This sequence is particularly interesting for its demonstration of how participants can move from disagreement to mutual understanding through careful interactional work.

Extract 6 illustrates sophisticated management of on-task topic within a virtual environment. The analysis indicates that participants successfully handle challenging aspects of disaffiliation and utilize multimodal resources, all while maintaining affiliation and achieving the pedagogical objectives of the task. The participants demonstrate a significant ability to reconstruct affiliations while expressing divergent perspectives, utilizing embodied resources effectively within the online context. Their utilization of multimodal resources, effective topic management, and successful attainment of mutual understanding exemplify display of L2 interactional competence in video-mediated virtual exchange interactions.

A sophisticated organization is evident in the interaction, which encompasses affiliation, disaffiliation and resolution, from initiation to closure in terms of topic management. It is crucial that both participants maintain topical coherence during complex stance-taking and perspective exchange. In terms of alignment, the analysis indicates that participants maintain coordination

across multiple layers. YOP and DEN have structural alignment, well-timed turn-taking, appropriate response tokens, and effective repair sequences. Multimodal resources including gaze, gesture, and posture create embodied alignment. (Stivers, 2008). Affiliation management is particularly intricate during the interaction. Participants use epistemic positioning and stance changes to manage face-threatening disaffiliation sequences. Successful affiliative work is demonstrated by DEN's eventual acknowledgment and perspective shift (lines 17,32-34), whereas YOP's disaffiliation regarding cultural globalization (lines 6-16) is formulated with numerous mitigation resources. This illustrates how participants can uphold social solidarity while articulating and negotiating diverse perspectives. The analysis indicates effective adaptation to the digital environment in online task-based interaction. Embodied resources help them overcome video-mediated communication's limitations by increasing gestural and postural movements. The successful completion of the task, characterized by mutual understanding and acknowledgment of perspectives, indicates elevated levels of online L2 interactional competence.

Extract 7 is taken from the fourth meeting of Dyad 26. Participants engage in a task entitled “Inclusive Language” in this episode. The extract starts at the 32.56th minute of the interaction and lasts for 1.50 minutes. In this episode, participants do the last task step starting around 30th minute which requires them to decide between two terms about which one is more affirmative/inclusive. There are five questions that they need to choose between a pair of phrases/terms. Before this episode, participants discussed the initial item in the last task step in a reciprocal fashion. Bel inquiries about Con's perspective on the second item immediately preceding the extract. The dyad subsequently engages in a discussion over the terms “black people” and “people of color” in relation to inclusivity. Participants have a shared screen during which this extract is taken, and they can only have access to this shared screen but not to each other’s cameras. So do I as the researcher. This elucidates the absence of embodied actions in this segment of the interaction. Extract 7 illustrates how interactants achieve only a surface level of alignment and affiliation during and on-task topic maintenance sequence.

Extract 7: Yeah Exactly (Dyad26/BEL-CON/M4/1.50')

```
 1  CON:  its ↑obvious (0.3) i think (0.6) <err::> (0.5)
 2        peo:ple (.) with color is better than (0.5) <err:m> (0.2)
 3        black people
 4  BEL: <black [people>
 5  CON:        [>i don't know<

 6  BEL:↑i don['t KNOW
 7  CON:       [it's ↑better but its b-b-but +its (1.0) like+
    con                                      +-tapping sound--+
 8        er- err b- bu- it's (0.4) like erm:: less: (0.6) .hh uh- i-
 9        $i don't know i think they- eheh i think for me for me both
10        are not like$ hh. eheh (0.2) [tha-
11 BEL:                                [i don't
12 CON:  (0.3)it's not the same
13 BEL:  i don't like the:
14       the term black [color ↑also: (.) but its more (.) inc-
15 CON:                 [but
16 BEL:  ↑obviously more inclusive than the: (0.3) .hh then
17       black people (0.2) but [i don't like
18 CON:                         [me neither
19 BEL:  it [either (0.2) err:: seems like +there is something+
    con                                    +----tapping sound---+
20 CON:     [you know
21 BEL:  wro:ng with the term
22       (1.6)
23 CON:  ye:s yes exactly
24       +(7.7)+
    con  +clicking sound+
25 BEL:  i don't kno:w (2.8) maybe::: (0.2) saying african america>n
26       or< african people err it's like more err:: more ↑accurate
27       (0.3) +i think+
    con        +clicking+
28       (3.6)
29 CON:  ↑>huh hum<
30       (1.1)
31 BEL:  people of color↓ is like
32 CON:  ↑no- (.) >i don't know< ↑maybe (.) ↑yeah (tha-) (0.3) err::
33       (.) err:: (0.5) er- e- but ~people of color~ is less let's
34       (.) not say it's ↑better but its less like .hh (0.4) let's
35       say ↑offenSIVE o::r (.) less:
36 BEL:  ↑YES [less offensive
37 CON:       [you know introduce the difference you know
38 BEL:  less [OFFENSIVE but
39 CON:       [yeah
40 BEL:  doesn't feel right ↑either eheh
41       (2.1)
42 CON:  +$yeah (0.3) exactly$+=
    con  +----clicking sound----+
43 BEL:  =oka:y (0.2) third ↑one
```

In lines 1-3, Con replies to Bel's inquiry with, "hum (0.4) it's ↑obvious (0.3) I think (0.6) err:: (0.5) people (.) with color are better than (0.5) err:m (0.2) black people". The response from Con used hedging phrases such as "I think" and "err::", suggesting a cautious position and encouraging additional dialogue. Con emphasizes her preference for "people of color" rather than "black

individuals". The comparative language use ("better than") indicates an evaluative position, potentially encouraging further discussion on the topic at hand. In line 4, Bel echoes "black people", emphasizing the phrase and demonstrating alignment with the Con's argument. This repetition can serve as a way to highlight the term for further examination or to express a differing perspective. In line 5, Con interjects with ">i don't know<", indicating uncertainty and prompting Bel to share her viewpoint. This statement of uncertainty can promote alignment by recognizing the topic's complexity and the necessity for collaborative inquiry (Stivers, 2008). In line 6, Bel replies with "↑i don't KNOW" in an overlapping manner, reflecting Con's uncertainty and emphasizing the collaborative essence of the conversation. This mirroring can function as a means of alignment and affiliation, recognizing the mutual uncertainty and encouraging additional discourse.

Con asserts that neither is fully inclusive on line 7, indicating a nuanced position. The employment of self-repairs, pauses, and hedging indicates the negotiation of meaning and the challenges in achieving consensus on topics that are delicate. In lines 11 and 13-14, 16-17, Bel interjects, initially disclosing an alignment and affiliation with Con's perspective. In the initial segments of the extract (lines 4, 6, and 14), Bel mirrors Con's ambiguity, echoing expressions such as "black people" and overlapping with Con's "I don't know". This mirroring is a type of affiliation in which individuals show that they understand one another's points of view (Dings, 2007; Tecedor Cabrero, 2013). This form of mirroring can foster a sense of solidarity and assist participants in navigating topics that are delicate. However, with the use of "but" in line 14 and further elucidating her position in lines 16-17, Bel asserts, "↑obviously more inclusive than the: .hh then black people", thereby confirming her viewpoint and encouraging Con to share her insights. This comment can sustain the topic's relevancy and promote additional involvement while indicating a possible disaffiliation from Con's perspective. In line 15, Con interjects with "but", suggesting a possible disaffiliation or divergent viewpoint. The use of "but" in lines 14 and 15 indicates instances of disaffiliation or dissent, as Bel seeks to clarify her stance ("obviously more inclusive than..".). Despite the tentative consensus on certain aspects, these

“but” interjections indicate a divergence, prompting additional clarification. In line 18, Con replies with “me neither”, to Bel's concluding position shift “but I don’t like” in an overlapping manner, displaying agreement with Bel's viewpoint once more. This agreement promotes affiliation and facilitates collaborative contact. By line 18, both interactants seem to achieve a provisional agreement, with Con stating, “me neither”, which aligns with Bel’s assertion that neither phrase is wholly inclusive. This shared expression of displeasure with both phrases indicates a unified position on inclusion, reinforcing their affiliation. Nevertheless, this agreement is not founded on a fully coherent set of beliefs regarding the terms; rather, it is an acknowledgment of their limitations.

In lines 19-21, Bel articulates a disdain for the phrase by stating, “it either (0.2) err:: seems like there is something wro:ng with the term”, thereby conveying a personal perspective. This demonstration of personal preference has the potential to encourage Con to share her own preferences and perspectives, thereby inciting a sense of affiliation. Con interjects with “you know”, but fails to complete her turn. A 1.6-second pause follows this in line 22, displaying a moment of potential contemplation. Such pauses may indicate the significance of the topic and the necessity for deliberate contemplation before responding (Schegloff, 2007). In line 23, Con replies with “ye:s yes exactly”, demonstrating agreement with Bel's viewpoint. This agreement indicates that the participants attained intersubjectivity at this point in time. It promotes affiliation and enhances the collaborative aspect of the engagement.

A 7.7-second interturn silence follows, displaying a moment of contemplation during which neither participant assumes the turn. Beginning at line 25, Bel articulates hesitation with “I don’t know”, prompting Con to share her viewpoint. She suggests alternative terminology with “maybe::: (0.2) saying african america>n or< african people err it’s like more err:: more ↑accurate (0.3) i think”, proposing a potential solution. This proposal can promote alignment and affiliation by encouraging Con to explore various viewpoints and share her opinions through agreement or disagreement. A 3.6-second delay occurs subsequently in line 28. Such silences may indicate the importance of the topic and the necessity for careful consideration before

responding (Schegloff, 2007). In line 29, Con replies with "↑>huh hum<", a delayed limited response indicating acknowledgment without full affiliation or disaffiliation. This response can function as a placeholder, enabling Con to take in the information and evaluate her position. Subsequently, an additional 1.1 seconds of silence occurs in line 30. In line 31, Bel proceeds with "people of color↓ is like", indicating a comparison or additional clarification regarding the word. The descending intonation on "color" may suggest confusion or a change in emphasis, prompting Con to share her viewpoint although she does not complete her turn. Beginning at line 32, Con articulates uncertainty with "↑no- (.) >i don't know< ↑maybe (.) ↑yeah (tha-)", displaying a nuanced position. The employment of numerous hedges and self-repairs indicates the discussion of meaning and the challenges in achieving consensus on sensitive issues. She proceeds with, "but people of color is less—let's not assert it's better, but it's less, let's say, offensive", demonstrating a nuanced perspective on the two categories. This statement reflects an attempt to balance the discussion by acknowledging the term's relative acceptability without fully endorsing it. Bel acknowledges and agrees on Con revealing affiliation on her perspective. She emphasizes her utterances in line 38 by incorporating "but" in a turn-final position, indicating a potential disaffiliation. She announces that it does not feel right either in line 40, emphasizing that she does not find either of the term inclusive. This is acknowledged by Con in line 40 following 2.1 seconds of silence, diminishing the strength of the utterances employed for agreement. At the end of the extract, they transition to the subsequent item on the list to address their inclusivity. It can be started that the dyad affiliated on not choosing one term over another as they both are not inclusive enough according to the interactants.

Extract 7 illustrates the intricate negotiation of meaning in a discourse around inclusiveness. The participants' employment of hedging, self-repair, and pauses indicates their hesitation in articulating decisive assertions regarding the terms under discussion. Although there exists a certain level of alignment and affiliation between the participants, it does not constitute a profound or totally committed consensus, highlighting the difficulties inherent in addressing sensitive societal issues. The conversation highlights how

participants utilize hedging and careful wording to work while not completely harmonizing their divergent views on inclusivity. The dyad finally shows a surface level affiliation, acknowledging that neither term is entirely inclusive. This minimal agreement is formed without delving into the meanings or ramifications of the terminology. The act of "aligning" or "affiliating" during conversation does not invariably yield a meaningful exchange of ideas; in this instance, both interlocutors avoid a more profound analysis and conclude that both phrases are inadequate. This might suggest that task-based engagement alone may be insufficient to facilitate meaningful topic maintenance and foster affiliation among participants (see Chapter 5 for more discussion on this).

Extract 8 comes from the fourth meeting of Dyad 28 between Pal and Sim. Participants undertake a task titled "Inclusive Language" in this episode (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from the 13th minute of the interaction and continues for 1.45 minutes. Prior to this episode, participants watched a video entitled "Cultivate Inclusion". After watching the video, they are expected to have a discussion about it. No specific guidelines exist for the discussion, aside from the allocated time frame of five minutes. The dyad engages in discussing about the video upon clarifying what they are supposed to do. Extract 8 demonstrates that collaborative turn constructions promote alignment and affiliation, while simultaneously allowing the dyad to maintain a topic in a harmonious manner. The extract is divided into two segments to make it easier to follow.

Extract 8 (*Segment 1*): New Pen(Dyad28/PAL-SIM/M4/1.45')

```
1  PAL:  i think the video is *very good*(0.3)  first of all
   sim   ((clicks))                              ((clicks))
   sim     ((desktop appeared with zoom videos))      Digitask
   pal                        *looks up-*             screen appears
2        (0.2) #*its very ↑informational (0.2)#*
   pal           *-----------hand movement---------*
   sim          #------------------nods-----------#
3        **so i really like it**
   pal   *he lowers his right hand*
   pal    *-leans forward & nods-*
4  SIM:  huh huh
5        *(0.6)
   pal   *---1---> line 26 1:scratching
6  SIM:  #same here# # #>i:i'm liking< <the:>  like     (0.4)#
   sim   ---------cursor movements----------------      ((clicks))
   sim     #---nods---# #----2---> line 16 2: lateral head movements
   sim                  #----------------leans forward-------------#
```

```
7        #the concept w:e're: # (1.0) >we are< #discussing #°here°
   sim   #----looks left----#--------------3-----------------
   sim   ------------------2----------------------#          ((clicks))
   sim                                        ((4:leans back)) #-4->
                                                               line 21
8        *(1.7)
   pal   *---nods--> line 18
9  PAL:  YEah*
   pal   ------*
10       (1.6)
11 PAL:  wel:l i# #think##(0.2) we need to respect on ↑diversity#
   sim   --4-----# #leans #forward
   sim                  #-------------looks upper left-------------#
12       ##(0.8)
   sim   #nods--> line 22
   sim    #-looks twrds right--> line 22
13 SIM:  *huh hum#*#
   sim   --------#--#
   pal   *slightly *nods
14       #(2.4)
   sim   #-looks at lower right--> line 24
15 PAL:  and (.) diversity# brings(0.3)*some language diversity
   sim   -------------------#
   pal                                  *--nods--> line 25
16       ↑too*  ##(0.4)# so #if you# >want to live in a< good#
   pal   ----*
   sim            #--------nods-------#
   sim           #looks twrds #upper left
   sim                  #-------------mouth movements-------------#
17       world* *i think we need to accept all of #them (0.9)*
   pal   --1--*  *-----------------hand movements-----------------*
   sim                                          #---nods--->line 27

18       *and we need to# treat*(0.2)* *the way that they* ↑deserve*
   pal   *------scratches his chin------* *----slightly leans forward----*
   sim   ----------------#
   pal                           *-------hand movements------*
19       #(1.1)#
   sim   #-nods-#
20 SIM:  yes#
   sim      #---looks towards right---> line 31
21       *(1.4)#*
   pal   -------#
   pal   *leans b*ack
22 PAL:  *#>that's what i understood<#*
   pal   *raises both hands &looks twrds* right
   sim     #-----looks twrds left------#
23       #(0.9)
   sim   #---nods--> line 34
24 SIM:  yep# #*same here #like (0.4)# i #understood (.) that*
   sim   ---# #----5---> line 35 5: looks at lower right
   pal          *--------------looks lower right-----------------*
   sim                      #leans back #and forth
   sim                     6: leans forwards #--6--> line 35
25       (.) we need (.) *to accept* #differences# #(0.3)#
   sim   -------------------------5---#--------6---# #leans #back
   pal                    *leans twrds* left
26       #**and accept [the differences#
   sim    *--nods---> line 37
   pal    *--7--> line 50 7: leans on his right side
   pal   #-slight upper body movements---#
27 PAL:                 [↑yeah*
   pal                   ------*
28       #*(1.6)
   sim   #---8---> line 41 8: looks upper right
   pal    *--nods--> line 40

29 SIM:  YE[s::
```

```
30 PAL:    [yeah we are all should*=
   pal      -------------------------*
31 SIM:  =#humans like# (0.5) #live in#↑peac>e an:d< and
   sim    #-strong nod-#                #-looks lower down--> line 43
   sim   -----------8-----------#
32       (1.8)#
   sim   ------#
33       #$↑harmony#$
   sim   #strong nod#
34       #(1.3)
   sim   #turns right--> line 45
35 PAL:  ↑yeah#
   sim   ------#
36       #(0.8)#(3.0)
   sim   #turns #back
```

The extract starts with Pal providing a positive evaluation of the video, asserting, "I think the video is very good (0.3) first of all". This positive assessment facilitates alignment and encourages increased engagement from Sim by creating space for agreement and appreciation for the content (Wong & Waring, 2020). In line 2, Pal states, "its very ↑informational", thereby extending his positive evaluation. In line 3, Pal concludes his turn by expressing his personal preference with the statement "so I really like it", which reiterates the strong positive stance. This expression of personal preference may promote affiliation by encouraging Sim to disclose her own preferences and viewpoints. In the subsequent line, Sim replies with "huh huh", demonstrating a minimal acknowledgment that implies agreement and readiness to participate in the discussion. This response supports the collaborative nature of the interaction, as it signals alignment with Pal's positive evaluation (Stivers, 2008).

In line 6, Sim conveys agreement with "same here", displaying alignment with Pal's positive evaluation. This agreement promotes affiliation and facilitates collaborative contact. Sim continues with ">i:i'm liking< the: like, the concept w:e're: (1.0) >we are< discussing °here°" strengthening her positive viewpoint. Her utilization of "we" emphasizes the inclusive language she uses and a possible affective bond they have. The employment of self-repairs and hedging indicates the negotiation of meaning and the challenges in achieving consensus on the topic. A 1.7-second silence occurs in line 8. Pal initially aligns nonverbally with Sim's perspective by nodding starting from line 8, followed by a verbal affirmation of "YEah" in line 9, displaying agreement with Sim. This agreement promotes alignment and

facilitates the collaborative essence of the encounter. The dyad achieved mutual understanding by reciprocating their perspectives by line 9.

In line 11, Pal takes the turn and introduces a new perspective, stating, “wel:l i think we need to respect on ↑diversity”. This assertion establishes a foundation for a novel viewpoint regarding the task at hand. The phrase “we need to” demonstrates a collective endeavor which might be indicative of alignment and affiliation. Sim replies in line 13 with “huh hum”, a minimal acknowledgment indicating understanding. This response reinforces the collaborative aspect of the encounter by indicating conformity with the task's goals (Stivers, 2008). Beginning at line 15, Pal further elaborates on linguistic diversity and offers guidance on how individuals should navigate this diversity, supplying supplementary context or specifics. This elaboration maintains the topic and promotes additional participation from Sim. Sim acknowledges his perspective through nodding multiple times during his turn, showing her alignment with her role as a listener and also understanding and agreeing what is being shared.

Sim verbally expresses agreement with “yes” in line 20 in a delayed manner, which is followed by another silence that suggests a potential topic closure if the speaker does not change. In line 22, Pal underlines the conclusion of his turn by stating that this is his interpretation of the video. Sim's nodding here signals her alignment and affiliation. She supports Pal's viewpoint, coinciding with Stivers' conclusions regarding the significance of alignment in collaborative engagements. Sim expresses her agreement with Pal by stating “same here” in line 24, indicating a shared perspective on the topic and demonstrating a robust affiliation. She then proceeds to elaborate on her understanding of the video.

Pal acknowledges this in an overlap in line 27, which is reiterated by Sim in line 29 in a delayed manner. Pal acknowledges this in an overlap in line 27, which is reiterated by Sim in line 29 in a delayed manner. Sim completes the turn that Pal started in line 30 and elaborates more on what people should do with differences (live in peace and harmony) in line 31. The collaborative turn completion in line 31 and line 33 serves as an indicator of robust affiliation and L2 interactional competence, as it demonstrates that the recipient i) aligns

with their role, ii) understands the preceding contribution, and iii) has the ability to complete the turn both in structurally and pragmatically coherent way (Lam, 2021; Mori and Hayashi, 2006; Sert, 2019; Taguchi, 2014). The completion is acknowledged by Pal in line 35.

Extract 8 (*Segment 2*): New Pen(Dyad28/PAL-SIM/M4/1.45')

```
37 SIM:  #°what [is:°
   sim   #--leans forward--> line 48
   sim     --cursor movements--> line 48

38 PAL:          ↑[for example like err: #
   sim             ------------------------
   sim             -------------------------#
39       #(0.9)#
   sim   #looks #at screen
40 PAL:  #every*↑pen *can't be the ↑same*#
   pal   ---7---*     *------headshake-----*
   sim   #----------mouth movements---------#
41       *(1.2)*
   pal   *looks *right
42 PAL:  so you need to*
   pal                  *looks twrds left---> line 55
43       (1.4)
44 PAL:  buy* *a new ↑PEN or* a new ↑color *to (0.5)* make it
   pal   ---*  *--looks down--*.              *look twr*ds right
45       #like *(0.5) your (0.2)* err: *make your notebook# more-*
   sim   #-----------------looks towards right---------------#
   pal          *-looks twrds right*        *-----looks twrds right----*
46       ↑f>un and< #↑*beautiful*
   sim              #--nods--> line 58
   pal                 *---nods---*
47       (1.0)
48 SIM:  $#yeah#$
   sim    #--looks twrds right--> line 60
   sim   -------#
49 PAL:  *so y-you need to try ↑new colors#* *[i #think*
   pal   *----slight upper body movements-----*  *---nods---> line 63
   sim    ------------------------------------#       #--5--> line 63
50 SIM:                                        [↑*exact#ly*
   pal                                          *scratches *his nose
51       (1.6)
52 SIM:  and like* (.) differences# #>bring-s brings<
   pal   ---------*
   sim   --------------------------#  #slightly leans to the screen-->
                                                          line 64
53      *us together*# and make us ↑stronger
   sim   ----------------#
   pal   *slightly nods*

54       #(1.4)
   sim   #-leans back---> line 66
55 PAL:  also make us ↑beautiful and# #make us↑*cool*#
   sim   ------------------------------# #-leans forward--#
   pal                                    *raise*s eyebrows
56 SIM:  #*↑#yeah (0.6) exactly##*
   sim   #---------------nods-----#
   pal    *------------nods---------*
   sim      #---raises eyebrows--#

57       #(2.1)
   sim   #-diverse gaze----> line 70
58 PAL:  ↑okay then so s- (.) *look at the pictures
```

```
59          #that are assigned##
   sim      #-----looks up------#-#
```

In line 37, Sim stars a new turn after the inter turn silence in the previous line. This is interjected by Pal in line 38 to provide an example relevant to the topic at hand. In lines 40-49, Pal presents an example (a pen and a notebook) to explain the divergence and its impact on the aesthetic quality of an object. He employs a simple metaphorical example to render a complex issue comprehensible for his interlocutor. This is strongly affiliated by Sim especially in line 50 with "exactly", suggesting a shared stance on the issue. She initiates her turn with "and" in line 52, extending her elaboration on her viewpoint, despite having just taken the turn. This might show that she is strongly affiliated with Pal's view, and she is adding onto his ideas rather than introducing new ones as if they are her ideas although she is adding a new perspective to ongoing topic (Garcia Garcia, 2021). Notably, in line 57, Pal uses the word 'also' and proceeds to contribute his ideas as though Sim had not spoken in the previous turn, continuing as if elaborating on his own line of thought. It can be stated that participants are contributing to and building on each other's turns in harmony evidencing strong alignment and affiliation. They collaboratively create these turns, demonstrating strong affiliation and shared understanding. Sim strongly affiliates (yeah exactly) with Pal in line 56. Upon attaining mutual understanding and affiliation, they proceed to the subsequent task step. In lines 58-59, Pal is reading the instructions for the subsequent task, which involves picture description.

The analysis of Extract 8 reveals that the dyad utilizes various resources to establish and maintain alignment and affiliation while concurrently prioritizing task completion. These resources involve timely use of acknowledgment tokens, the employment of inclusive language (we), embodied actions (such as nodding), the use of metaphorical examples (notebook), phrases that indicate stance and foster strong affiliation (such as "I really like it", "same here", "exactly"), and multiple collaborative turn completions. These practices promote alignment and affiliation between participants and enhance their shared understanding of the task and topic (Stivers et al., 2011). Acknowledgement tokens serve to sustain the current

topic and enhance the affiliative bond between participants (Stivers, 2008). The use of a clear metaphor makes a difficult issue understandable for his interlocutor, promoting intersubjectivity between the participants, thus serving as a significant indicator of L2 interactional competence, as demonstrated by the previously stated research and associated literature (Burch & Kley 2020; Mondada 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz 2019). Embodied collaborative completions operate as a mechanism for achieving intersubjectivity in social interactions (Lam, 2021; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Sert, 2019; Taguchi, 2014). Collaborative turn completions denote episodes in which "a speaker completes the utterance of a previous speaker" (Gardner 2001, p. 2). Sert (2019) is the first study contending that collaborative sequences indicate L2 interactional competence and promote the establishment of mutual understanding.

Extract 9 comes from the fifth and last meeting of Dyad 23 between Nir and Bac. Participants undertake a task named as the "Final Reflection Task" in this episode (see Appendix A for the task). The extract begins at the 13th minute of the conversation and continues for 2 minutes. In this episode, participants address the second question of the initial task stage: "How do you think the importance of English language will be in one hundred years? Do you think the English language will still be the Lingua Franca? Why (not)?". Prior to this episode, they addressed the initial question in the same phase. What we see in the first line of the extract below is their transition to the second question. Extract 9 illustrates how collaborative turn completions enables interactants to restore affiliation following disaffiliation. The extract is divided into two segments to make it easier to follow.

Extract 9 (*Segment 1*): Importance of English (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M5/2.04')

1	**NIR:**	**%how do you think the importance of english will% be in**
	bac	%------------------mouth movements------------------%
2		**↑one *hundred years*?**
	nir	*slightly nods-*
3		**%*(1.3)***
	bac	%----makes a face-->line 5
	nir	*-nods-*
4	**BAC:**	**<er:mm:>**
5		**(3.7)%**
	bac	-----%

```
6  BAC:  .hh%(.)% %it will be:::% (.) %the ↑same [as today%
   bac      %look%s up
   bac             %-leans back and% closes his eyes
   bac                                  %---head movements---%
7  NIR:                                                [huh huh
8  BAC:  *(2.1)* *(2.9)
   nir   *moves* her head back
   nir           *----1---> line 9 1:diverse gaze
9  NIR:  *<ermm>* (0.4) maybe (1.4) <ermm> (1.8)*
   nir   *mouth *movements
   nir   ----------------------------------------*
10       *en-en-glish language (1.0) te*aching erm (1.1)
   nir   *-------------looks up-----------*
11       ↑%students% *(2.1)* %*will not % be available (1.7)*
   bac    %looks right%.       %slightly le%ans back
   nir              *looks* upper right
   nir                        *------------------frowns---------*
12       %because%(0.9) many people *will speak (.) english* (.)
   bac   %looks to%wards right
   nir                                *--3--> line 14 3: raises eyebrows
13        very well (0.4)* *↑so: *(2.3)* <*%ermm%> (3.4)**
   nir    ----------------* *--------diverse gaze-----------*
   nir                            *tilts* her head right
   nir                                     *tilts her head le*ft
   bac                                       %looks% towards left
14       *%it% will* not (0.4) be necessary (3.2) to teach
   nir   *slight he*adshake
   bac    %looks up%
15 BAC:  %to [do%
   bac   %slight %headshake
16 NIR:  i me[an

17 BAC:  %teach ↑english you mean↑%
   bac   %--leans twds the screen---%
   bac   %---3---> line 23
18 NIR:  *↑yeah (0.6)*
   nir   *--looks up--*
19 BAC:  %<erm:m> ↑$%maybe$%
   bac   %---makes a face----%
   bac               %---4--> line 22 4: smiles
20       (1.1)
```

Nir establishes the context for a speculative discourse by posing a query (already given in the task) regarding the long-term significance of English in lines 1-2. Bac's non-verbal response demonstrates involvement and cognitive processing of this inquiry. Nir's nodding gesture serves as a non-verbal cue that might be a go-ahead for Bac's response, demonstrating alignment and support (Stivers, 2008). The pause and facial expression in line 3 indicate Bac's thinking, while Nir's nodding persists in demonstrating encouragement and

agreement. Bac's hesitation marker in line 4 is a prevalent characteristic of intricate discussions, as it denotes the cognitive effort required to formulate a response (Jenks, 2014). Nir's nodding in line 4 functions as an affiliative gesture, promoting Bac's response and demonstrating support (Stivers, 2008). A 3.7-second pause follows in line 5, indicating that the dyad encounters difficulty in formulating an answer to the question, and neither participant is inclined to take the lead. In line 6, Bac articulates his proposition, indicating a conviction in the enduring significance of English, employing a hedged sentence ("it will be:::") to convey ambiguity, a characteristic feature of speculative discourse (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020). In line 7, Nir recognizes his response in a manner that overlaps with his final comments.

In line 9, Nir hesitantly shares her perspective by taking the turn. In line 10, she puts forward the topic of English language instruction, proposing a shift towards the practical ramifications of time on the teaching and learning of English. She hypotheses the prospective availability of English language students, with intra-turn pauses reflecting her uncertainty about the prediction (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020). Bac's and Nir's nonverbal expressions (gazing and frowning) show involvement and reflection on the implications of Nir's assertion. Nir articulates her rationale for speculation in lines 12-14, stating, "because (0.9) many people will speak (.) English", implying anticipated widespread English competence in the future. The elevated eyebrows show astonishment or emphasis (Stivers, 2008).

She asserts that English instruction may become redundant, using a headshake to underscore her dissent on the future necessity of teaching English. In line 16, Bac requests clarification, employing a headshake to show uncertainty or opposition over Nir's assertion. He seeks confirmation in line 17, moving toward the screen. Bac's candidate comprehension is verified by Nir in line 18. He seeks confirmation in line 17, moving toward the screen. Bac's candidate comprehension is verified by Nir in line 18. Bac's hesitant agreement, shown by a hesitation marker and facial expression in line 19, suggests a sophisticated comprehension of the topic and an implicit disaffiliation that reflects the intricacy of the discussion (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020).

Extract 9 (*Segment 2*): Importance of English (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M5/2.04')

```
21 NIR:  because *(0.7) most of the people (0.4)%
   bac   ----------------------------------------%
   nir           *---5---> line 23 5: lateral head movements
22       i think%(0.2)can- will able to speak english*%%
   bac   -------%
   nir   ------------------------------------------------*
   bac                                                    %---3--> line 25
   bac                                          (5: looks up)%--5-->line 26
23       (0.5)
24 BAC:  ↑%yes [yes%%
   bac   -----------%
   bac    %leans back%
25 NIR:          [so we ↑don't% *have to teach=
   bac           --------------%
   nir                          *---6---> line 27 6: leans back
26 BAC: =to* teach °it°
   bac   ---*
27       (0.6)
28 NIR:  ↑*yeah*% %hh.%*we don't have to (0.3)* ↑teachers%
   nir    *nods*         *-looks up & shakes head-*
   bac             %look%s up
   bac           %-------------------leans back----------------%
29       %(0.7)%
   bac   %looks %towards right
30 BAC:  %i think% <err> *%hh. (0.4) >i dont know<* maybe
   bac   %leans t%owards right
   bac                     %----1---> line 35
   nir                    *--------looks down---------*
31       (0.2) maybe %you *↑right*% (.)%but%
   nir                     *raises *eyebrows
   bac                %leans on her %left %slig%ht headshake
32       (3.2)
33 BAC    *<err> lets* (.) *↑for example* lets (.)
   nir    *makes a face*     *----frowns---*
34       *take% %↑america% as an example* >*i mean<
   nir   *--slight lateral head movements--*  *----8---> line 37
   bac   -----%  %looks up%                              8: nods
35       %everyone is: s- speaking %↑englis>h and:>
   bac   %----5---> line 38          %---9---> line 39
                                     9:lateral head movements
36       they still need* ermm ↑english teacher (.)
   nir   ----------------*

37       *because*(0.2) every language h:as its own s::specificities%
   nir    *slightly leans forward*
   bac    ----------------------------------------------------------------%
38       (0.8)%
   bac    ----%
39 NIR:  *uh ↑that's true (.) [yeah
   nir    *----8---> line 42
40 BAC:                       [%i mean
```

```
   bac                          %---3--> line 43
41 NIR:  corr[ect*
   nir   ---------*
42 BAC: ↑even [%there%
   bac   --------------%
   bac           %---10---> line 44 10: leans left
43 NIR: *i *couldn't*% think that*
   bac   -------------%
   nir      *------headshake-------*
   nir   *--looks up-*
44 BAC: ↑yeah even in ↑turkey %you are all *speaking turkish*
   bac                           %---5---> line 48
   nir                                     *-raises eyebrows-*
45       but still %there are err.% i think *teachers (0.2) err.
   bac              %lateral head mo%vements
   nir                                     *---8---> line 50
46       ↑teaching turkish%
   bac   ------------------%
47       (0.7)
48 NIR:  yeah* *°that's° %same you* are ↑right%
   nir   ----*  *------looks up------*
   bac                    %------diverse gaze----%
```

Subsequent to the 1.1-second silence in line 20, Nir reiterates her reasoning. Bac's agreement and reclining posture in line 24 imply agreement to Nir's rationale, demonstrating alignment and affiliation (Stivers, 2008). Nir continues her argument by implying a future in which the instruction of English is rendered unnecessary. Bac completes Nir's turn in line 26, indicating alignment and affiliation with her perspective. In line 28, Nir underscores her argument with emphasis, use nodding and head shaking to bolster her position. By employing hedges and pauses to express a tentative opposing attitude, Bac skillfully implies a minor disaffiliation in lines 30–37. He recognizes Nir's viewpoint while presenting a counterargument, employing non-verbal signals to convey a nuanced position (Stivers, 2008). Starting from line 33, Bac presents an example to clarify his argument. He employs America as a case basis for his argument, whereas Nir's head gestures show participation and contemplation of Bac's perspective (Hampel & Stickler, 2012). Bac asserts that, despite the prevalent use of English, there remains a necessity for English educators in the USA. In line 37, Bac articulates a justification for his hypothesis, positing that language instruction is essential because of linguistic particularities. Nir's forward lean demonstrates curiosity and engagement (Stivers, 2008). Nir acknowledges Bac's argument in lines 39

and 41, employing both verbal and non-verbal signals to demonstrate alignment (Stivers, 2008). Beginning in line 40, Bac further develops his argument, employing non-verbal resources to reinforce his position (Hampel & Stickler, 2012). Nir utilizes headshakes and an upward gaze to indicate alignment in line 43, expressing an excuse for her inability to align with Bac's argument earlier (i couldn't think that) (Stivers, 2008). In lines 44-46, Bac establishes a parallel with Türkiye to elucidate his argument for Nir, employing non-verbal resources to underscore his point. Nir's elevated eyebrows show surprise (Stivers, 2008). He underscores the necessity of language educators despite the prevalent use of language. In line 48, Nir acknowledges Bac's reasoning, employing both verbal and non-verbal signals to demonstrate alignment and affiliation (Stivers, 2008).

The examination of Extract 9 uncovers multiple important aspects of alignment, affiliation, topic maintenance, and online task-based interaction. Nir and Bac participate in a speculative discussion regarding the future significance of English, utilizing various resources that demonstrate their alignment and affiliation, including acknowledgment tokens, collaborative turn construction, and embodied actions (e.g., nodding, getting closer to the screen, headshake). Extended interturn and intra-turn silences, hedges, and non-verbal gestures show the complexity of the topic, and the challenges participants face in maintaining the current topic, producing L2 discourse to convey their viewpoints, aligning and affiliating with one another, and ultimately fulfilling the task. Topic management is facilitated by open-ended inquiries, illustrative examples, and counterarguments, enabling both participants to examine the ramifications of their discussion. This enables them to affiliate with one another again, even after disaffiliation. The conversation exemplifies successful topic management, as both parties collaboratively enhance each other's contributions, resulting in a coherent discussion. The analysis underscores the significance of alignment, affiliation, and multimodal resources in promoting effective communication in online task-based language learning environments.

Extract 10 comes from the fifth and last meeting of Dyad 24. Participants do a task titled “Lingua Franca” in this episode (see Appendix A for the task). The

extract begins at the 18.22nd minute of the conversation and continues for 38 seconds. In this episode, participants address the fourth and final question of the first task step: "Why do you use English when you talk to peers from other countries?". Prior to this episode, they addressed the third question in the same phase, and what can be seen in the initial line of the extract below is their transition to the last question. Extract 10 illustrates how participants achieve alignment and affiliation even on surface level within such a short sequence.

Extract 10: Common Language (Dyad24/YOP-DEN/M5/0.38')

```
 1  YOP: %okay% (.) ↑%why% do you use ↑eng[lish
    den   %nods%       %lean%s towards the screen
 2  DEN:                                    [why]
 3       (1.7)
 4  DEN: %eh[eh%
    den   %head m%ovement
 5  YOP:    [heh yeah (.) >go ahead<
 6       (1.3)
 7  DEN: %when you talk to peers from %other countries%%
    den   %------------lateral head movements----------------%
    den                                  %-looks at screen-%
 8       (0.4)
 9  YOP: yeah %$we spl>it it< o/an half% (0.3) ehheh
    den         %------leans backwards-----%
10       %the↑questio[ns$% eheh (0.2) .hehe
    den   %leans towards the% screen
11 DEN:              [%yeah heh% (0.3) ehe
    den               %slightly %covers her mouth
12      (1.2)
13 DEN: %↑that was the- be[>cause< (0.2) both of our%
    den   %--------------------looks down-----------------%
14 YOP:                    [((because))
15 DEN:  %common language is ↑english%
    den   %----looks up to the screen----%
16       (1.2)
17 YOP:  yeah be>cause< %(0.7) english% like %(0.2) it's: the::%
    den                  %-----nods-----%       %looks at her right-%
18       (0.4) first language used (.) %all over the ↑world (0.2)
    den                                 %----1---->line 19 1:nods
19       like %over: (0.4)%  ↑%all the% other language% (.)
    den         %looks upper% r. %slightly leans towards the sc%reen
    den   -------------------------------%
20       ↑%so: (.) >and as you<↑said it's the >↑common language<
    den    %----1--->line 21
21 DEN: ↑%huh humm%%
    den   ----------%
    den    %looks down%
```

In line 1, Yop starts the transition to the last inquiry of the initial task phase with "okay" and reading the query, "↑why do you use ↑english", thereby initiating the task-relevant topic. During this, Den inclines her head and leans toward the screen, displaying engagement and contemplation. In line 2, Den

echoes the word “why”, in an overlap, signaling that she also attempts to read the question. Following a 1.7-second pause in line 3, Den resumes with laughing, “eheh”, which sustains a cheerful atmosphere and cultivates an inviting environment, essential in online exchanges when non-verbal signals are constrained. In line 5, Yop immediately encourages Den to continue with “heh yeah (.) >go ahead<“, utilizing laughter to maintain a light-hearted tone and encourage participation. In line 7, Den accepts her proposal and reads the subsequent portion of the original inquiry, which offers the background, “when you talk to peers from other countries”. This contextualization aids in sustaining the topic by delineating the conditions under which English is employed. In lines 9-10, Yop remarks on their fun approach to reading the question in two segments. The employment of laughter (“eheh”) indicates a cheerful manner, promoting a sense of solidarity. In line 11, Den affirms this humorously and the dyad shares a laugh, displaying alignment, affiliation, and mutual understanding. This is essential for establishing rapport and facilitating a collaborative engagement.

In lines 13-15, Den begins to address the matter, stating that the rationale for their usage of English is its status as a common language, so emphasizing its role as a lingua franca. In line 14, Yop interjects with “because”; nevertheless, she does not receive the turn until after Den concludes her turn and the 1.2-second silence in line 16. Yop gets the stage in line 17 and provides a detailed explanation of the widespread usage of English (the most frequently spoken language in the world). This allows the dyad to reciprocate the speakership and exchange their perspectives on the same topic. In line 20, Yop summarizes her perspective by stating, “↑so: (.) >and as you<↑said it’s the >↑common language<“, which aligns with Den's prior assertion and emphasizes their mutual comprehension. Den nods often during Yop's turn, indicating her alignment with her perspective and identification with her position. “As you said”, might be regarded as an affiliative resource employed to point out their mutual viewpoint. Den concludes the interaction on a note of alignment by acknowledging with “huh humm” in the last line, indicating a shared comprehension. The dyad proceeds to the subsequent task phase after addressing a technology-related trouble.

In Extract 10, Yop and Den cultivate a cooperative and empathetic interaction by demonstrating alignment and affiliation through laughter, shared experiences, and collaborative completions. Their utilization of non-verbal signals—particularly in a digital environment—alleviates the constraints of the medium, where visual indicators and bodily presence are lacking. They all contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and sustaining rapport, ensuring the engagement remains fluid and engaging. The sequential organization, characterized by question-response pairs and elaborations, ensures a coherent interaction focused on the use of English as a common language. However, while the interaction is cooperative and shows a high degree of alignment, it is important to note that the topic at hand—the use of English as a lingua franca—does not generate extensive second language (L2) talk. The conversation is primarily focused on affirmations and straightforward exchanges. Although the participants express their opinions, they do not exhibit the same level of nuanced, rich language production that is frequently observed in more in-depth, reflective discussions. This is despite the fact that they address an open-ended question, which frequently provides an opportunity for participants to engage in a more in-depth discussion of the topic at hand.

The restricted language production also hinders the dyad from establishing a robust social bond, potentially leading to deeper affiliation. So, the dyad may not be able to completely participate in the type of deeper affiliation that is associated with more complex discussions. The potential for establishing a more profound emotional or social bond is restricted by the succinctness of their interactions and the directness of their responses. In conclusion, the interaction between Yop and Den showcases a productive and cooperative exchange supported by non-verbal signals and alignment. However, the restricted opportunities for L2 conversation hinder both L2 language production and the possibility for stronger social connections. However, the restricted opportunities for L2 conversation hinder both L2 language production and the possibility for stronger social connections. The current task, while effective in facilitating a collaborative interaction, fails to foster the deep, engaging dialogue that might cultivate more complex relationships or enhance affiliation. The current task, while effective in facilitating a

collaborative interaction, fails to foster the deep, engaging dialogue that might cultivate more complex relationships or enhance affiliation. Therefore, although alignment is reached, the dyadic relationship stays at a somewhat superficial level concerning affiliation, potentially limited by the task's design and the linguistic simplicity it promotes.

4.2.1. Summary of Findings

The extracts given above (Extracts 1-10) show how participants (re)build alignment and affiliation and manage topics while doing tasks. These extracts reveal various resources used to ensure mutual understanding, collaboratively achieve the tasks and maintain a topic at hand and conversational flow in general. For instance, Extract 1 illustrates the use of confirmations and examples to sustain alignment through mutual engagement. Embodied actions, such as nodding and acknowledgement gestures, are highlighted as crucial for sustaining conversational flow and assuring active participation. To ensure mutual understanding participants utilize repetition, explanation in extended turns, and asking follow-up questions. Extract 2 shows how participants build and develop affiliation in a role play task using rising intonation and try-marking utterances to solicit engagement. The extract also exemplifies "affective stance marking" (Cekaite, 2016), intricate interactional effort, integrating several resources such as prosody (rising intonation), and gestures (e.g. hand movement). Throughout the engagement, participants exhibit advanced management of the online learning environment. They skillfully maneuver across various participation frameworks while preserving task focus and social cohesion. The use of humor to build affiliation following disaffiliation is evident in Extract 3. It is another example of role play interaction where utilization of humor sustains an affiliative tone and promotes further contribution on the scenario (Holmes, 2000). The maintenance of topics is accomplished via reciprocally by sharing perspectives and the employment of enquiries to prolong the discussion (Rolling the ball back, Çimenli, Sert, & Jenks, 2022). Participants demonstrate alignment through vocal affirmations and non-verbal actions. Affiliation is established via shared experiences and mutual understanding. Bel and Con's discussion about personal preferences and hypothetical situations (lines 9-13)

functions as a medium for expressing (dis)affiliation. The employment of humor and laughter (lines 27-29) enhances their affiliative connection, as seen by Satar and Çimenli Olcars (2025), who underscore the significance of affiliative actions in preserving interactional harmony.

Extract 4 demonstrates how participants achieve and maintain alignment and affiliation via acknowledgement and confirmation. Timely acknowledgements and strong agreements (line 15) strengthens the affiliative bond between participants (Stivers, 2008). The utilization of hypothetical language facilitates the investigation of alternatives and promotes further engagement (Holmes, 2000). Throughout the extract, we see how participants successfully integrate multiple interactional demands - managing topic, maintaining alignment and affiliation, and navigating technical requirements - while achieving their pedagogical goals in an online environment. Screen management serves as a vital interactional tool, with TUN effectively incorporating cursor movements and tab navigation into their elucidation of register distinctions. The participants exhibit "digital pointing practices" (Mondada, 2014), modifying conventional deictic gestures for the online context. Affiliation in this encounter transcends basic structural alignment, exhibiting profound emotional and stance-taking agreement. In accordance with Stivers' (2008) examination of nodding as an affiliative resource, it is evident that JEN's non-verbal behaviors actively reinforce TUN's perspective on register disparities. The lack of any dissent or opposition throughout the interaction further solidifies this robust affiliative framework. The analysis also demonstrates advanced topic management resources, with TUN effectively employing contrast structures, exemplification, and stepwise topic transitions. The careful organization of turns, including strategic pauses and discourse markers, facilitates the coherent progression of ideas while preserving interactive involvement. JEN's continuous alignment through vocal and non-verbal replies facilitates topic maintenance, promoting a collaborative learning environment.

Extract 5 shows alignment without affiliation while maintaining the topic-at-hand. Clarification request, acknowledgement tokens and display of understanding (line 10) illustrate participants' active involvement and

engagement with the task. The participants collaborate to attain a mutual comprehension of the topic at hand, showcasing their ability to navigate a discussion and sustain alignment. However, the absence of both viewpoints and the lack of an affective connection indicate that the participants fail to attain affiliation. Extract 6 presents a sophisticated example of managing disaffiliation and (re)building it. The disaffiliation sequence from lines 6 to 16 demonstrates advanced face-work through the employment of hesitation markers ("ermm"), multiple silences, and intricate embodied actions such as lateral head movements, body positioning, and gaze shifts. Den's acknowledgment "oh that ↑makes sense" (lines 32-34) following Yop's turn demonstrates affiliation, showing both understanding and stance modification. This sequence is particularly interesting for its demonstration of how participants can move from disagreement to mutual understanding through careful interactional work. In terms of alignment, the analysis indicates that participants maintain coordination across multiple layers. YOP and DEN have structural alignment, well-timed turn-taking, appropriate response tokens, and effective repair sequences. Multimodal resources including gaze, gesture, and posture create "embodied alignment". (Stivers, 2008). Affiliation management is particularly intricate during the interaction. Participants use epistemic positioning and stance changes to manage face-threatening disaffiliation sequences. The analysis indicates effective adaptation to the digital environment in online task-based interaction. Embodied resources help them overcome video-mediated communication's limitations by increasing gestural and postural movements. The successful completion of the task, characterized by mutual understanding and acknowledgment of perspectives, indicates elevated levels of online L2 interactional competence.

Extract 7 illustrates how participants achieve only a surface level of alignment and affiliation during an on-task topic maintenance sequence. The participants' employment of hedging, self-repair, claim of insufficient knowledge, and prolonged silences indicates their hesitation in articulating decisive assertions regarding the terms under discussion. Although there exists a certain level of alignment and affiliation between the participants, it does not constitute a profound or totally committed consensus, highlighting

the difficulties inherent in addressing sensitive societal issues. The conversation highlights how participants utilize hedging and careful wording to work while not completely harmonizing their divergent views on inclusivity. The dyad finally shows a surface level affiliation, acknowledging that neither term is entirely inclusive. The act of "aligning" or "affiliating" during conversation does not invariably yield a meaningful exchange of ideas; in this instance, both interlocutors avoid a more profound analysis and conclude that both phrases are inadequate. This might suggest that task-based engagement alone may be insufficient to facilitate meaningful topic maintenance and foster affiliation among participants.

Extract 8 demonstrates that collaborative turn constructions promote alignment and affiliation while maintaining a topic in a harmonious way. The analysis of Extract 8 reveals that the dyad utilizes various resources to establish and maintain alignment and affiliation while concurrently prioritizing task completion. These resources involve timely use of acknowledgment tokens, the employment of inclusive language (we), embodied actions (such as nodding), the use of metaphorical examples (pen and notebook), phrases that indicate stance and foster strong affiliation (such as "I really like it", "same here", "exactly"), nonverbal resources, and multiple collaborative turn completions. These practices promote alignment and affiliation between participants and enhance their shared understanding of the task and topic (Stivers et al., 2011). Acknowledgement tokens serve to sustain the current topic and enhance the affiliative bond between participants (Stivers, 2008). The use of a clear metaphor makes a difficult issue understandable for the interlocutor, promoting intersubjectivity between the participants.

Extract 9 illustrates how collaborative turn completions enable interactants to restore affiliation following disaffiliation. The examination of Extract 9 uncovers multiple important aspects of alignment, affiliation, topic maintenance, and online task-based interaction. Nir and Bac participate in a speculative discussion regarding the future significance of English, utilizing various resources that demonstrate their alignment and affiliation, including acknowledgment tokens, collaborative turn construction, and embodied

actions (e.g., nodding, getting closer to the screen, headshake). Prolonged interturn and intraturn pauses, hedges, and non-verbal gestures underscore the inherent complexity of the communicative challenges learners face in maintaining topic, articulating their viewpoints in the L2, establishing alignment and affiliation, and accomplishing the task objectives. Topic progression is facilitated through the use of open-ended questions, illustrative elaborations, and the presentation of counterarguments, which collectively enable interlocutors to critically engage with the implications of their exchange. Such interactional moves allow for the restoration of affiliation following moments of disaffiliation. The interaction exemplifies effective topic management, wherein participants collaboratively co-construct discourse by extending and enhancing each other's contributions, thereby ensuring coherence. The analysis emphasizes the pivotal role of alignment, affiliation, and multimodal resources in supporting successful communication within online task-based language learning environments.

Finally, Extract 10 shows how participants achieve alignment and affiliation even on a surface level within a short sequence. In Extract 10, Yop and Den cultivate a cooperative and empathetic interaction by demonstrating alignment and affiliation through laughter, shared experiences, and collaborative completions. Their utilization of non-verbal signals—particularly in a digital environment—alleviates the constraints of the medium, where visual indicators and bodily presence are lacking. They both contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and sustaining rapport, ensuring the engagement remains fluid and engaging. The sequential organization, characterized by question-response pairs and elaborations, ensures a coherent interaction focused on the use of English as a common language. However, while the interaction is cooperative and shows a high degree of alignment, it is important to note that the topic at hand—the use of English as a lingua franca—does not generate extensive second language (L2) talk. The conversation is primarily focused on affirmations and straightforward exchanges. Although the participants express their opinions, they do not exhibit the same level of nuanced, rich language production that is frequently observed in more in-depth, reflective discussions. This is despite the fact that they address an open-ended question, which frequently provides

an opportunity for participants to engage in a more in-depth discussion of the topic at hand. The current task and task-induced topic, while effective in facilitating a collaborative interaction, fail to foster the deep, engaging dialogue that might cultivate more complex relationships or enhance affiliation. Therefore, although alignment is reached, the dyadic relationship stays at a somewhat superficial level concerning affiliation, potentially limited by the task's design and the linguistic simplicity it promotes. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Resources for Alignment and Affiliation in On-Task Interaction

Resources for Alignment and Affiliation within On-Task Topic Management	Acknowledgments, and Affirmations Assessments Questions Embodied Actions Screen-based Actions Humor and Laughter Prosody RBB Inclusive language (we) Metaphorical language use Collaborative turn construction	**Characteristics of On-Task Interactions**	Task-induced Topics Structured and Goal-Oriented Emphasis on Alignment Emphasis on Task Management and Coordination

The analysis provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of online task-based interaction, highlighting the advanced L2 interactional competence demonstrated by participants in managing alignment, affiliation, and task-induced topic. However, the task-induced nature of the topics may inadvertently limit the participants' ability to delve into their individual perspectives or investigate their personal experiences in a more open-ended manner. In situations where interactions are predicated on specific task prompts, the opportunity for organic, spontaneous communication that facilitates the development of a more significant social bond may be diminished. In this context, a dyad may not establish a robust social bond beyond the superficial level, despite the fact that the interaction is

characterized by high alignment. This is due to the transactional nature of their exchanges and the limited language use. The potential depth of affiliation that could arise from a more informal or unstructured conversation is not yet fully investigated in this section. This will be handled in the following section.

4.3. Resources for Alignment and Affiliation within Off-Task Topic Management

In this section, we explore the dynamics of off-task topic management within online task-based interactions, presenting five extracts that illustrate how such diversions can foster meaningful interaction and enhance alignment and affiliation among participants. While off-task talk is often perceived as a deviation from the primary objectives, it plays a crucial role in creating spaces for social bonding and the negotiation of interpersonal relationships and creates opportunities for learning (Markee, 2005; Stone, 2019). The extracts presented in this section highlight various aspects of (re)building alignment and affiliation, showcasing how participants negotiate meaning, manage disaffiliation, and reinforce shared goals. Participants often use humor, storytelling, and personal anecdotes to create a sense of solidarity and shared experience, which can lead to more effective collaboration when returning to on-task topics (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). These interactions demonstrate that off-task talk is not merely a distraction but a valuable component of conversational dynamics that can enrich the interactional experience. This section underscores the importance of recognizing the value of off-task interactions in educational and collaborative settings, where fostering a sense of community and mutual support can lead to more meaningful and productive communication. Through these extracts, the role of off-task talk in creating a balanced and dynamic conversational landscape is emphasized.

Extract 11 comes from the first meeting of Dyad 27. San and Aya do the task titled "Getting to know each other" in this meeting (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from 6th minute of their interaction and lasts for 3.14 minutes. Before the extract, the dyad talks about their holidays abroad. In the extract, they move out of task and focus on an Arabic word. Due to the

extended length of the extract, some lines have been omitted (see Appendix D for omitted lines). Nevertheless, the content and significance of these omitted lines are succinctly addressed within the analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the conversation's context. Extract 11 shows how the dyad achieves alignment and affiliation through a shared experience and humor.

Extract 11: Yani (Dyad27/SAN-AYA/M1/3.14')

```
1  SAN:  when i say #IT means (.)#
   san              #makes a gesture#
2        #i #sa>y hh.it< in#↑arabic #without even ↑realizing#
   san   #looks twrds right--#         #--------headshake--------#
   san       #---1---> line 3 1: hand movements
3        i say (0.3) yani#
                      so
   san   ------------------#
4        (0.6)
5  AYA:  #%(.)yani↑
              so
   both  #%----2--->line 6 2: both dyads looking at screen
6        ↑(0.6)#%
   both  -------#%
7  SAN:  #yEs#
   san   #nods#
8  AYA:  <huuh>(0.2) #%we have it in ↑TURkish ↑Yes (0.3) yani (.)#%
                                                          so
   both               #%----------------------2----------------------#%
9        in ↑%tur[kish
   aya       %---3---> line 11 3: nods
10 SAN:           [((inaudible)) yeah (0.4) ↑#i heard it#(.) when i'm
   san                                       #-leans back-#
11       trying to% explain something #in english# (.)#i would say#
   aya   ----------%
   san                                  #raises her# index finger
   san                                        looks tw#rds her right#
12       #>blah, blah, blah< (.) #yani  >blah, blah< (.)#
                                    so
   san   #----------------looks around----------------------#
   san                              #---4---> line 15 4: head movements
13       ↑#i didn- i #don't even realize that i# said ↑yani=
                                                          so
   san    #---1---> line 18
   san                 #closes her eyes & shakes her# head
14 AYA:  ↑ya[ni (.) %$like (.) [so$%
           so
   aya              %--hand movement-%
15 SAN:     [yani↑ ~~me: (.) i [say~~#
             so
   san       --------------------------#
16 SAN:  ↑#YES#=
   san    #nods# & slightly leans towards the screen
17 AYA:  =$%like s[o$%
   aya    %hand movements%
18 SAN:           [(inaudible)) i (.) ↑always say it#
   san             ------------------------------------#
19       (0.6)
20 AYA:  %yes (.) $we say°°s°° it a/e>s w<ell%(.) in:
   aya   %-------------------nods---------------%
21 SAN:  yeah
```

```
22 AYA:  englis>h S<ometimes  we get %confused (.) and use TUrkish

   aya                                  %---1---> line 23
23       .hhh words (.) #>in the middle of% the< [speech$↓ eheh
   san                   #----3---> line 24
   aya    --------------1-------------------%
24 SAN:                                              [yeah#
   san                                               -----#
25       %happens all the ↑time% #(0.2) err.# ↑#so let's test
   aya   %---------nods----------%
   san                              #looks twrds# left
   san                                       looks# twrds right—> line 26
26       yoUR#(.)↑ar#a#bic >#a little#< (.) can ↑you #INTROduce#
   san   ----#       #lo#oks up                    leans t#wrds right
   san                        #looks twr#ds left     & raises eyebrows#
27       yourSELF↑
28       (0.9)
29 AYA:  okay err.# ene ismi aya#
   san              #opens her mouth# & leans her right
                              47 Lines omitted
30 AYA:  like >it's the<↑similar (0.2) #i:i%guess# (0.2) it's
   aya                                        %hand movement-->line 31
   san                                     #looks twrds# her left
31       quite%=
   aya   ------%
32 SAN:  =>#it is ↑similar#< (.) #because >#this is< very ↑basic#
   san     #-raises eyebrows#      #------------makes a face----------#
   san                                        #---1--->line 36
33       (.) >you introduce yourself< (.) #pret*y much the ↑same
   san                          5: makes a face #---5--->line 34
34       in every language (0.2) err.# ↑#%bu*t (.) when it gets
   san   -------------------------------#  #--raises eyebrows--> line 35
   aya                                    %-nods--> line 35
35       more ↑#complicated##% and you talk about (.) daily things
   san   --------------------#
   aya   ---------------------%
   san          #widened her #eyes
36       (.) %you can #↑notice the difference##
   aya        %----3--->line 37
   san                #--lateral head movement--#
   san    ---------------1----------------------#
37 AYA:  huh hum then% the:: (.) %dialec[t difference occurs%
   aya   -------------%             %-------hand movements-------%
38 SAN:                                      [↑##for example##
   san                                          #looks twrds #left
   san                                        #raises her inde#x finger
39       ↑yeah (.) #for example (.) s-standard ↑arabic they
   san              #----1--->line 40
40        #would say# (.) #err. (0.2)#merhaben(.)#keyfe haluk##
                                             ((hi))    ((how are you))
   san    #looks right#                          raises# her eyebrows#
   san    ------------------#           #------hand movements-----#
41       (1.0)
42 AYA:  err hho>w are< you↑
43 SAN:  #yes#
   san   #nods#
```

San starts the dialogue with a contemplative remark regarding her use of "yani" (Tr. That is) in previous turns, stating, "when I say IT means (.)". This establishes the foundation for a discussion on language mixing and

bilingualism. This explicit topic start helps building the conversation's structure (Button & Casey, 1985). San's gestures, including her rightward gaze and accompanying motions, demonstrate her involvement and serve to underscore her argument. In line 2, San states, “I sa>y hh.it in ↑arabic without even ↑realising”, indicating her inadvertent utilization of Arabic. This self-reflection encourages Aya to examine the topic of language use and subconscious behaviors. San's head shake and gaze to the right further underscore her contemplation. She continues at line 3, “I say (0.3) yani”, reintroducing the Arabic term “Yani” (Tr. that is) into the discourse. This particular example anchors the debate in a tangible linguistic phenomenon, encouraging Aya to connect or share similar experiences.

In line 5, Aya replies with, “(.) yani↑”, mirroring San's usage of “Yani” and aligning with the topic and San. This repetition functions as an affiliative gesture, demonstrating both understanding and solidarity with San's experience. Both speakers direct their attention towards the screen which can be seen through their gazes on screen, displaying their mutual concentration and involvement with the topic at hand. In line 7, San aligns with “yEs”, accompanied by a nod. This affirmation and non-verbal signal demonstrate alignment with the current topic and prompt Aya to keep participating in the dialogue. Aya further explains, “we have it in TURkish ↑Yes (0.3) yani (.)”, connecting the use of “Yani” to Turkish with an initial change of state token, emphasizing the connection between Arabic and Turkish language use. This expansion not only preserves the topic but also introduces a cross-linguistic perspective, thereby enriching the discourse. Both speakers nod, displaying mutual understanding, agreement and affiliation. This helps to align the speakers' experiences, emphasize the common language phenomena, and further elaborate on the topic, revealing the significance of collaborative topic extension in sustaining conversational continuity (Button & Casey, 1985).

In lines 10 and 11, San responds with “yeah (0.4) ↑i heard it(.) when i'm trying to explain something in english”, indicating recognition and agreement. San's reclined posture indicates her relaxed engagement with the topic at hand, but

her raised index finger denotes a point of emphasis or clarification, likewise reflecting on her linguistic choices while communicating in English. This reflection prompts Aya to contemplate similar experiences or provide insights. In line 12, San demonstrates her use of "Yani" as a discourse marker in conversation in English. This example demonstrates the integration of many languages in dialogue, emphasizing the flexibility of multilingual interaction. In the next line, she further reflects, "↑i didn- i don't even realize that i said ↑yani=", expressing surprise at her unconscious language use. This self-awareness encourages Aya to disclose similar experiences or insights.

Aya articulates this in lines 14 and 17 with "↑yani (.) like(.) so", employing hand gestures to underscore her statement. This answer corresponds with San's reflection and incorporates an affiliative dimension through the use of similar language and actions. In line 15, San proceeds with "yani me: (.) i say", sustaining the emphasis on the term "Yani" and prompting more discourse in an overlapped way with San's previous turn. San's nod and subtle inclination towards the screen signal her involvement and preparedness to proceed with the conversation.

In line 16, San endorses Aya's comprehension of yani (line 14) with a high pitch 'YES=", accompanied with nods, so confirming her agreement, alignment and affiliation (Stivers, 2008). This affirmation prompts Aya to keep going in the dialogue or present novel perspectives. In line 17, San states, "i (.) ↑always say it", displaying her recurring use of "Yani". This statement encourages Aya to disclose comparable behaviors or observations. In line 20, Aya confirms with "yes (.) we say°°s°° it a/e>s well(.) in:", while nodding to show agreement. This answer corresponds with San's observations and strengthens their collective linguistic experience across many languages. It also displays strong affiliation between the dyad as Aya points out a similarity in their language use emphasizing their "sharedness" in using a word. San's succinct confirmation in line 21 sustains the conversational momentum and prompts Aya to proceed. In lines 22 and 23, Aya recounts a comparable event and employs Turkish vocabulary while conversing in English with a cheerful tone. This humorous approach cultivates a sense of friendship and prompts San to connect with the topic at hand while also bypassing a potential face-

threatening problem. Stivers (2008) observes that the sharing of personal experiences is a prevalent method for fostering alignment and establishing rapport which fosters affiliation. Glenn (2003) examines how humor functions as a mechanism for fostering solidarity and affiliation in dialogue. In line 24, San replies with “yeah”, a succinct affirmation that preserves the continuity of the dialogue. In the subsequent turn, she states “happens all the time”, recognizing the prevalence of the experience and emphasizing their shared perspective on the issue.

Beginning at line 25, she proposes a transition to a previously referenced topic in this meeting: Aya's familiarity with Arabic. She assigns Aya the responsibility of introducing himself in Arabic. This language directs interaction towards a certain task, enhancing coordination and participation. In line 29, Aya aligns with her and accepts this offer that San assesses his Arabic proficiency and replies with “okay”, displaying his preparedness to engage with the topic. He presents himself in Arabic. This response illustrates Aya's involvement with the task and establishes a foundation for additional discussion or critique. In omitted lines, Aya continue presenting himself in Arabic, while San assesses, rectifies, and validates his Arabic proficiency. Aya proposes potential interpretations and translations for San's statements. Subsequently, San demonstrates her accent at Aya's request.

In line 31, Aya reflects on the similarities between the Tunisian dialect and standard Arabic. He used hand movements to underscore the argument. This contemplation encourages San to examine the parallels among languages and provide insights. In line 33, San replies, “=>it is ↑similar (.) because >this is very ↑basic”, affirming Aya's observation and offering further detail. This remark corresponds with Aya's contemplation and strengthens their shared understanding. In lines 34 and 35, San states “(.) >you introduce yourself< (.) pretty much the ↑same in every language”, emphasizing the universality of self-introduction across different languages. San then continues, “↑but (.) when it gets more ↑complicated and you talk about (.) daily things, you notice the differences” indicating a shift towards more complex linguistic phenomena. This transition encourages Aya to participate in the discussion and offer thoughts or examples. In line 37, Aya replies, “huh hum then the::

(.) dialect difference occurs", employing hand gestures to underscore San's argument. This answer corresponds with San's observation and incorporates an affiliative dimension through the use of similar language and gestures. Beginning at line 38, San incorporates 'for example (.) s-standard ↑arabic', presenting a particular instance of dialectal variation, displaying a transition towards the inclusion of specific instances. This transition encourages Aya to participate in the discussion and offer thoughts or examples. In line 42, Aya replies with "err hho>w are you↑", translating the Arabic expression into English. This answer illustrates Aya's comprehension and involvement with the topic at hand. In the final phrase, San confirms Aya with "yes", accompanied by a nod. This affirmation and non-verbal cue show alignment with the current topic and encourage Aya to keep engaged in the discourse. Subsequent to this excerpt, the participants proceed to discuss the distinctions among various dialects. thus off-task topic maintained for some more time until the initiation of the next task step.

The analysis of Extract 11 uncovers numerous significant information on the dynamics of online interactions, especially within the realm of language learning. The initiation and maintenance of topics are supported by verbal and non-verbal signals, underscoring the significance of multimodal communication in digital environments. Alignment and affiliation are established via common experiences, a shared language use and humor, which cultivate a sense of connection and rapport among individuals. The employment of humor and laughter enhances their affiliative connection, as seen by Satar and Çimenli Olcars (2025), who underscore the significance of affiliative actions in preserving interactional harmony. The extract demonstrates the intricate relationship of linguistic and non-linguistic resources in conducting discussion and promoting learning in interaction in online settings. This shows that in task-based video-mediated online interaction participants might have off-task talk and have meaningful L2 interaction. This off-task talk mostly occurs (in the dataset) when participants finish a task step earlier than the designated time, thus still have some "free time" before the next task step is initiated. This is when actually participants

have more informal and socially bonding interaction over a topic they initiated spontaneously.

Extract 12 comes from second meeting of dyad 23. Nir and Bac do "Communication Styles" task in this meeting (see Appendix A for the task). The extract is taken from 17th minute of their interaction and lasts for 1.44 minutes. Before the extract, the dyad acts out a scenario part of a guided role play (Pea Day, Extract 5). However, in this episode, they move out of the task topic and talk about a more personal topic (having a cat) as they finish early then the designated time. Extract 12 shows how participants use personal anecdotes and empathic talk to maintain alignment and affiliation.

Extract 12: Adopting A Cat (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M2/1.44')

```
1  NIR:    +in cas>e you< finish°ed° #talking# #earliER↓#
   nir     -----1-----> line 4 1: cursor movements
   bac       +----2----> line 10 2: puts his hand on his mouth
   nir                                  #looks up# #looks at #screen
2          (0.2) ↑you can also get creativ>e and< (.) continue to
3          conversation by adding +more ↑details+ (.)or by (.)
   bac                            +-----smiles----+          ((click))
4          swapping roles↓
   nir     --------1--------
5          (1.6)
   nir     ---1---> line 8 ((scrolling))
6          #(0.7)#   #(0.5)#   (0.3)
   nir     #looks #up #looks #back at screen
   nir                #raises# eyebrows ((click))
7  BAC:    +yeah (.) we+ can ↑talk about +$tha[t$
   bac     +slightly nods+                 +---3---> line 10 3: smiles
8  NIR:                                          [↑okay
   nir                                           ---1--
9          (1.3)
10 NIR:    err. (0.3) i want to::+ ↑adopt +a cat+ but #unfortunately+
   bac     ----------2-------------+------3--+
   bac                     5: raises his eyebrows +----------5----------+
   nir                                              makes# a face->line 11
11         >because of my#<↑#mom# (.) >i canNOTt<
   nir     ---------------#   #sli#ghtly moves back
12         (0.6) she+ ↑<sa:y[s>
13 BAC:                     [°~+yeah i can  guess~° ye[ah
   bac                         +---6---> line 14
                    6: makes 1 (number) gesture with his r. hand
14 NIR:                                                y[eah+
   bac                                                 --6---+
15         +(.) >#because of< cat(.)'s hair# (0.8) err
   bac     +---7---> line 20 7: scratches his nose
   nir           #----looks at her right------#
16         #<she:> +doesn't# alLOW me+ to adopt (0.4) ↑a cat
   nir     #--looks around--#
   bac               +-------nods--------+
17         (3.4)
18 BAC:    yeah (1.3)
19 BAC:    yeah >that's not °s/bad°+< ↑#you +know# err s-
```

```
   bac      ------------7--------------+          +--2--> line 22
   nir                                  #slightly #leans fwd
20          #e~veryone °says th<AT>#(.)↑but finally >they wi<ll>
   nir      #---------nods------------#
21          (0.5) #fall in love (.)# with the ↑+cat and
   bac      -----------------2---------------------+
   nir            #--raises eyebrows--#
22          the>y will<↑#accept it (0.8) ↑+inshallah# (.)+
                                        ((hopefully in Arabic))


   nir                 #---------nods-----------------#
   bac                                  +opens both hands+
23          ↑#that's what [mommies DO#
   nir      #----------smiles---------#
24 NIR:                   [$heh. heh$
25 BAC:     (0.3) they said ↑NO (.) #at the ↑+beginning+  +>and [then<
   bac                                   +head movem+ent+-5-> line 29
   nir                              #----8----> line 27
26 NIR:                                                      [↑yeah#
   nir                                                       --8---#
27          (1.0)
28 BAC:     >they said+< <↑oh> POoR ↑cat (.) ((inaudible))
   bac      -----------+
29          #you can stay hom>e and< i will feed hi>m# and< ↓some
   nir      #-----------------nods----------------------#
30          ((inaudible))
31 NIR:     yes# (.) ↑but(.)# actually it's bett>E°r° for me
   nir         #-makes a face-#
32          be<cause if i (0.6) err. .hhh (.) #if (0.8) >she# or he<
   nir                                          #---looks up--#
33          (0.3) dies↑ (0.6) #i will ↑cry# (.) i will (0.2) be
   nir                        #makes a face#
34          +↑SO sad+
   bac      +-smiles-+
35          (1.4)
36 NIR:     +for (0.2) #her (0.2) or his# (.) H[IM+
   bac      +------------------nods-----------------+
   nir                 #-head movements-#
37 BAC:                                          [i know i know the
38          feeling like(.)yeah(.)#that's ↑really heart(.)breaking
   nir                           #---8---->line 40
39          (0.3)# #you know the problem that# (.) they don't live
   nir      ---8--# #--leans towards the screen-#
40          (0.2) for ↑too long >i m<ea<n> (0.3) they have like🖵
                        ((screen changes to the next scenario))🖵
41          (.) #↑seven(.) or maybe ↑eight years >and then< they
   nir           #--8-->line 43
42          will: (0.3)↑+rise [up#+
   nir      ----------8----------#
   bac                 +-----6----+
43 NIR:                   ↑#[yeah#
   nir                      #leans fo#rwards to screen
   nir                       --1---> line 49
44 BAC:     ↑+hhh.okay
   bac       +---10---> line 49
45          (1.0)
46 NIR:     okay↓
47          (0.5)
48 BAC:     ((inaudible)) task#+ #(0.5)↑ you couldn't find your
   bac      -------1-------------+
   nir      -------10-----------# #-10->>  ((places cursor on zoom app))

49          ↑car keYS in ti>me and< now (.)you're late for ↑$work$
```

The extract starts with Nir reading the task instructions, which indicate her suggestion to persist in discussing the task. However, this is not what the dyad does as we will see in the following lines. Nir's nonverbal behaviors in lines 4-6, such as glancing up and back at the screen, indicate a moment of contemplation or expectation, typical in online communications where visual signals are constrained (Stivers & Sidnell, 2005). The short pauses and mouse movements show a transition-relevant place, enabling Nir to regulate the conversation's pace. These pauses function as interactional resources, enabling Nir to organize her thoughts and prepare for the subsequent conversational step. In virtual environments, where the lack of physical presence may impede engagement, such pauses are crucial for preserving coherence and assuring mutual understanding between participants. In line 7, Bac verbally aligns with Nir's proposal by expressing willingness to discuss the topic, along with a little nod and grin to display affiliation. This non-verbal alignment is essential in online environments, as visual signals facilitate interactional coherence (Stivers, 2008). The integration of verbal and non-verbal cues amplifies the affiliative dimension of the relationship since Bac's nod and grin express understanding and agreement. This alignment may show a common understanding and reciprocal involvement, which are crucial for maintaining a positive interactional atmosphere.

Nir introduces a personal topic regarding cat adoption beginning in line 10, which diverges from the preceding larger (on-task) discussion. The term “unfortunately” indicates a potential trouble, prompting empathy and alignment from Bac. Nir shares a personal story to encourage Bac to engage more profoundly with the issue, cultivating empathy and understanding. Bac's answer in line 13 exemplifies empathy and resonance with Nir's circumstances through both a gesture and vocal affirmation. The employment of “yeah” accompanied by a gesture denoting understanding exemplifies affiliative work (Stivers, 2008). Bac's reaction validates Nir's experience and promotes the affiliative connection among the participants. This method effectively fosters rapport by enabling participants to connect personally and exchange their experiences and viewpoints (Stivers, 2008). This debate underscores the significance of empathy in dialogue, facilitating emotional connections and mutual support via shared experiences. Beginning

at line 14, Nir further elucidates the topic by including her mother's viewpoint on cat adoption, employing non-verbal signals such as glancing around to convey displeasure or confusion. Bac's nodding demonstrates ongoing alignment and endorsement, strengthening the cooperative connection among the participants. This interaction illustrates the significance of non-verbal signals in preserving alignment and coherence in conversation. Bac's nod demonstrates her comprehension and endorsement, prompting Nir to continue in recounting his experience and expounding on the topic at hand.

In lines 19-23, Bac engages in a "relational talk" (Holmes, 2000), indicating that Nir's mother's initial reluctance to acquire a cat may evolve over time. His employment of "inshallah" ("hopefully" in Arabic, line 22) introduces a cultural aspect to the dialogue, indicating shared cultural understanding and strengthening affiliation (Stivers, 2008). This discussion underscores the significance of supportive discourse in fostering rapport and sustaining an appealing interactional atmosphere, as participants employ language to provide solace and encouragement, so cultivating affiliation. Nir's laughing in line 24 ("heh. heh") functions as an affiliative mechanism, bolstering the mutual comprehension and humor inherent in the scenario. Bac's continuation of the narrative on parental acceptance in the subsequent lines further aligns with Nir's perspective, sustaining the topic and developing rapport. Humor serves as an effective instrument for building affiliation, enabling people to engage in a more light-hearted manner and exchange moments of delight and amusement. This underscores the significance of humor in cultivating a constructive interactional atmosphere, as it stimulates people to interact in a fun and cheerful fashion (Heath & Luff, 2013; Holmes, 2000; Looney & He, 2020; Looney & Kim, 2018; Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025; Sumruk et al., forthcoming; Sumruk & Jenks, 2025). Bac's account of parental acceptance of a pet illustrates a prevalent societal story, which Nir accepts with a gesture (line 29). This collective story fosters connection and illustrates alignment with Bac's viewpoint (Stivers, 2008). Bac and Nir strengthen their affiliative bond by utilizing similar cultural scripts, showcasing their shared understanding and admiration of one another's experiences. This underscores the significance of shared narratives in fostering rapport and sustaining a

pleasant interactional atmosphere, as participants utilize similar cultural references to connect and engage with one another.

Beginning with line 31, Nir presents a novel viewpoint, articulating apprehension on the possible emotional repercussions of a pet's demise on herself. This slight shift in topic exemplifies competent topic management, as Nir moves between personal anecdotes and overarching emotional themes (Schiffrin, 1987). Nir exemplifies her ability to steer the conversation's direction, maintaining its engagement and relevance by redirecting the attention. She elucidates the emotional ramifications of pet loss, prompting Bac to delve into the topic more profoundly, so cultivating empathy and comprehension. Bac's smile in reaction to Nir's concern demonstrates empathy and comprehension, strengthening the affiliative connection as non-verbal indicators, such as nodding, facilitate alignment and support during conversations (Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013; Stivers, 2008). Bac's empathetic response (line 37) acknowledges Nir's concerns and reinforces the affiliative bond between the participants, underscoring the significance of empathy and non-verbal cues in sustaining alignment and coherence in conversation, as participants utilize these resources to connect emotionally and support one another through shared experiences.

This also illustrates alignment and mutual understanding, essential for sustaining rapport (Stivers, 2008). In line 38, Bac continues to make an "empathic talk", empathizing with Nir's problems by using terms such as "that's really heartbreaking" (Stivers, 2008). Bac's empathetic discourse not only alleviates Nir's apprehensions but also cultivates a sense of solace and security. This exchange underscores the significance of supportive discourse in fostering rapport and sustaining a favorable interactional atmosphere, as participants employ language to provide solace and encouragement. Nir's agreement with Bac's viewpoint, signified by his forward tilt, demonstrates sustained alignment and engagement. The employment of non-verbal signals, such as leaning towards the screen, enhances the affiliative dimension of the connection (Stivers, 2008). Nir leans forward, indicating her participation and interest in the talk, so strengthening the affiliative bond among the participants. Bac's employment of the discourse marker "okay" in line 44

indicates a shift in the conversation. This demonstrates effective topic management, as Bac prepares to shift the focus or conclude the current topic (Schiffrin, 1987). The new scenario to be shown on screen could accelerate this transition process. In line 46, Nir consents to this shift and begins reading the scenario from her screen. Nir presents a situation with lost car keys, employing humor to alleviate the atmosphere. This change in topic illustrates Nir's ability to steer the conversation's direction, facilitating a seamless transition and sustaining participation (Stivers, 2008). She presents the scenario to encourage Bac to re-engage with the topic in a more light-hearted manner, promoting humor and playfulness.

Analysis of Extract 12 illustrates the complex dynamics of conversation, emphasizing how participants navigate topics, align with one another, and cultivate affiliation. Participants sustain a cohesive and compelling discussion by utilizing methods such as personal stories and empathetic discourse. Effective topic management is essential for sustaining conversational coherence and ensuring participant engagement. Participants exhibit alignment and affiliation via vocal affirmations, non-verbal signals, collaborative narratives, laughter, and empathetic talk facilitating rapport and sustaining a constructive interactional atmosphere. Humor serves as an effective instrument for building affiliation, enabling people to engage in a more light-hearted manner and exchange moments of delight and amusement. Bac attempts to cultivate hope and optimism in, almost like an emotional support for, Nir through his empathetic and assuring talk multiple times which is aligned by Nir. This is not what we see in on-task talk in our dataset. Although it might not be connected directly to the off-task topic management the dyad has, it is evident in the extract that participants achieve strong alignment and affiliation through varying resources mentioned above. Employment of “inşallah” (hopefully) cultivates their sharedness in terms of culture and religion as well. This cultural reference acts as a potent affiliative mechanism, indicating a mutual understanding and common ground among the participants. By doing this, the dyad reinforces their affiliative bond and appreciation for their shared cultural/religious heritage. Analysis of the extract demonstrates the vital role of supportive discourse in building rapport and maintaining a stimulating interactional environment, as participants use

language to offer comfort and encouragement, thereby fostering affiliation (Stivers, 2008).

Extract 13 comes from the third meeting of Dyad 30. Han and Zel do the "Linguistic Landscapes" task in this meeting, however what we will see in the extract is not related to the task (see Appendix A for the task). The extract comes from almost 26th minute of the interaction and lasts for 1.27 minutes. Before this episode, the dyad discusses the pictures provided in the first part of the task and then starts exploring the Tokyo map for the second part. The instruction given for this task step is:

> "Here is a street for you to take a look at. SHINJUKU/TOKYO Kabukicho Sakura-dori St. Explore the street together for 5 minutes. During your journey, pay attention to the various languages used. Making use of the questions below, comment on the street in terms of its linguistic landscape. Considering the linguistic landscape in Tokyo, who do you think the target audience is? (in terms of nationality, range of age, gender) Why do you think so? Answer the questions considering the 'signs' of the workplaces".

Extract 13 shows how the dyad skillfully navigates between on-task and off-task topics in an aligned way while maintaining alignment and affiliation.

Extract 13: Flue (Dyad30/HAN-ZEL/M3/1.27')

```
 1  HAN:    #>it's ↑s<o flue
    han      #----1---> line 4 1: diverse gaze on zoom
    han     cursor movements---> line 3
 2          (1.8)
    han     ---2--  2: clicks several times on google map
 3  ZEL:    uh *ye:s*↓
    zel        *raise*s her eyebrows & looks twrds screen
    han     ------------
 4          (2.4) #
    han      ---1---#
    han           moves the screen twrds right
 5  HAN:    #for example thes°e°# (.)  #*storES*# *(0.4) #THAT boards#
    han     #slightly moves her he#ad right#----leans twrds the screen------#
    han                                  ---3---> line 6
            3: moves the cursor around the store on the Google map
    zel                                  *opens her* mouth
    zel                                            *--4--> line 7 4:smiles
 6          (0.7) those ↑signboards  are their linguist landscape
    han      ----------3-------------  --cursor movements---> line 8
 7          (.).hhh #OKAY so we underSTAND what* is lan-linguistic (.)
    zel      ----------------4---------------------*
    han             #---1---> line 11
 8          landscape (.)  i:s?
    han     ----------     clicks  --5--> line 10 5:screen changes
 9  ZEL:    ↑*yes °of course°*
    zel     *lateral head movement*
 10 HAN:    and (.) we see (.) it'<s>  (.) map ↑too
```

han ---------5-------------- ((screen reappears))
11 **(0.3) $even though it'>s so< #flue$ eheh.#**
han --------------1----------------# #-1-> line 13
12 **(2.1)**
13 **ZEL: ehe you know flu>e err< flue is ↑french#**
han -------------------------1-------------------#
han screen appears ((a webpage))
14 **(0.8) °it's° #french [↑word#**
han #leans towards #the screen
15 **HAN: [#really#**
han #makes a# face
han ((digitask web app)) screen appears
16 **(0.5)**
han ----cursor movements--> line 17
17 **ZEL: yes ehe (0.6) but in ↑english we say ↑FOggy °for example°**
han ----------
18 **HAN: ##fogg#y yeah#↓(0.2) °#foggy#° #i will# use th[a t**
han #slightly lea#ns back
han #looks #up #-nods-# #raises# her eyebrows
han ((then places the cursor on info box)) clicks

19 **ZEL: [err**
20 ***i-t-*'s oh *#i-t-'s written with (.)#* ↑#O bu-t >i-t's**
zel *looks* up
han&zel *#---look at screen--------#*
han 7: looks towards the screen #---7---> line 21
21 **pronounced with#<↑#A# i guess (.) ↑fA:gy**
han ----------#
22 **HAN: ↑FAg#gy # #(0.3) okay# (0.4) #fAggy↓#**
han #lo#oks up
han #look#s up
han #---nods----# #looks t#wds zel
23 **ZEL: #or just ↑u#*/anclear* ((you can say))**
han #looks twrds# the screen
zel *lateral he*ad movement
24 **HAN: heh. #.hhh (0.8) FOggy (.) ↑isn't foggy also used#**
han #----------looks up----------#
25 ***as a (.)* *weather ↑term?**
zel *leans back* *---8--->line 27 8: scratches her eye
26 **(0.7)**
27 **ZEL: ↑yeah #wea*-th-r err (.) when fog (.) you can-'t see clear**
zel -----8-----*
han #---9---> line 30 9: nods
28 **HAN: yes**
29 **ZEL: *you can't see things clearly**
zel *---10---> line 30 10: hand movements
30 **HAN: yes*#↓**
zel ---*
han --9--#
31 **ZEL: yes**
32 **#*(0.6)***
han #----7---> line 39
zel *scratc*hes her eye
han ----11---> line 33 11: scrolls down the info box
33 **ZEL: okay↓.hhh (0.2) ↑*so: we: (.) learned >what is it*<**
han ----------11----------
zel *----------smiles----------*
34 **w>e s:<aw *it's exampl es and we (.) err. explor>e the<**
han ---cursor movements---> line 35
zel *---7---> line 40
35 **linguistic *landsca*pe through ↑google map links**
han ----------
zel *slight m*ovement towards right
36 **(0.7)**
37 **ZEL: °°huh hum°°**
38 **HAN: (.) ↑*so* let's #err should discuss our ↑country's**

```
   han      scrolls down the info box
   zel             *sli*ghtly nods
   han                          places the cursor on info box
   han                            #-whole body movement-> line 39
39         linguistic# landscape#==so do ↑you (0.3) err.
   han      ----------#
   han      ---------7------------#
40         ↑#mention your#↑countr>y* in< linguistic landscape
   han      #head movement#
   zel      -------------7------------*
41         ↑#mention your ↑SIGNS (.) sign boards#
   han      #-------looks towards the screen----------#
   han                                  cursor movements
```

In the first line, Han uses the term “flue”, a Turkish word for blurry, for the map they are looking at establishing a foundation for a brief side examination of language and meaning to follow. The original task for the dyad expects participants to use a map to complete a task; however, for Han the map appears to lack sufficient resolution for easy attention. But it is still readable, nonetheless. This initiates an evaluative discourse sequence related to the quality of visual (the map) at hand that deviates from the main pedagogical objective of the task given to them. The rising intonation of Han in Line 1 indicates a questioning or uncertain tone, prompting Zel to participate. Zel affirms Han's remark in line 3, employing a downward intonation to correspond with Han's assertion. The employment of the turn-initial “uh” indicates a pause for reflection or uncertainty before to replying, a phenomenon frequently observed in alignment (Stivers, 2008). The initial topic is not immediately relevant to the current task, displaying a typical diversion in conversations where participants may deviate from the primary emphasis to examine adjacent topics or unrelated ones. This transition can be seen as a method of topic management in which individuals bounce between relevant and irrelevant topics.

Beginning at line 5, Han elaborates on the topic by offering instances, redirecting the discussion towards the examination of linguistic landscapes. The emphasis on “THAT boards” indicates a concentration on visual components, consistent with the task at hand. In line 7, Han expressly links the discourse to the assignment by employing the term “linguistic landscape” to correspond with the task's aims. This exemplifies effective topic management by redirecting the discussion on the task at hand. In lines 7-8, Han solicits confirmation or elaboration, employing a rising tone to encourage

Zel's contribution. This open-ended inquiry promotes more dialogue and cooperation. In line 9, Zel emphatically recognizes the relevance to the work, use “yes of course” to indicate understanding and alignment. The reappearance of task-related information demonstrates a purposeful return to the main focus, underscoring the dynamic nature of topic management in online task-based interactions. The participants' ability to transition between topics demonstrates their verbal proficiency and flexibility, crucial qualities for sustaining interest and accomplishing task goals.

Beginning at line 10, Han further explicates the assignment, underscoring the use of the map. The fragmented speech an emphasis on incorporating digital instruments into the dialogue, a crucial element of online on-task engagement. She employs humor with the expression “it's so flue”, accompanied by laughter. The utilization of humor facilitates affiliation and alleviates tension, hence promoting a constructive interactional atmosphere (Glenn, 2003). In line 13, Zel humorously engages with Han's use of “flue”, noting that the term is derived from French.

This light-hearted interaction fosters connection and illustrates mutual engagement. Han inclines towards the screen, indicating orientation on the task at hand. The reference to “French word” indicates a transition towards linguistic inquiry, which is not consistent with the task's aims. In line 15, Han conveys her astonishment or curiosity by using “really” to solicit more clarification. This response fosters engagement and encourages Zel to persist. In line 17, Zel elucidates the distinction between “flue” and “foggy” in English. In line 18, Han recognizes Zel's elucidation, reiterating “foggy” to enhance comprehension. The phrase “I will use that” demonstrates her acknowledgement and incorporation of the new information. Zel's interjection in line 19 shows a continuation or elaboration of the topic at hand, preserving the conversational flow.

Beginning in line 19, Zel examines the pronunciation of the focal word this time, emphasizing the distinctions between its written and spoken versions. Her employment of “I guess” demonstrates uncertainty and solicits Han's perspective. This collaborative exploration promotes alignment and shared understanding of a linguistic element. In line 22, Han reiterates the

pronunciation, employing “okay” to indicate acceptance and comprehension. This reiteration strengthens alignment and indicates active participation. In the subsequent line, Zel presents an alternative to “foggy”, use “or just unclear” to indicate flexibility in linguistic expression. This transparency fosters collaboration and mutual understanding. In line 24, Han reintroduces humor with “heh”, thereafter posing a query over the term “foggy”. This inquiry encourages Zel to provide further input, enhancing involvement and alignment. Zel affirms Han's inquiry in line 27, explaining the term “foggy” as a meteorological descriptor. This response corresponds with their emphasis and demonstrates proficient topic management. Han's succinct confirmation in line 28 demonstrates agreement and understanding, so encouraging alignment. In line 29, Zel further elucidates the meaning of “foggy”. This further clarification facilitates mutual understanding. Their frequent affirmations also indicate a mutual understanding.

In line 33, Zel refocuses on the task (okay↓.hhh (0.2) ↑so:), summarizing the understanding they obtained thus far. This reflection illustrates their shift in emphasis once again, indicating competent topic management and alignment. In line 35, Zel emphasizes the utilization of Google Maps, consistent with the task's objectives and displaying proficient integration of modern technologies. Zel's succinct reply in line 37 suggests agreement and readiness for progress. Beginning at line 38, Han advocates for progressing to the subsequent task phase, proposing a discussion on their nation's linguistic landscape, which is the next stage in the task. This proposal illustrates proficient topic management and task progression. Han advances the concept, inviting Zel to participate and urging her to express her viewpoint. This invitation fosters opportunities for enhanced cooperation and alignment. In lines 40-41, Han underscores the emphasis on signs, aligning with the task's aims and promoting further exploration.

The analysis of Extract 13 uncovers several important aspects of conversational engagement in an online task-based setting. Topic management is a dynamic process, with participants skillfully navigating between on-task and of-task topics. This adaptability is essential for sustaining involvement and ensuring that the conversation remains

productive. Han and Zel effectively redirect the discussion towards the exploration of linguistic landscapes, shown by Han's reintroduction of the term “linguistic landscape” (line 6) and Zel's synthesis of their insights (line 33). Alignment and affiliation are established through verbal and non-verbal signals, such as humor and shared laughter, which strengthen social connections and group cohesiveness. The online nature of the interaction introduces unique challenges, requiring effective coordination and communication to navigate digital tools and achieve task objectives. The analysis of Extract 13 underscores the intricacy and richness of online task-based interactions. The participants' ability to handle topics establish alignment and affiliation, and integrate multimodal communication highlights the significance of these abilities in attaining effective results in digital learning contexts.

Extract 14 comes from the fourth meeting of a dyadic VE meeting between Pal and Sim. The extract lasts for 2.40 minutes and was taken from the 6.11th minute of the interaction. The dyad was assigned to accomplish two VE tasks in this meeting, each of which was supposed to take half an hour. In this particular segment, they were doing the first task of the meeting called “Inclusive Language”, which comprises four interrelated task phases having a single theme (see Appendix A for the task). Prior to this extract, they discussed three initial questions regarding their knowledge and experiences of inclusive language. Following these questions, the dyad is supposed to move on to watching a video on inclusive language. However, the app screen displays that they still have 5 minutes before the next task step is activated. This extract reveals what occurs during the additional five minutes the dyad has. Extract 14 shows how learners can use off-task talk to build affiliation even after disaffiliation while still maintaining orientation back-and-forth to the overall task structure. This extract is a long one, as it aims to illustrate how participants manage topic transitions while navigating both on-task and off-task talk. To capture this process, we included the initiation, maintenance, and termination of off-task topical talk, highlighting how the dyad constructs alignment and affiliation throughout. The extract is presented in three segments to make it easier to follow.

Extract 14 (*Segment 1*): Favorite Singers (Dyad28/PAL-SIM/M4/2.40')

```
1     PAL:  *so probably↑* (0.7) that's (.) isn't that- *it- all the
      sim   *cursor moveme*nts                          *scrolling up and
                                                          down--> line 3
2           tasks are over↑
3           (1.0)*(0.4)
      sim   ------*
4     PAL:  no:: it's not
5           (.)*(1.1)
      sim     *clicks on zoom image
6     SIM:  what↑
7           (1.1)
8     PAL:  okay err (.) when the five minutes (.) finished (0.2) we
9           will get #another (0.4) #step
      pal             #-hand movement-#
10          (1.4)
11    SIM:  *OH:* okay
      sim   *-1-* 1: raises her eyebrows and move her head backwards
12          (1.2)*#(1.0)#(0.8)*
      pal         #-nods-#
      sim        *------2-------*2:moves the cursor on the right of task page
13    PAL:  so erm# ↑wh#*ich song is you favourite from harry sty[les*
      pal           #-3--# 3: hand movement
      sim                 *------------places cursor on task page-----------*
14    SIM:                                                          [ehe*eh
      sim                                                            *4
            4: leans backwards & ties her hands behind her head --> line 16
15          (0.4) #erm (.) er-# i believe it's like sign of the times
      pal         #laughs & smil#es
16          (1.0)*#(0.7)
      sim   -----*
      pal         #looks upwards --> line 17
17    PAL:  uhm# (.) mine is (0.3) probably: (0.5) to be so lonely
      pal   ---#
18          (1.0)*(.)
      sim         *raises her eyebrows and smiles --> line 19
19    SIM:  hm*m:*
      sim     *nods --> line 20
      sim   -----*
20          (0.6)*(0.4)
      sim   ------*
21    PAL:  yeah i like* (fine) line
      sim               *opens her mouth & looks towards her right--> line 23
22          (2.0)
23    SIM:  er- >i believe< (0.2) they're all *good (0.9) *like
      sim   ---------------------------------------*          *looks towards
                                                   her right --> line 26
24    PAL:  #yeah
      pal   #nods--> line 25
25          (0.4)#(0.2)
      pal   -----#
```

What we see until line 8 is collaborative completion of the stage one. Pal announces that the first stage of the task is over in a hesitant way (hesitations, pauses, and expression of uncertainty with 'probably') and when they can pursue the second stage of the task. Explicit announcement of the end of task stage (lines 1-2), hesitations and restarts until line 11, long inter-turn silences,

and discourse markers signaling a potential termination (line 8) mark a completion of stage one. This is acknowledged by Sim in line 11 with a change of state token and discourse marker okay, which flags the termination of a current topic and also an end to a task stage in our case. As the timing of the stages is predetermined by the task designers, dyad cannot pass to a next stage whenever they finish a current stage of the task. And Pal's announcement of time remaining for the task stage (line 8) to be initiated by the platform creates space for a possible free time talk that might be related or unrelated to the recently accomplished task stage (inclusive language).

What comes next is important at this point for the rest of the interaction. In line 13, Pal initiates a question-answer sequence. This suggests a topic shift to a more personal, off-task conversation about music preferences. This shift demonstrates learners' ability to manage multiple interactional agendas in task-based settings (Hellermann & Pekarek Doehler, 2010). Sim finds this question laughable which might show her surprise for such a question following the completion of a task stage about an off-task topic. However, in line 15, she provides an answer for the question validating the initiation of a new topic and displaying alignment. Thus, the dyad marks a departure from the task and makes a collaborative transition to an off-task talk having an off-task topic (favorite singers and songs) to recently completed task stage and its topic (inclusive language). Sim's acknowledgement of the task stage completion with a change of state token ("OH") and a discourse marker ("okay") marks the termination of the current topic and the task stage. This marks a collaborative transition to an off-task talk, unrelated to the recently completed task stage. This acknowledgment is crucial for signaling readiness to transition to off-task talk. Please note that Pal announces that he stalked Sim on Instagram and saw that she also likes Harry Styles in the beginning of the same meeting. However, that was all for them to talk about Harry Styles as they were about to start the task. Announcement of the off-task time available until the next task stage shows that the time constraint mediates the ongoing interaction and will do the same for the upcoming sequences. It also creates space for off-task interaction, which may foster building rapport and affiliation. Although they move onto a new off-task topic, it also reflects dyad's orientation to the task-based interaction as they announce beforehand

how much time they will spare for this off-task talk (5 mins.) since the next task stage is due within five minutes.

What we see between lines 13 and 25 is initiation, maintenance of the off-task topic which enables the dyad to share perspectives on a topic that they choose to talk about and development of affiliation between them in this side sequence. The transition from on-task to off-task talk is a critical moment in the interaction, as it allows participants to engage in more personal and spontaneous exchanges. This shift is often marked by a change in tone, pace, and the introduction of new topics that are not directly related to the task at hand. Such transitions are important for fostering a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding, as they provide opportunities for participants to share personal interests and experiences (Wang et al., 2025). Until line 25, both participants share their favorite song from Harry Styles. By asking about favorite songs (line 13), Pal taps into a common cultural reference point, which can serve as a rich source of affiliative talk. This resource is particularly effective in language learning contexts, where shared cultural knowledge can facilitate more meaningful and engaging interactions (Duff, 2002).

Extract 14 (*Segment 2*): Favorite Singers (Dyad28/PAL-SIM/M4/2.40')

```
26    SIM:  like y:- t- *the s↑low music and: (0.2)#(0.4) the (fun)
      sim   --------------*
      pal                                                #looks downwards-->
27          ones# are good #(0.6)# *but (0.2) #>because son of the
      pal   -----#           #-nods-#              #looks downwards--> line 28
      sim                               *looks towards her right ----> line 28
28          times was *his first<# (0.8) like=
      sim   ------------*
      pal   ------------------------#
29    PAL:  =#yeah#
      pal    #nods#
30          (0.4)
31    SIM:  *yeah er-*
      sim   *-smiles--*
32          (0.5)#(1.0)
      pal         #looks downwards-->line 33
33    PAL:  i'm grown up with listening ##like# one
      pal   --------------------------------##--5-# 5: raises his eyebrows
34    PAL:  directi:#o[n,(0.3)# selena gomez
      pal             #----6-----# 6: looks upwards
35    SIM:              [£>oh my *god£<* (0.4)
      sim                        *--7---* 7: covers her face with her hand
36          >i can't ↑believe<# we have £so much #in common£ eh*eh
      pal                        #looks towards his le#ft
      sim                                 8: comes closer to screen   *8--->
37    PAL:  £YEeheh*AH£ #(0.3) and like↑ .hh (0.2) and erm## (.)
      sim   --------*
      pal                 #-----------looks upwards--------------##-5--> line 38
38          paramore# #i don't know do you kno:w par#amore↑
      pal   ---------# #------lateral head movements-------#
```

```
39          (1.0)
40    SIM:  like *a little bit not too much right* (0.8)*to be hone[st*
      sim         *------lateral head movements------*       *lateral head mo.*
41    PAL:                                                              [err
42          of course taylor #swift i'm a big *taylor swift fan (.)
      sim                                        * nods --> line 43
43          i'm a swif*tee (0.5) ehe
      sim   ----------*
44    SIM:  eheh *£uhuh£* (0.2) *i'm  selenat[or* ♪eheh*eh
      sim         *-nods-*          *-rhythmic head mov-*      *leans backwards->
                                                                  line 46
45    PAL:                                          [(also/awesome) £I'm A
46          (SELEnator) *too£ [eheh
      sim   --------------*
47    SIM:                  ehe[EHE .hhhe (.) *£and directioner£
      sim                                      *raises her eyebrows and
                                               leans forward --> line 48
48          (0.9)*(0.8)
      sim   -----*
```

Starting from line 26, Sim moves the topic further and adds on other songs she likes from the same singer. Although it does not go too deep, affiliative work continues with sharing perspectives on the same singers and their songs up until line 46 through agreements. An explicit case for these agreements can be the response cry (Heritage (2011), oh my god i can't believe we have so much in common) in lines 35 and 36 which might be accepted as an explicit way to build affiliation. Another example of the affiliation between the dyad is at linguistic level. This sequence shows how shared cultural references can enhance affiliation and create opportunities for extended interaction. In line 43, Pal affiliates himself with other Taylor Swift fans by using a positioned group identity (i'm a swiftee). This is not agreed by Sim, but she uses another positioned group identity to affiliate herself with fans of another singer Selena Gomez (i'm a selenator). Although the dyad does not affiliate being fan of the same singer, they appropriate their language to identify themselves as fan of a singer by recycling the jargon they use to do so. Thus, being a "groupie" is the sharedness participants have here.

Extract 14 (*Segment 3*): Favorite Singers (Dyad28/PAL-SIM/M4/2.40')

```
49    PAL:  no i wasn't directioner (0.2) i was just listening it.
50          (0.5)#(0.2)
51    SIM:  *↑ok[ay*
      sim   *-nods-*
52    PAL:     #[but↑#
      pal      #---9--# 9: head movement
53          (1.0)#
      pal   ------#
54    SIM:  erm what ↑about (demi lovato) (0.2) eheh
```

55 **PAL:** **WEll↑ (0.9) I don't like you right no:w**

56 **(0.4)**

57 **SIM:** ***yeah uh uh**
sim **nods--> line 59*

58 **PAL:** **i sort of**

59 **(0.4)*(0.2)***
sim **raises her hands --> line 60*
sim *----------**

60 **SIM:** **the £previous* demi£↑ eheh**
sim *----------**

61 **PAL:** **er- *#the previous demi of course i love her (.) she was so**
sim **nods --> line 62*
pal *# hand movements -->line 63*

62 **unproblematic (.)she was so good but *right now*(0.2)*(0.5)**
sim **---makes a face---**
sim *----------**

63 **everything she do is (0.9) £problematic thing£#**
pal *----------#*

64 **SIM:** ***ehe £yeah£* eheh* (0.6) £.hh£ she is complicated yeah**
sim **---nods---** **leans backwards --> line 66*

65 **(0.8)**

66 **PAL:** **she is #th[e most problematic person (0.2) i have***
pal *#hand movement---> line 69*
sim *----------**

67 **SIM:** **[but i still like her**

68 **PAL:** **ever seen (.) *she is the most problematic £person* i have**
sim **----------smiles and laughs----------**

69 **ever£ seen#=**
pal *----------#*

70 **SIM:** **=she has too m[uch in her (0.4) in her life (.) to be**

71 **PAL:** **[i like**

72 **SIM:** **honest i beli#eve that#'s w- (0.2) that's why she's beco:me**
pal *#---nods--#*

73 **(0.2) like that**

74 **(1.1)**((task screen changes, a video comes to screen))

75 **PAL:** **#i have miley cyrus**
pal #looks downwards and upwards -->line 77

76 **(0.3)*(0.2)**
sim **raises her eyebrows --> line 77*

77 **SIM:** **u:hm:#* (.) i used to like her but* (0.2) not anymore***
pal *-----#*
sim *------** **lateral head movement**

78 **PAL:** **al#so i like lana# del rey**
pal *#looks downwards#*

79 **(0.4)*(0.4)**
sim **raises her eyebrows and nods --> line 82*

80 **SIM:** **same here**

81 **(0.2)#(1.1)**
pal *#nods -->line 82*

82 **PAL:** **yeah#* (0.2) err do you know (0.2) marina and diamonds↑**
pal *----#*
sim *-----**

83 **(0.2)*(1.4)***
sim **looks *upwards*

84 **SIM:** ***no↑***
**-10* 10: lateral head movement*

85 **(1.1)**

86 **PAL:** **or err (.) florence and the machine↑**

87 **(1.0)*(1.7)**

```
      sim          *makes a face --> line 88
88    SIM:  er- (0.2)* ↑NO (0.7) but↑
      sim   ----------*
89    PAL:  #oh there are *s-# (0.2)#(0.6) ↑*THey are *so good#
      pal   #--------5----------#       #------------nods-------------#
      sim                  *----looks towards her left----*
      sim                                        *nods--> line 93
90          (0.8)
91    SIM:  °i'll listen to them°
92          (0.4)
93    PAL:  °°okay°° (0.3) ok#ay* *oh# we have a video >right now*
      pal                        #---5----#
      sim   ----------------------* *-----leans towards backwards-------*
94    SIM:  yes (.) let's #watch it#
      sim                  #---11----# 11: places the cursor on video
```

Starting from line 49 upon Sim's announcement of her one other affiliation (directioner) with another fan group, dyad starts to display disaffiliating with each other until line 77. Here, we see how participants manage potential disaffiliation. Pal's clarification about not being a "directioner" is met with Sim's acknowledgment and a quick topic shift that shows her ability to maintain social cohesion in the face of potential face-threatening acts (Hellermann, 2011). However, affiliative moves help the dyad maintain their affiliation during disaffiliation sequences as well. For example, in line 60, Sim suggests a possible agreeable idea (the previous demi) following Pal's announcement of his current dislike (right now) towards Demi Lovato in line 55 which is actually agreed by him in line 61 and 62.

Following Pal's comparison of Demi Lovato's previous and current status between lines 61 and 63, this time Sim downgrades her previous status from liking Demi to finding her "complicated", thus affiliates by Pal by downgrading her previous stance towards the singer. This downgrading is followed by an account giving on the singer's behalf by Sim and her reannouncement of her liking (between lines 67-73) which makes her downgrading 'less than agreement'. So, she displays her disagreement in such a delicate way that it does not harm affiliation they are building. This sequence demonstrates how participants navigate potentially contentious topics while maintaining affiliation. Sim's suggestion of "the previous demi" offers a compromise, allowing both participants to express their opinions without threatening their developing rapport. This aligns with Taguchi's

(2015) findings on the development of L2 interactional competence in managing disagreements.

Starting from line 82, off-task topic at hand is slowly getting closer to a closure. To start with, although it is Pal who mostly introduces a new singer or song since the beginning of the extract, from now on Sim does not display enough knowledge of them to talk about or does not know them at all. So, the dyad has limited space to affiliate with each other until line 89 as epistemic gap becomes bigger between them requiring more epistemic work. Another powerful signal for topic closure is announcement of a future action by Sim in line 91 (i'll listen to them). What follows this is acknowledgment (okay) and announcement of a new material on screen by Pal in line 93. This signals a request to turn back to the task through the newly initiated task stage which is also marked by a transition marker (okay). In line 94, Sim confirms this and suggests watching the video which marks the transition to the task. This also demonstrates how participants manage epistemic asymmetry. Pal's enthusiastic recommendation and Sim's commitment to listen later show how learners can use such asymmetries as opportunities for learning and future engagement (Sert, 2015). Please note that the video becomes available on screen in line 74, but from the change of state token produced in line 93 and minimal shifts in gaze direction and face expressions we can say that dyad sees it when they suggest turning back to task (line 93) not immediately after it becomes available for them. After this extract, they move on to watching a video on inclusive language and later they have a discussion on that.

The extract illustrates how participants use off-task talk to foster rapport and establish common ground, aligning with Dings' (2014) findings on the role of small talk in enhancing L2 interactional competence in second language contexts. The development of off-task topics involves a series of affiliative moves, where participants express enthusiasm and surprise about shared interests, which helps build mutual understanding. This process occurs in three stages: (i) the transition to an off-task topic by signaling the end of a current task, (ii) the development of off-task dialogue through affiliation, and (iii) the return to the task. The analysis of Extract 14 highlights how participants strategically navigate transitions between on-task and off-task

discourse, using interactional resources to establish alignment and affiliation despite potential disaffiliation. By engaging in off-task discussions, participants share perspectives on self-selected topics, facilitating authentic L2 conversations. They recycle use of being fan of a celebrity reflecting their affiliative bond (Rodrigues, 2022). These exchanges enable learners to collaborate and strengthen their L2 interactional competence, suggesting that brief disalignments from a task can create opportunities for learning. This underscores the importance of off-task talk in developing rapport and L2 interactional competence, offering valuable insights for task designers and ELT practitioners. It suggests that intentional gaps between tasks could promote unstructured interactions that foster deeper engagement and learning in second language contexts.

Extract 15 comes from the fifth and last meeting of Dyad 23. The extract is taken from one of the two tasks the dyad does in this meeting: "Final Reflection Task" (see Appendix A for the task). Before this extract, Bac and Nir talk about importance of English in a hundred years (Extract 9). The dyad is supposed to focus on an Indo-European list of languages and answer two questions based on this list following this question. However, in this episode, they talk about structural features of future tense in Turkish as the list they are supposed to focus on is not display on the screen yet. The extract starts at almost the 36th minute of the interaction and lasts for 3.14 minutes. Right before this extract, Bac directs a question to Nir in a multi-unit turn, enquiring about the difficulty of Turkish grammar compared to English. What we see in line one is an answer to this question. Extract 15 shows how collaborative turn construction fosters alignment and affiliation between the participants.

Extract 15 (*Segment 1*): Geliyorum (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M5/3.14')

```
1  NIR:  tsch no:: >it is<↑so %different% from english=
   nir                          %makes a face%
2  BAC:  =really↑
3  NIR: huh huh because (0.4) %we are (0.2) adding (1.4)err.%
   nir                          %-----------looks up-------------%
4        (0.3) some
5        %(2.7)%
   nir   %joint hands together% ((head moves twrds the %screen))
   nir   %smiles%
6  BAC:  #s[o<m>e $words$↑
   bac   #---7---> line 9 7: smiles
```

```
7  NIR:  %w[e are addi<ng> (0.7) so<m>e (0.6) things
   nir    %----6---> line 9  6:hand movements
8        (.) >at the end< (0.3) of the (.)↑word (0.2)i mean
9        ↑suffix# (0.2) >at the end of%<
   bac    ---7---#
   nir   --------------6-------------------%
10 BAC:  %<uh>% (.) #>for example<# like #the ↑ed in english#
   nir    %puts %both hands back of her head
   bac                #----looks up----#       #------looks up-------#
11       ↑the ed to express the #pAST# for some words fo>r
   bac                                #rais#es his eyebrows
12       i<rregular words↓ %(0.6)% #uh for the regular# verbs↑
   nir                          %-nods%
   bac                                    #---lean backwards---#
13 NIR:  %↑yeah%
   nir   %joint %her hands under her hands
                          18 lines are omitted
14 NIR:  (0.4) #for example (0.2) ↑%gel%#%
                                              come
   bac          #---------smiles-----------#
   nir                                 %ope%ns her both arms
   nir                                        %---6--> line 18
15 BAC:  gel↓
         come
16 NIR:  %it means ↑come (0.3)%
   nir    %--looks at screen-----%
17 BAC:  #↑uh huh#
   bac    #nods several times#
18 NIR:  (0.5)%%okay↑%
   nir    --6--%%makes a thumps-up gesture%
19 BAC:  #y%es↑#
   bac    #-nods-#
   nir      %--8---> line 20 8: puts her hands together
```

The extract begins with Nir addressing Bac's inquiry by emphasizing the distinctions between Turkish and English grammar, particularly noting the application of suffixes in lines 1-9. This explanation demonstrates significant metalinguistic awareness, offering a deeper understanding of the structural distinctions between the two languages by not only comparing their grammatical frameworks but also reflecting on how language is used, described, and understood as a system. The utilization of particular instances (e.g., "adding some things at the end of the word") aids in clarifying the explanation and enhancing its accessibility for Bac. A 2.7-second silence follows Nir's incomplete utterance in line 4. The prolonged silence and incomplete utterance in the sentence may suggest possible interactional troubles. While there is no explicit indicator of a word search, this may suggest that Nir is engaged in a word search activity here. Line 6 presents a candidate turn completion from Bac. Collaborative turn completions refer to

instances where “a speaker completes the utterance of a previous speaker” (Gardner 2001, p. 2). Taguchi (2014), Dings (2014) and Sert (2019) argue that collaborative sequences show L2 interactional competence and facilitate the development of a mutual understanding. Nir employs “some” and then “word” in lines 7 and 8 in her multi-unit turn, affirming Bac's candidate completion. Thus, it can be stated that by line 9, the dyad aligns with each other’s turns and roles and achieve a shared understanding, which is one of the indicators of L2 IC.

In line 10, Bac offers a comparable example from English, emphasizing the use of “-ed” to indicate the past tense. This parallel example fulfills four primary objectives: i) strengthens the juxtaposition of the two languages, ii) illustrates Bac's engagement with the topic, iii) indicates Bac's comprehension of Nir's prior contributions, iv) offers Nir a possible example of the topic she finds challenging to explain (she has not yet finished her utterance by line 9). Nir's acknowledgment of Bac's example further emphasizes the collaborative nature of the encounter and illustrates another example of collaborative turn construction. This episode illustrates the principle of “interactional alignment” (Atkinson et al., 2007), when participants coordinate their contributions to attain a mutual understanding. This alignment is essential for sustaining a coherent and engaging interaction, as it secures that both parties are actively engaged in the discourse. Utilizing examples is an essential resource for elucidating intricate concepts and establishing mutual understanding among participants (Schegloff, 1992). Nir clarifies suffix rules in Turkish by drawing on a comparison to English in the omitted lines (see Appendix D). Bac solicits specific examples by issuing specific requests (give me a Turkish word in the present tense... then conjugate it to the simple past), therefore demonstrating his engagement with the topic at hand. The example starting from line 14 is a response to this request, validating continuation of the topic. The interaction takes a crucial turn starting from line 14 with the introduction of the Turkish verb “gel” (come). This sequence illustrates “language-focused episodes" (Markee, 2000) in which participants deliberately engage with language learning. Nir's careful structuring of the explanation is apparent through the offering of translations and multimodal support, such as the gesture of opening her arms during the explanation.

Extract 15 (*Segment 2*): Geliyorum (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M5/3.14')

20 NIR: **erm (0.2) i am saying (0.3) %↑%geliyor**
(he/she is)coming
nir ----------8---------% %--6--> line 26
21 BAC: **#$that's ↑different$#**
bac #--slightly looks up---#
22 **(0.5)**
23 NIR: **it means (0.4) yeah erm. it means %it %the same**
nir %rai%ses her eyebrows
24 **actually #(0.3)# ↑gel is a verb (.) #version#**
come
bac #raises# his eyebrows #raises hi#s eyebrows
25 **(1.6)**
26 NIR: **it means ↑come (0.5)% %okay↑**
nir ---------6---------% %--9--> line 27
9:makes a thumps-up gesture
27 BAC: **#>yes yes< i ↑got it (.)#% %geliyor (.)**
(he/she is)coming
bac #----------nods----------#
nir ----------9----------% %-6--> line 29
28 NIR: **>i said< geliyor# it means# he or she comes (.)**
(he/she is)coming
bac #-----3-----#
29 **>%i am sorry%< #or he or (.)she# is coming%**
nir %-looks up--%
bac #------5--------#
nir ----------6----------%
30 **%#(0.4)#**
bac #looks up & down#
nir %---8---> line 32
31 BAC: **so (.) is ↑#*yor* you added the *yor* right↑**
((present con. tense suffix for 3rd person sing.))
bac #---6---> line 32
32 NIR: **↑yes ↑%geliyor#**
(he/she is)coming
nir ----8--%
bac ------6---------#
33 BAC: **geliyor**
(he/she is)coming
34 NIR: **>#%at the end of the verb#<**
bac #-------smiles & nods------#
nir %---6---> line 39
35 BAC: **>#yes yes< i got it#↑**🖵
bac #-nods several times-#
🖵 a new task on the screen appears
36 **(1.1)**
37 NIR: **%yeah% or geliyorum and added ↑#geliyorum#**
i'm coming *i'm coming*
nir %nods%
bac #-looks up-#
38 BAC: **yorum=**
((present con. tense suffix for 1st person sing.))
39 NIR: **=#it means i (.) am# (.) com%ing% (0.4)**
bac #---------nods--------#
nir ----------6----------% %---8--> line 41
40 BAC: **<ohh> (1.6) so >it is< just #one word↑**

Lines 20-40 exhibit a sophisticated development of the grammatical exposition through the incorporation of “geliyor (coming)”. The sequence exhibits strong alignment via Bac's acknowledgment tokens, repetitions of target forms, backchannels, and Nir's careful elucidation of the grammatical concept. The embodied actions, such as eyebrow rises and hand gestures, play a crucial role in the meaning-making process. Bac's remark in line 21 (“that's different”), along with his demonstrations of understanding in lines 27, 31, and 35, indicate his engagement with the ongoing topic and his alignment with the speaker. A pivotal moment of understanding occurs in lines 40-58 about the “yor” suffix. Multimodal resources, such as gaze behaviors and gestures, are essential for attaining mutual comprehension.

Extract 15 (*Segment 3*): Geliyorum (Dyad23/BAC-NIR/M5/3.14’)

```
41 NIR:  ↑yes% geliyor it is %just ↑one word%
            (he/she is)coming
   nir    -8--%                  %does number one% gesture
42 BAC:  an[d#↑
   bac   --6--#
43 NIR:  bu[t %the>y #ar<e (.) ↑combined#%
   nir         %joints her both hands togeth%er
   bac                #puts his hand under #his chest
44 BAC:  t- too too many information inn (.) in ↑#one word#
   bac                                              does# number one
45       %(1.6)                                            gesture#
   nir   %--nods->line 51
46 NIR:  yes%
   nir   ----%
47 BAC:  #(0.3) you save too much $↑time$
   bac   #----10---> line 50 10: touches his neck
48       %(1.1)%
   nir   %looks %up
49 NIR:  erm sorry↑
50 BAC:  i mean y- you using this way of combining (.)#
   bac   ---------------------10----------------------------#
51       #words erm (.)#it: it saves
   bac   #does number one# gesture
52       #t:too much ↑time and #sp[ace##
   bac   #-----looks at his right----------#
   bac                            #does number one gesture#
53 NIR:                              ↑[%yeah%
   nir                                %leans back%
54 BAC:  >#especially for writing< (.) you don't have to write
   bac    #-----6----> line 56
55       ↑#lo<ng>#  sentence to express (.) erm (.) %small detail
   bac    #slightly closes his eyes#
   nir                                                %--nods-->line 56
56       (.) so↓#%
   bac   ---6----#
   nir    ---------%
57 NIR:  %(.) ↑%good%
   nir   %---9---> line 58
   nir         %makes% a face
58 BAC:  ?#yeah that's% interesting↑
```

```
   nir   ---------9------%
   bac     #---10--->>
59         (#1.2#)
   bac     #leans# towards the screen
60 NIR:    %↑yeah% °%we have%° another thing because (0.3)
   nir     %claps-%  %leans twr%ds the screen
   nir           ((places the cursor on zoom app)) cursor movements
61         %%our time is↑%%
   nir    %hand movements%
   nir     %-makes a face--%
62 BAC:    #erm yes
   bac     #---3---> line 63
63 NIR:    running# out you kno[w
   bac     ----3---#
   nir                              scrolls down the task
64 BAC:                            [yes yes
```

Line 40 marks an important point of comprehension regarding Turkish word structure, as seen by Bac's change-of-state token and clear expression of understanding. The acknowledgment “so >it is< just one word↑” exemplifies an “epistemic shift” (Heritage, 1984). Nir validates this comprehension through verbal and nonverbal communication, exemplified by the display of the number one gesture (line 44), indicating robust alignment and affiliation. The conversation exemplifies “understanding displays” (Koole, 2004) with Bac's explicit declaration of understanding (line 40), comments regarding the structure (lines 44, 47, 51-52, and 54-55), and Nir's affirmation sequences. Bac's observation in line 44 prompts a discourse about the pragmatic advantages of Turkish grammar, exemplifying “language awareness moments” in second language learning (Markee, 2000). The interaction concludes with a transition towards the task-at-hand (lines 58–64) showing sophisticated task management and time awareness. Bac's insight regarding the combination of words and saving time illustrates his understanding of the efficiency of the Turkish language. The transition is facilitated by the emergence of a new task on the screen (line 35), suggesting a shift in focus. The sequence ends with a focus on time limitations, evidenced by Nir's physical gestures (clapping, leaning towards the screen) and visual (task alteration on screen, line 35) and verbal cues of task fulfilment (lines 60-63).

Throughout the extract, both speakers employ diverse resources to strengthen alignment. This encompasses reiterating important phrases, rephrasing one another's assertions, employing confirmation checks, and engaging in collaborative turn construction. These practices facilitate alignment between

participants about their comprehension of the task and the topic (Stivers et al., 2011). The interaction illustrates complex topic management by systematically advancing from fundamental concepts to intricate grammatical elements. The participants adeptly maneuver through explanations of verb forms, suffixes, and conjugations while ensuring consistent thematic progression. This is particularly demonstrated in lines 14-39, where Nir introduces and elaborates on the Turkish word "gel" (to come) and its variants. Effectively managing transitions is a crucial element of L2 IC, enabling participants to navigate the requirements of both on-task and off-task encounters (Abe, 2023; Gan, Davinson & Hamp Lyons, 2009; König, 2013, 2020). The smooth transition illustrates the participants' awareness of the interaction's overarching structure and their ability to collaboratively navigate topic boundaries. Such transitions are essential for sustaining conversational flow and ensuring that both parties remain engaged and attentive to the task at hand. This sequence illustrates the application of "formulations" (Heritage & Watson, 1979), wherein Bac summarizes his understanding for confirmation. Such formulations are essential for guaranteeing that both participants have a mutual understanding of the topic at hand and can progress in the conversation. Intersubjectivity serves as a significant indicator of L2 interactional competence, as demonstrated by the previously stated research and associated literature (Burch & Kley 2020; Mondada 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz 2019). Embodied collaborative completions represent a means for attaining intersubjectivity in social interactions (Lam, 2021; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Sert, 2019; Taguchi, 2014). Assessments, backchannels, formulations, and collaborative completions are several elements of interaction that constitute intersubjectivity and alignment (Hırçın Çoban & Çimenli, 2022; Lam 2018, 2021; May 2011; Ross 2018). Alongside other resources from prior extracts, collaborative turn construction facilitates participants in attaining intersubjectivity, alignment, and affiliation in Extract 15.

4.3.1. Summary of Findings

A closer look at the given extracts uncovers substantial insights regarding how participants navigate alignment and affiliation during off-task

interactions in online task-based environments. These extracts often involve more personal and informal interactions. For example, participants might discuss their personal experiences or preferences, which can help build rapport and strengthen their social bond. Humor is frequently employed to foster a positive and friendly environment and alleviate tension (Looney & He, 2020; Looney & Kim, 2018). Addressing disaffiliation on off-task topics necessitates practices such as active listening and empathy to preserve alignment and affiliation. Nonverbal communication is essential for expressing understanding and support during off-task interactions. Acknowledging and affirming one another's emotions and experiences during off-task conversations cultivates a supportive atmosphere. Storytelling and personal narratives foster a more captivating and relatable dialogue. Mutual experiences and shared interests build rapport and reinforce social connections.

In Extract 11, the dyad achieves alignment and affiliation through shared experiences and humor. Aya mirrors San's use of "Yani (Tr. that is)", indicating comprehension and solidarity (line 5). Aya associates the term "Yani" with Turkish, enhancing the discussion through a cross-linguistic lens (line 6). San exemplifies the incorporation of various languages in conversation (line 12). Aya employs hand movements to emphasize her assertions, aligning with San's reflections (lines 14 and 17). Aya's understanding is endorsed by San, displaying agreement and affiliation (line 16). Aya narrates a similar incident, employing humor to cultivate alignment and affiliation (lines 22 and 23). It also demonstrates a robust affiliation between the dyad, as Aya highlights a commonality in their linguistic usage, underscoring their "sharedness" in employing the term (yani). The dyad commonly utilizes humor during interactions, as Stivers (2008) notes that sharing personal experiences is a common technique for promoting alignment and developing rapport, hence enhancing affiliation. Glenn (2003) analyzes the use of humor as a tool for promoting solidarity and affiliation in discourse. This corresponds with the research of Button and Casey (1985) regarding collaborative topic extension and Stivers (2008) concerning the significance of non-verbal cues in alignment and affiliation.

The examination of Extract 11 reveals substantial insights into the dynamics of online interactions, particularly in the context of language learning. The initiation and maintenance of topics are facilitated by verbal and non-verbal cues, highlighting the importance of multimodal communication in digital contexts. Alignment and affiliation are formed through shared experiences, same language, and humor, fostering a sense of connection and rapport among individuals. The utilization of humor and laughter strengthens their affiliative bond, as demonstrated by Satar and Çimenli Olcars (2025), who emphasize the importance of affiliative behaviors in maintaining interactional harmony.

Extract 12 illustrates how participants employ personal stories and empathetic discourse to sustain alignment and affiliation. The examination of the extracts reveals the intricate dynamics of conversation, highlighting how participants maneuver between topics, align with each other, and foster affiliation. Efficient topic management is crucial for maintaining conversational coherence and ensuring participant involvement. Participants demonstrate alignment and affiliation through vocal affirmations, non-verbal cues, collaborative turn completion, shared cultural references, laughter, and empathic discourse, so fostering rapport and maintaining a positive interactional environment. Humor functions as an effective means for strengthening affiliation, allowing individuals to interact in a more lighthearted manner. Bac endeavors to foster hope and optimism in Nir, serving as an emotional support through his empathic and reassuring talk, which Nir consistently acknowledges.

This does not correspond to the on-task conversation observed in our dataset. While it may not be directly related to the dyad's off-task topic management, the extract clearly demonstrates that participants attain significant alignment and affiliation through the aforementioned tools. The use of “inşallah” (meaning hopefully in Arabic, line 22) fosters their cultural and religious commonality. This cultural reference serves as a powerful bonding mechanism, displaying shared understanding and commonality among the participants. By doing this, the dyad reinforces their affiliative bond and appreciation for their shared cultural and religious history. The analysis of the

extract reveals the crucial role of supportive discourse in establishing rapport and sustaining an engaging interactional atmosphere, as participants employ language to provide comfort and encouragement, thus promoting affiliation (Stivers, 2008).

In Extract 13, the dyad swings between on-task and off-task topics while preserving alignment and attachment. Topic management is a fluid process, with individuals adeptly transitioning between on-task and off-task topics. This adaptability is crucial for maintaining engagement and ensuring the discourse remains fruitful. Han and Zel adeptly steer the conversation towards the examination of linguistic landscapes, evidenced by Han's reintroduction of the term “linguistic landscape” (line 6) and Zel's synthesis of their observations (line 33). Alignment and affiliation are formed through verbal and non-verbal cues, including humor and shared laughter, which enhance social bonds and group cohesion. Zel's use of humor in response to Han's use of “flue” (line 13) fosters the sense of friendship. The examination of Extract 13 highlights the complexity and depth of online on-task interactions. The participants' ability to manage topics fosters alignment and affiliation, while the integration of multimodal communication underscores the importance of these skills in achieving successful outcomes in digital learning environments.

Extract 14 illustrates how participants attain alignment and affiliation via collaborative turn completions, even subsequent to disaffiliation. The dyad manages several interactional objectives in on-task environments. Interactions are mediated and opportunities for off-task interaction are created by time constraints. Cultural references foster affiliation and facilitate prolonged L2 interaction (lines 35 and 36). A clear example of these affiliative sequences is the response cry (Heritage (2011), “oh my god, I can’t believe we have so much in common”) in lines 35 and 36, which may be seen as an immediate way of fostering affiliation. The development of off-task topics is facilitated by a sequence of affiliative moves, in which participants exhibit surprise and enthusiasm regarding shared interests, thereby fostering mutual understanding. This process transpires in three phases: (i) the shift to an off-task topic by signaling the conclusion of a current task, (ii) the formation of

off-task discourse through alignment and affiliation, and (iii) the re-engagement with the task. The examination of Extract 14 underscores how participants adeptly maneuver transitions between on-task and off-task dialogue, employing interactional resources to foster alignment and affiliation despite potential disagreements.

In Extract 15, how "language-focused episodes" and collaborative turn construction promotes alignment and affiliation. Throughout the extract, both speakers utilize multiple resources to enhance alignment and affiliation. This includes restating key terms, rephrasing each other's statements, utilizing confirmation checks, and participating in collaborative turn completion. According to Stivers et al. (2011), these resources promote affiliation among participants regarding their comprehension of the task and the topic-at-hand. The interaction demonstrates sophisticated topic management by methodically progressing from basic notions to complicated grammatical components. The participants skillfully navigate explanations of verb forms, suffixes, and conjugations while maintaining a coherent thematic flow. This is especially illustrated in lines 14-39, when Nir presents and expounds upon the Turkish term "gel" (to come) and its derivatives.

The interaction significantly shifts from this line with the use of the Turkish verb "gel" (to come). This sequence exemplifies "language-focused episodes" (Markee, 2000) wherein individuals intentionally engage in language learning. Nir's careful organization of the explanation is evident through the provision of translations and multimodal assistance, exemplified by the gesture of extending her arms during the discourse. Effectively managing transitions is a vital component of L2 interactional competence, allowing participants to maneuver the demands of both on-task and off-task interactions (Abe, 2023; Markee, 2005; Stone, 2019). The seamless transition demonstrates the participants' ability to collaboratively navigate topic boundaries and their awareness of the interaction's overarching structure. Such transitions are vital for maintaining conversational flow and ensuring that both participants stay engaged and focused on the work at hand. This sequence demonstrates the use of "formulations" (Heritage & Watson, 1979), in which Bac frames his comprehension for validation. Such phrases are

crucial for ensuring that both participants possess a shared understanding of the topic and can advance the conversation. In conjunction with other resources from previous extracts, collaborative turn creation enables interactants to achieve intersubjectivity, alignment, and affiliation in Extract 15. The findings from analysis of the extract in this section are summarized in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Resources for Alignment and Affiliation in Off-Task Interaction

Resources for Alignment and Affiliation within Off-Task Topic Management	Characteristics of Off-Task Interactions
Acknowledgments and Affirmations Assessments	
Questions Embodied Actions Screen-based Actions Humor and laughter Prosody	Self-selected topics Spontaneous and Relational
Repetition and Rephrasing Inclusive language (we) Mirroring (expressions or actions) Extreme case formulations	Emphasis on Affiliation Explicit orientation to time Reorientation to task Managing transition between on-task and off-task Managing Disaffiliation
Collaborative turn construction Personal experiences and Storytelling Empathic Talk Shared Cultural References	

The examination of the extracts indicates that alignment and affiliation are essential for sustaining coherent and engaging interactions in online task-based environments. Table 8 illustrates that participants employ diverse practices, such as sharing common experiences and cultural references (inşallah, hopefully in Arabic, Extract 12), humor, personal stories, empathy (e.g., That's really heartbreaking, Extract 12), extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) (e.g., oh my god i can't believe we have so much in common, Extract 14), non-verbal cues, acknowledgment, assessment and collaborative turn construction, to cultivate rapport and mutual

understanding. Sustaining conversational coherence and accomplishing task objectives necessitates effective topic management and transitions between on-task and off-task discourse. The results highlight the significance of multimodal communication, common cultural references, and supportive discourse in fostering affiliation and improving L2 interactional competence. Interactions are mediated and opportunities for off-task interaction are created by time constraints. The shift from on-task to off-task discourse has a pivotal role in the encounter, facilitating participants' engagement in more intimate and spontaneous conversations. This transition is frequently characterized by alterations in tone, tempo, and the development of an off-task topic. Such transitions are crucial for cultivating solidarity and mutual understanding, since they provide participants with the opportunity to share personal interests and experiences (Holmes, 2000). The seamless transition demonstrates the participants' understanding of the interaction's overall framework and their ability to collaboratively manage topic boundaries. To navigate digital tools and accomplish task objectives, effective coordination and communication are necessary due to the unique challenges introduced by the online nature of the interaction.

The data indicates that in task-based online interactions, participants may engage in off-task discussions while also facilitating significant L2 interaction (Markee, 2005, Stone, 2019). Similar to what Markee (2005) suggests, this off-task discourse predominantly transpires (in the dataset) when participants complete a task step ahead of the allotted time, so retaining some “free time” prior to the beginning of the subsequent task step. In his study, off-task talk occurs in transitional phases in an L2 classroom. This is when participants engage in more informal and socially bonding interactions regarding a topic that they spontaneously initiated. Through off-task discussions, participants exchange viewpoints on self-chosen topics, promoting genuine L2 conversations. These exchanges facilitate collaboration among learners and show their L2 interactional competence (Abe, 2023; Markee, 2005), indicating that temporary disalignment from a task might foster opportunities for learning (Dooly & Tudini, 2022; Illés & Akcan, 2016; Stone, 2019). This emphasizes the significance of off-task conversation in the development of

rapport and L2 interactional competence, providing valuable insights for ELT practitioners and task designers. Both sections illustrate the importance of alignment and affiliation in facilitating productive communication and engagement, whether on-task or off-task. Further discussion of these observations will be conducted in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

By analyzing the micro-level details of interaction, the present research endeavors to reveal the process by which participants establish and sustain alignment and affiliation during both on-task and off-task exchanges. In chapter 5, findings of the study presented in the previous chapter will be discussed in detail under two sections in relation to research questions and related literature. The first section will focus on (re)establishment of alignment and affiliation in on-task topic management in video-mediated interactions (RQ1); while the second section will deal with (re)establishment of alignment and affiliation in off-task topic management in video-mediated interactions (RQ2). Similarities and differences between two contexts will be compared and contrasted where relevant, especially in the second section. Building on the findings of the study, implications for research and pedagogy will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

5.2. Interactional Resources for Alignment and Affiliation in On-Task Topic Management

The findings reveal the dynamics of topic management, alignment, and affiliation across various extracts, illustrating how participants skillfully integrate technical-pedagogical competence with interactional skills. It underscores the significance of multimodal resources in fostering effective communication within online learning environments which might be connected to L2 Interactional Competence (L2-IC) and Virtual Exchange

Interactional competence (VE-IC). These connections will be explored further later in this section.

On-task topic maintenance refers to maintaining a topic that is pre-determined in the task design and that participants are expected to talk about in order to complete the task. Alignment and affiliation are key concepts in understanding the dynamics of social interaction. Alignment refers to the ways participants coordinate their actions and contributions to maintain the structure of the conversation, while affiliation captures the emotional or relational connection between them. Both play a crucial role in interaction, shaping how knowledge is shared and how interactions unfold. Disalignment, conversely, occurs when a participant interrupts the projected sequence, for example by seeking clarification, offering assessments, or shifting topics. Disaligned actions disrupt this asymmetry by either contesting the speaker's hold on the floor or by failing to treat the narrative as ongoing or completed. Meanwhile, disaffiliation involves a failure or refusal to endorse the speaker's affective stance. Disaffiliative responses may challenge, mitigate, or withhold agreement with the speaker's evaluative position. The examination of extracts 1–10 offers a comprehensive overview of the resources employed by participants to manage alignment, affiliation, and facilitate topic maintenance during online task-based interactions. The results demonstrate that participants utilize various interactional resources to enhance mutual understanding, achieve task completion, and maintain conversational flow.

Alignment and mutual understanding are critical components in fostering effective communication and collaboration within various contexts such as assessments, complaints, and storytelling (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 2011; Kupetz, 2014; Stivers, 2008). These concepts emphasize the importance of shared goals and perspectives among individuals or groups, facilitating a cohesive approach to problem-solving and decision-making. Establishing alignment involves ensuring that all parties are on the same page regarding objectives, expectations, and methodologies. The interactions prominently feature alignment resources that serve to uphold conversational coherence and facilitate task progression. Participants often employ

confirmations, acknowledgments, assessments and embodied actions, such as nodding, to indicate active engagement and to strengthen mutual comprehension (Extract 1, Extract 4). Similar to what Satar (2015) found, posing questions to initiate new discussions and maintain existing topics are used as resources to enhance social presence and maintain interaction in this study. Repetition, extended explanations, and follow-up questions function to elucidate concepts and maintain alignment, thereby ensuring that participants stay focused on the task at hand (Extract 1, Extract 5).

Although alignment is consistently observed, the extent of engagement exhibits variability. In certain instances, alignment is preserved in the absence of profound affiliation, as illustrated in Extract 5, where participants employ acknowledgment tokens and clarification requests devoid of affective involvement. This indicates that although on-task interactions facilitate structural alignment, they may not consistently enhance deeper relational connections.

Affiliation and affective engagement are critical concepts in understanding interpersonal relationships and social dynamics. Affiliation refers to the connections and associations individuals form with others, often characterized by a sense of belonging and mutual support. Affective engagement, on the other hand, pertains to the emotional investment individuals have in these relationships. Affiliation encompasses not only structural alignment but also emotional and relational connections. This phenomenon is observable in role-play sequences, humor, and affective stance-marking (Cekaite, 2016). In Extract 2, participants demonstrate how they establish affiliation through role-playing, employing try-marking utterances and rising intonation to promote engagement. Prosody, gestures such as nodding, and nonverbal signals play a significant role in affiliation enhancing the perception of shared involvement (Cekaite, 2016; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013; Stivers, 2008). Similar to what Garcia Garcia (2021) found with Spanish data, discourse markers are another resource in our dataset signaling affiliation (Extract 8). Assessment tokens not only shows listener's alignment to ongoing topic and current speaker's telling but also reflects listener's stance to those to certain degree (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992; Wong & Waring, 2020).

They can take many shapes including verbal, nonverbal and bodily displays and display of listener's co-participation in interaction (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987).

Another essential affiliation resource is humor. Extract 3 illustrates the utilization of humor as a resource to restore affiliation after instances of disaffiliation. By integrating laughter and shared amusement, participants sustain an affiliative tone, fostering further contributions to the interaction (Heath & Luff, 2013; Holmes, 2000; Looney & He, 2020; Looney & Kim, 2018; Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025; Sumruk et al., forthcoming; Sumruk & Jenks, 2025). Timely acknowledgments and robust agreements (Extract 4) serve as additional resources that reinforce the affiliative bond among participants (Stivers, 2008). Extract 10 illustrates the role of humor, laughter, and shared experiences in fostering a cooperative and empathetic atmosphere, despite the discussions being somewhat superficial. Extract 10 indicates that although alignment is successfully attained, affiliation persists only at a superficial level as a result of the task's structured characteristics. Participants depend on affirmations instead of engaging in comprehensive analysis, indicating that the design of tasks may restrict spontaneous and significant interactions.

Digital tools significantly contribute to the process of affiliation. Screen-based actions, such as cursor movements and tab navigation, serve as interactional resources that modify traditional deictic gestures for digital environments (Mondada, 2014). The utilization of digital pointing practices facilitates the management of the participation framework and promotes coherence in the completion of tasks (Extract 4). The incorporation of nonverbal signals, including gaze movements and physical gestures, mitigates the constraints inherent in video-mediated communication, thereby enhancing affiliative bond (Extract 6). Acknowledgment tokens, inclusive language (e.g., "we"), embodied actions (such as nodding), metaphorical examples (e.g., "pen and notebook"), phrases that express stance and promote strong affiliation (e.g., "I really like it", "same here", "exactly"), nonverbal resources, and multiple collaborative turn completions are essential components in communication (Extract 8). The use of a clear metaphor in extract 8, makes a difficult issue understandable for the listener, promoting intersubjectivity between the

participants, thus serving as a significant indicator of L2 interactional competence, as demonstrated by the previously stated research and associated literature (Burch & Kley 2020; Mondada 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz 2019). Embodied collaborative completions operate as a mechanism for achieving intersubjectivity in social interactions (Lam, 2021; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Sert, 2019; Taguchi, 2014). Collaborative turn completions denote episodes in which "a speaker completes the utterance of a previous speaker" (Gardner 2001, p. 2). Sert (2019) contends that collaborative sequences indicate L2 interactional competence and promote the establishment of mutual understanding. The degree of affiliation is contingent upon the specific context of the discussion. In Extract 7, participants partake in a nuanced societal discourse, utilizing hedging and extended pauses to manage varying viewpoints. While they reach a surface-level consensus, the interaction lacks deep engagement, illustrating how task-induced topics do not always facilitate strong affiliative bonds.

Affiliation is not achieved directly and easily of course. Sometimes it is achieved skillfully following a disaffiliation. Disaffiliation sequences are systematically orchestrated through sophisticated face-work practices, which encompass hesitation markers, silences, and embodied actions, including lateral head movements and shifts in gaze (Extract 6). Participants utilize repair sequences and response tokens to address potential conflicts and restore affiliation. The acknowledgment phrase “oh that ↑makes sense” (Extract 6) indicates a shift in stance and reaffiliation (Steensig, 2012). The incorporation of multimodal resources, such as gaze and gesture, enhances embodied alignment and interactional cohesion (Stivers, 2008).

Collaborative turn completions function as a means of (re)establishing affiliation following instances of disaffiliation. Extract 9 illustrates how participants engage in speculative discussions about the future significance of English, employing alignment and affiliation resources such as acknowledgment tokens, confirmation, collaborative turn construction, and embodied actions (e.g., nodding, getting closer to the screen, headshake) and inclusive language (e.g., “we”). These resources enable participants to adjust their positions and restore connections, even in instances of initial

disaffiliation. In a very recent study, Gubina et al. (2024) analyze expanded responses to requests for confirmation (RfCs) in German conversation. Their findings reveal important findings regarding topic maintenance, alignment and affiliation. Expanded responses frequently go beyond basic confirmations, allowing for topic elaboration by clarifying vague elements or providing narratives that enhance the discussion. Topic maintenance is accomplished when responses correspond with the sequential and topical junctures of the interaction, thereby ensuring continuity and coherence. Alignment is evident when responders align with the stance or agenda of the RfC, thereby fostering social harmony and cooperation. Agency is evident in unsolicited expansions, where responders modify or contest the parameters of the RfC, demonstrating their independence and epistemic authority. Affiliation is demonstrated by responses that adjust to the interactional context, either by adhering to the RfC's trajectory or by subtly opposing its terms.

Research underscores the significance of examining the topic as a co-constructed and contextualized process. It has been already discussed that maintaining a topic is an essential interactional skill since any talk necessitate topic progressivity. This interactional skill is relevant to both face-to-face interactions and online virtual exchanges (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Meredith, 2017; Nguyen, 2011; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Supakorn, 2017; Svennevig, 1999; Walsh, 2012). Topic maintenance thus can be accepted as a distinct learning object while it simultaneously fosters additional developmental opportunities by enabling student participation in classroom activities as well as online exchanges. In other words, being able to maintain a topic is one of numerous components of interactional competence (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Pekarek Doehler, 2018, 2019, 2021; Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015) that can be taught. It is also a tool that students can use to facilitate their learning in the classroom. Topic maintenance in on-task interactions is facilitated by reciprocal sharing and inquiry-driven dialogues. The notion of "rolling the ball back" (Çimenli, Sert, & Jenks, 2022) appears in Extract 3, wherein participants sequentially express their individual viewpoints, thereby facilitating the continuity of the discussion topic. The employment of

hypothetical language enhances the exploration of topics by enabling the consideration of alternative perspectives (Extract 4). The examination of Extract 4 reveals sophisticated topic management practices, as Tun adeptly utilizes contrastive structures, exemplification, and sequential topic transitions. The systematic arrangement of turns, incorporating deliberate pauses and discourse markers, enhances the logical flow of ideas while maintaining active engagement. Jen's ongoing alignment through both vocal and non-verbal responses enhances the maintenance of topics, thereby fostering a collaborative learning atmosphere. Extract 7 underscores the difficulties associated with addressing delicate topics within an on-task interaction. Participants employ precise language to recognize concerns related to inclusivity while not completely resolving their divergent viewpoints. This indicates that although task-based interactions facilitate alignment, they may not consistently establish the conditions required for in-depth topic exploration or robust affiliative engagement. In Extract 9, topic maintenance is supported by the use of open-ended questions, relevant examples, and counterarguments, allowing both participants to explore the implications of their dialogue. This allows for the possibility of re-establishing affiliations among individuals, even after a period of disaffiliation (Satar, 2015).

L2 IC within digital environments encompasses the ability to effectively engage and communicate in various online contexts. This concept involves understanding the nuances of digital communication, including the use of language, non-verbal cues, and the socio-cultural norms that govern interactions in virtual spaces (Skogmyr Marian & Balaman, 2018). In digital environments, individuals must navigate a range of platforms, each with its own set of conventions and expectations. The findings highlight the participants' sophisticated second language interactional skills in co-constructing intersubjectivity by navigating alignment, affiliation, and constraints associated with the task induced-topic of discussion. In accordance with previous research, examination of the extracts reveal that L2 IC is not an individual construct, but it is achieved collaboratively (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Jenks, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019). Extract 2 illustrates the adeptness of participants in navigating diverse participation

frameworks, all the while maintaining a focus on the task at hand and fostering social cohesion. In Extract 4, participants integrate various interactional demands, including the management of topic, the maintenance of alignment and affiliation, and the navigation of technical requirements, all while successfully achieving their pedagogical objectives in an online setting. Screen management functions as an essential interactive mechanism, with Tun successfully integrating cursor movements and tab navigation into their explanation of register differences. The participants demonstrate "digital pointing practices", adapting traditional deictic gestures to suit the online environment (Mondada, 2014). Digital adaptation is apparent, as participants enhance their gestural and postural movements to mitigate the limitations of video-mediated communication (Extract 6). Nonverbal cues, including nodding and gaze direction, play a crucial role in enhancing alignment and affiliation, thereby facilitating coherent interactions even within the limitations of online communication. As discussed earlier, successful management of these technological affordances is indicative of L2 IC (Balaman & Sert, 2017b; Licoppe, 2017; Markee, 2008, Mondada, 2016). Extract 8 illustrates the role of collaborative turn construction in promoting topic coherence and affiliation. Participants utilize acknowledgment tokens, stance-marking phrases such as "I really like it", "same here", and "exactly", along with metaphorical examples like "pen and notebook", to foster intersubjectivity (Stivers et al., 2011). The use of a clear metaphor makes a difficult issue understandable for his interlocutor, promoting intersubjectivity between the participants, thus serving as a significant indicator of L2 IC, as demonstrated by the previously stated research and associated literature (Burch & Kley 2020; Mondada 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz 2019). This is consistent with Pekarek Doehler (2019) and Pekarek Doehler Pochon-Berger (2011)'s recommendation to incorporate preference organization, which includes expressing agreement and disagreement, as an element of L2 interactional competence. The successful execution of the task, marked by a shared understanding and recognition of differing viewpoints, reflects enhanced levels of online L2 IC (Extract 6).

The results indicate that on-task interactions, although beneficial in enhancing mutual understanding and an organized conversation, do not consistently

facilitate profound social bonds. The task-induced nature of the topics may inadvertently limit the participants' ability to delve into their individual perspectives or investigate their personal experiences in a more open-ended manner. This underscores a possible constraint of task-based learning, wherein the emphasis on the completion of tasks may detract from significant social interaction and the depth of affective bond. In situations where interactions are predicated on specific task prompts, the opportunity for organic, spontaneous communication that facilitates the development of a more significant social bond may be diminished. In this context, a dyad may not establish a robust social bond beyond the superficial level, despite the fact that the interaction is characterized by high alignment. This is due to the transactional nature of their exchanges and the limited language use. Thus, on-task interactions characterize as having task-induced topics, structured and goal oriented with participants using specific resources to manage and coordinate their contributions, task management and coordination is important: Participants employ directives, inquiries, and illustrative examples to manage the flow of conversation and maintain coherence with task-related goals. This structured approach helps maintain focus and facilitates collaboration. The focus is on achieving alignment, which serves as the primary objective in both understanding and task execution. Successful collaboration frequently results in the emergence of affiliation as a secondary outcome. However, this does not mean that task-based interaction is not effective. On the contrary, in both face-to-face and online settings, the task-based approach offers opportunities to create spaces where learners can meaningfully practice language use (Long, 2015; Ziegler, 2016). The potential depth of affiliation that could arise from a more informal or unstructured conversation is not yet fully investigated in this section. This will be handled in the following section.

5.3. Interactional Resources for Alignment and Affiliation in Off-Task Topic Management

Although it is frequently seen as a departure from the main goals, off-task conversation is essential for building interpersonal relationships and promoting social bonds (Dooly & Tudini, 2022; Markee, 2005). It is hard to

define off-task talk as tasks in language learning are multi-faceted, involving various subtasks that, while not directly aligned with the primary objective, contribute to the overall learning process. This study describes "off-task topic" as any topic introduced by a participant during an on-task encounter that is not directly relevant to the primary task or activity being undertaken. An irrelevant topic arises unexpectedly, displaying a departure from the task-focused or goal-oriented conversation. These topics are typically personal, social, or extraneous, serving purposes other than task progression, such as fostering rapport, alleviating stress, or conveying personal interest. The fluid transition between on-task and off-task behavior further obscures these distinctions. Students may briefly change topics, engage in unrelated discussions, and subsequently return to the primary task, complicating the identification of when they have diverged. This section showcases L2 speakers' processes of building alignment and affiliation, their negotiation of meaning, addressing instances of disaffiliation, and how they reinforce common goals during off-task talk. Utilizing humor, storytelling, and sharing personal anecdotes, individuals foster a sense of unity and collective experience. This approach has the potential to enhance group cohesion and promote more seamless transitions back to on-task interaction (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013).

Off-task talk should not be viewed simply as a distraction; instead, it plays a significant role within the larger interactional framework (Abe, 2023; Dooly & Tudini, 2022; Markee, 2005; Stone, 2019). For example, off-task talk creates a meaningful interactional space for L2 speakers. This form of communication also serves as an essential tool for fostering social bonds and facilitating relational work among interactants. These moments allow participants to express identity, build trust, and establish rapport, which are crucial for effective collaboration. In academic and collaborative environments, recognizing the significance of off-task interactions contributes to the cultivation of a supportive atmosphere, thereby promoting engagement and ultimately enriching the overall communicative experience (Dooly & Tudini, 2022; Illés & Akcan, 2016). This section highlights the significance of analyzing these exchanges, emphasizing the necessity of incorporating both on-task and

off-task interactions to foster a dynamic, balanced, and productive conversational environment.

Alignment refers to the ways participants cooperate with the structural and sequential organization of an ongoing activity. It reflects procedural support—actions that help advance the projected course of interaction proposed by the prior speaker. Aligned responses accept the speaker's presuppositions, goals, and turn design, thereby facilitating the intended sequence (Heritage, 1984; Stivers, 2008). For example, during storytelling, recipients may display alignment through minimal response tokens such as *mm-hm*, *yeah*, or nodding, which indicate attentiveness without interrupting the speaker's extended turn (Goodwin, 1986; Schegloff, 1982). Such behavior helps preserve the asymmetrical distribution of speaking roles that is typical in narratives, explanations, or complaints. However, aligned behavior does not necessarily signal affiliation, which concerns emotional or evaluative support. Moreover, while disalignment may momentarily disrupt sequential progressivity, it is not inherently oppositional—it can instead signal a need for clarification or a renegotiation of participation roles. The analysis of off-task interactions in online task-based environments reveals that alignment and affiliation are central to fostering rapport, sustaining engagement, and facilitating topic maintenance and meaningful communication.

This is in line with what Dooly and Tudini (2022) suggested earlier: facilitating social affinity is essential for effective collaborative learning (Dooly, 2018). They also emphasize the importance of 'off-task' discussions in unsupervised, online collaborative environments. Similarly, Yamaha and Akahori (2007) suggested that video exchanges allowed learners to express emotional and intellectual aspects of their identities more fully. In our study, participants employ a range of interactional resources—such as humor, storytelling, shared cultural references, asking follow up questions and nonverbal actions—to establish and maintain social connections. In the same vein, Satar (2015) suggest that resources including posing questions to initiate new discussions and maintain existing topics, introducing topics of mutual interest, and bringing up off-task topics after task completion enhance social presence and maintain interaction. These resources contribute to successful

topic management, smooth transitions between on-task and off-task discourse, and the resolution of disaffiliation, ultimately supporting L2 IC (Abe, 2023). Importantly, off-task talk fosters authentic conversation, promoting spontaneous topic maintenance and relationship-building—an aspect highly relevant to task-based language teaching. Thus, it may be suggested that these interactions are not merely peripheral but integral to the broader conversational dynamics of task-based language learning (TBLT). This will be discussed more in the next section.

Affiliation builds upon alignment by fostering emotional connection, solidarity, and social bonding through shared experiences, humor, and empathy (Stivers et al., 2011). Participants achieve affiliation through mirroring, repetition, collaborative turn completion, and shared linguistic markers, humor, personal storytelling, assessment and expressions of empathy to strengthen their relationships. Assessment tokens not only shows listener's alignment to ongoing topic and current speaker's telling but also reflects listener's stance to those to certain degree (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992; Wong & Waring, 2020). They can take many shapes including verbal, nonverbal and bodily displays and display of listener's co-participation in interaction (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987). Notably, relationship-building is more prominent in off-task talk, as participants engage in more spontaneous, authentic interactions, reinforcing the idea that task-based language teaching can foster meaningful communication beyond the task itself. Pekarek Doehler (2019) identifies preference organization (articulating disagreements, assessments, etc.) as an aspect to observe for the development of L2 interactional competence (IC). Affiliation is closely connected to the preference organization (Clayman, 2022), underscoring the importance of incorporating affiliation as a component of L2 IC.

In Extract 11, affiliation is reinforced through linguistic mirroring, as Aya adopts San's use of "yani (Tr. that is)" and shares a common experience signaling comprehension and solidarity. This moment exemplifies how participants reinforce understanding by adopting each other's lexical choices. Aya's association of "Yani" with Turkish adds another layer to the affiliation, creating a cross-linguistic bond between participants underscoring their

"sharedness". Such moments highlight the role of shared linguistic knowledge in reinforcing relational coherence (Konzett-Firth, 2020). In the same extract, humor serves as another affiliative resource, particularly when Aya and San share laughter over their common usage of "yani" (Tr. That is). The playful tone of their interaction reduces social distance and enhances engagement, aligning with Glenn's (2003) findings on humor as a means of reinforcing group cohesion. Similarly, Stivers (2008) emphasizes that shared laughter functions as an affiliative resource, signaling agreement and mutual enjoyment of the interaction. In the same vein, it has been already illustrated how laughter and humor play an important role in building affiliation in the face-to-face (Looney & Kim 2018; Looney & He, 2020) and online L2 classroom interaction (Sumruk & Jenks, 2025; Sumruk, Durmuş & Balaman, 2025).

Extract 12 illustrates the role of sharing personal stories and empathetic discourse in sustaining affiliation. Bac provides emotional support to Nir by using reassuring and encouraging language, fostering a sense of optimism. Nir's consistent acknowledgments of Bac's support further solidify their affiliative bond. It has been already illustrated in previous research that empathic responses serve as both affiliative markers and devices for emotional calibration, enabling interactants to negotiate their relative stance positions and involvement dynamically (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Heritage, 2011; Prior, 2017; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2006). One key moment in this extract is the use of the phrase "inşallah" (meaning "god willing/hopefully" which is a borrowed from Arabic into Turkish and is also commonly used in other languages influenced by Islamic culture). This shared cultural reference serves as a powerful bonding mechanism, reinforcing their common background and deepening their connection. Such findings resonate with previous studies on how cultural references function as affiliative tools in multilingual and multicultural interactions (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). Participants demonstrate alignment and affiliation through vocal affirmations, non-verbal actions, collaborative turn completion, shared cultural references, laughter, and empathic discourse, so fostering rapport and maintaining a positive interactional environment. The analysis of the extract reveals the crucial role of supportive discourse in establishing rapport and sustaining an engaging interactional atmosphere, as participants employ

language to provide comfort and encouragement, thus promoting affiliation (Stivers, 2008). Furthermore, Extract 13 showcases how alignment is negotiated through topical extensions. Han and Zel collaboratively manage topic progression, particularly when discussing the concept of "linguistic landscapes". Their ability to maintain thematic continuity by referencing earlier points contributes to alignment, demonstrating the participants' awareness of conversational cohesion. Such findings align with Heritage and Watson's (1979) concept of formulations, where speakers summarize or refine previous contributions to reinforce shared understanding. Alignment and affiliation are formed through verbal and non-verbal actions, including humor and shared laughter, which enhance social bonds and group cohesion (Heath & Luff, 2013; Looney & He, 2020; Looney & Kim, 2018; Stivers, 2008; Sumruk & Jenks, forthcoming; Sumruk et al., 2025).

A similar pattern appears in Extract 14, where affiliation is strengthened through shared surprise and enthusiasm. Cultural references foster affiliation and facilitate prolonged L2 interaction. One participant expresses excitement over discovering a commonality with their interlocutor, exclaiming, "Oh my god, I can't believe we have so much in common!" This extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) serves as a direct affiliative move, emphasizing the significance of their shared experience. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2006) examined "surprise reaction tokens" as a distinct category of "response cries" from a dataset of 600 instances. They highlighted "surprise tokens" as an "interactional resource" and a "social phenomenon" that expresses emotions, particularly surprise. They discovered that individuals convey surprise through non-lexical tokens, such as "whistles and gasps", as well as lexical tokens, such as "oo:h!, wow, oh my god, Jesus Christ, my goodness, good gracious" and even silence in delayed responses illustrating affiliation and disaffiliation (pp. 152, 153, 178). Prior (2017) suggest that "response cries" such as "Oh my goodness! That's terrific!" are among the most common and significant expressions of empathy, both lexically and prosodically, aiding speakers and recipients in situating themselves within interactional contexts (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012b; Heritage, 2011). Similarly, in Extract 15, affiliation is achieved through collaborative turn completion, where participants contribute to each other's utterances,

ensuring a smooth conversational flow. This is particularly evident in sequences where speakers reformulate or rephrase each other's statements, reinforcing shared understanding and keeping the discussion on track. Stivers et al. (2011) argue that such resources are fundamental in achieving intersubjectivity, ensuring that both parties remain engaged in the interaction. Resources they use to build alignment, and affiliation includes restating key terms, rephrasing each other's statements, utilizing confirmation checks, and participating in collaborative turn completion.

Affiliation is not always achieved easily. In moments of disalignment or disagreement, participants employ affiliative resources to restore harmony. In Extract 14, the dyad manages potential disaffiliation by using acknowledgment tokens, humor, and collaborative topic extension to realign the interaction. Similar to what Kendrick and Drew (2016) found participants calibrate their responses in case of a disaffiliation and how this calibration can help them rebuild affiliation. The extract highlights how participants manage disaffiliation while preserving interactional harmony. This is in line with Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger's (2011) findings revealing that L2 speakers with higher proficiency levels can navigate disagreements via varied interactional and linguistic resources more successfully compared to L2 speakers having lower level of proficiencies. Participants also use self-deprecating humor and laughter to soften disagreements and reestablish solidarity. By integrating such moves, they maintain interactional harmony and navigate potential friction in a constructive manner. These findings underscore the importance of responses for alignment and affiliation in maintaining a positive interactional environment in both on-task and off-task discussions.

Successful topic management is critical for sustaining engagement and ensuring interactional coherence. The findings reveal that participants skillfully manage transitions between on-task and off-task discussions, using specific interactional resources such as prosodic shifts, lexical markers, and multimodal actions to signal changes in conversational frames (Holmes, 2000). One of the most salient findings is the demonstration of participant agency in initiating and sustaining new topics of their own choosing. Unlike

on-task interactions, where engagement is shaped by task requirements, off-task talk allows for more spontaneous and relational exchanges. Participants could choose to disengage entirely when they have extra time after finishing a particular task/task step, but instead, they engage in the co-construction of new topics, reflecting their agency in discourse management (Markee, 2000). For example, Extract 14 provides insights into how participants signal topic shifts to manage conversational transitions. The shift from on-task to off-task discourse occurs when participants complete a task step ahead of schedule, creating a temporary space (side sequence) for informal exchanges. This transition is characterized by shifts in prosody, tone, and tempo, reflecting the participants' ability to navigate different conversational frames. Wang et al. (2025) showed that side sequences spaces that facilitate affiliation, support engagement, and enhance the affective climate of the L2 classroom.

Interestingly, agency is not limited to participants. The app and the task itself exhibit agency in shaping on-task interactions, subtly guiding topic direction. While off-task talk showcases participant agency, on-task talk reveals how digital environments and structured activities influence conversation. This notion aligns with the concept of technological agency, wherein digital interfaces contribute to discourse management by structuring participant interactions.

In Extract 13, Han and Zel demonstrate how fluid is topic management by swinging between on-task and off-task topics. This adaptability is crucial for maintaining engagement and ensuring the discourse remains fruitful. Han strategically brings back the term "linguistic landscape" to anchor the discussion, ensuring that the conversation remains thematically relevant. Zel, in turn, synthesizes their observations, providing a structured progression of ideas. This aligns with Stivers (2008), who highlights the importance of topical coherence in sustaining engagement. The ability to transition fluidly between task-related and spontaneous discussions reflects their interactional awareness and autonomy.

Multimodal resources—gestures, facial expressions, embodied actions, and screen-based interactions—play a critical role in maintaining engagement and reinforcing meaning. As discussed earlier, successful management of these

technological affordances is indicative of L2 IC (Balaman & Sert, 2017b; Licoppe, 2017; Markee, 2008, Mondada, 2016). These nonverbal resources help maintain coherence in online interactions, especially in settings where visual and auditory cues are limited (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). The integration of multimodal resources enriches L2 interactional competence and reinforces the communicative potential of off-task talk. In Extract 11, Aya employs hand movements to emphasize her assertions, aligning her gestures with San's reflections. These embodied actions serve as nonverbal alignment resources, reinforcing the participants' shared understanding. Satar (2015) highlights that gesture and bodily orientation are essential for interactional coherence, particularly in digital settings where visual aids compensate for the absence of full-body engagement. In Extract 15, multimodal communication is evident in the way participants incorporate screen-based actions to support their discussion. Cursor movements and annotations serve as referential tools, enhancing clarity and ensuring alignment. These findings align with research on digital multimodal interactions, where participants integrate verbal and nonverbal resources to sustain collaborative engagement (Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025).

L2 IC refers to the participants' ability to navigate conversational structures, negotiate meaning, and sustain engagement in task-based interactions. In Extract 15, participants demonstrate repetition, reformulation, and confirmation checks to enhance mutual comprehension. Nir introduces the Turkish verb "gel" (to come) and systematically explains its derivations, using gestures and rephrasing to facilitate understanding. This corresponds with research on scaffolding in L2 learning, where participants actively construct knowledge through collaborative dialogue (Heritage & Watson, 1979). It also showcases how topic management supports language learning. Participants engage in "language-focused episodes" (Markee, 2000), where they deliberately discuss linguistic elements such as verb forms and suffixes. As it has been shown in Abe's (2023) study as well, the ability to transition seamlessly between informal exchanges and structured discussions on language points underscores the participants' interactional awareness and competence. Effectively managing transitions is a vital component of L2 IC, allowing participants to maneuver the demands of both on-task and off-task

interactions (Abe, 2023; Markee, 2005). The seamless transition demonstrates the participants' ability to collaboratively navigate topic boundaries and their awareness of the interaction's overarching structure. In the same way Dings (2014) has revealed that assessments and collaborative completions are among the core components of L2 IC.

In task-based online interactions, off-task discussions frequently emerge when participants finish a task step ahead of schedule, leaving them with "free time" before the next phase. This is in line with what Markee (2005) found out in a face-to-face L2 language classroom. During these moments, they initiate informal, socially bonding conversations on self-chosen topics. The sequence follows a three-step process: (i) transition into an off-task topic, (ii) establishment of a shared bond through alignment and affiliation, and (iii) return to the on-task discussion. Such exchanges allow them to share perspectives, fostering authentic L2 interactions that promote engagement and collaboration. While these moments represent temporary disalignment from the task, they may create valuable learning opportunities, reinforcing the role of off-task discourse in L2 development.

The findings highlight the significance of off-task interactions in online task-based learning environments, demonstrating that they are not mere distractions but integral to fostering engagement, social bonding, and L2 IC. The analysis of representative extracts underscores the importance of alignment and affiliation in maintaining coherent and engaging interactions in online task-based environments. As illustrated in Table 8, participants employ diverse resources—such as asking questions, humor, shared experiences, personal stories, empathy, non-verbal actions, acknowledgment, and collaborative turn construction—to foster rapport and mutual understanding. Findings emphasize the significance of off-task talk in developing rapport and L2 IC. Such discussions often arise when participants complete task steps ahead of schedule, allowing for spontaneous and informal exchanges.

As has been suggested by Dooly and Tudini (2022), these interactions provide opportunities for learners to engage in more relaxed and spontaneous exchanges and share personal interests and experiences, which can lead to

increased solidarity and mutual understanding, facilitating authentic language use (Hauser, 2016; Markee, 2005) and collaboration as a result. The analysis suggests that brief disalignment from task-focused discussions can create valuable learning opportunities. By engaging in off-task conversations, participants enhance their L2 IC and foster a sense of solidarity-an essential component for effective communication in both academic and social contexts. Similar to what Stone (2023) suggests, being cautious while assigning additional tasks to early finishers, the findings of this study suggest that allowing space for off-task talk can enhance the overall quality of interaction by fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. This perspective challenges the traditional view of off-task talk as purely disruptive, highlighting its potential to contribute positively to the interactional goals of alignment and affiliation (Stivers, 2007).

Thus, characteristics of off-task talk can be listed as follows: self-selected topics are introduced and maintained; interaction is spontaneous and relational; emphasis is on (re)building affiliation; there is an awareness of time and task although they have an off-task talk- thus they skillfully swing between on-task and off-task topics; disaffiliation is resolved almost in every instance. These findings emphasize that off-task talk is not merely incidental but a fundamental aspect of meaningful communication in language learning contexts.

The findings duly highlight the role of multimodal communication, cultural references, and supportive discourse in strengthening affiliation and enhancing L2 IC. Findings of the study is in line with Konzett-Firth (2023) illustrating how learners gradually develop the skills to manage turn-taking, articulate agreement or disagreement, and communicate their intentions across various interactional contexts. The transition from minimal to non-minimal and from vocal to verbal turns corresponds with research suggesting that verbal and non-minimal expressions of affiliation or disaffiliation show enhanced L2 IC (cf. Burch & Kley, 2020), as they reflect heightened engagement (Mundwiler & Kreuz, 2018). This pertains to the learner's evolving ability to monitor ongoing interactions for potential transition points, topic management, and action formation, thereby allowing them to

execute more timely and appropriate responses while exhibiting increased autonomy from linguistic and sequential cues. Notably, time constraints shape interactions by creating opportunities for off-task exchanges. The transition from on-task to off-task discourse marks a key moment in the interaction, enabling participants to engage in more personal and spontaneous conversations. These shifts are often marked by changes in tone, tempo, and topic selection, providing opportunities to cultivate solidarity and deepen mutual understanding (Holmes, 2000). A seamless transition reflects participants' grasp of the interaction's structure and their ability to collaboratively manage topic boundaries. Additionally, the online setting introduces unique challenges, necessitating effective coordination and communication for task completion.

Overall, findings highlight the complex interplay between on-task and relational aspects of communication in dyadic video-mediated virtual exchanges. Both findings section demonstrate the importance of alignment and affiliation in promoting effective communication and interaction, whether on-task or off-task. The ability to manage transitions effectively can be one of the key aspects of L2 IC, as it allows participants to navigate the demands of both on-task and off-task interactions (Abe, 2023). The smooth transition demonstrates the participants' orientation to the overall structure of the interaction and their ability to collaboratively manage topic boundaries. In the same vein, Abe (2023) reveals that learners with higher proficiency levels can manage transitions between on-task and off-task interaction smoothly showing their high-level L2 IC. The resources used in each context vary, but they all contribute to achieving mutual understanding and maintaining social cohesion. On-task and off-task interactions share common resources such as humor, non-verbal actions, and verbal acknowledgments to foster affiliation and maintain engagement. However, they differ in structure and focus. On-task interactions are goal-oriented, emphasizing structured task management and coordination to achieve alignment and task completion. In contrast, off-task interactions prioritize personal connection and empathy, fostering rapport and social bonds. While on-task interactions use specific resources to manage tasks effectively, off-task interactions are

more spontaneous, allowing participants to share personal interests and experiences.

As a result, affiliation in on-task interactions often emerges as a byproduct of successful task management, whereas in off-task interactions, building and maintaining social bonds is the central objective. This does not necessarily mean that participants are not aware of time-based restrictions in off-task talk. On the contrary, they explicitly show their orientation to time by stating their time left to finish a task or start a new one. Thus, managing skillfully between on-task and off-task talk, participants display their "technical-pedagogical knowledge" (Hampel & Stickler, 2012) in "digital task management" (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2018) reflecting the dual progressivity of task and talk (Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017b). By examining both on-task and off-task interactions, the present study provides valuable insights into the distinct and shared resources for alignment and affiliation that participants use to build alignment and affiliation in these conversational contexts.

This study highlights the necessity of a balanced methodology in online task-based learning, wherein structured interactions are supplemented by opportunities for spontaneous and affective communication. This study underscores the importance of adopting a balanced pedagogical approach in online task-based language learning (TBLT), one that harmoniously integrates structured task interactions with opportunities for spontaneous and affective communication. While task-based activities often emphasize goal-oriented exchanges that align with predefined linguistic and cognitive objectives, such as completing problem-solving tasks or collaborative projects, it is equally critical to provide space for unstructured, affect-driven interaction. These spontaneous moments—such as informal greetings, humor, personal anecdotes, or expressions of frustration and encouragement—contribute to the development of interpersonal rapport, socio-emotional engagement, and a sense of community among learners. For instance, in an online language class, a structured task might involve learners working in breakout rooms to co-author a travel itinerary, guided by specific linguistic targets. To balance this, instructors might intentionally allocate time for open-ended conversation before or after the task, encouraging students to share personal

travel experiences or cultural perspectives. Such interactions not only enhance learner motivation and well-being but also support the development of pragmatic competence and authentic language use in digital learning environments.

Alignment and affiliation unfold as complex, situated processes, and a participant's orientation toward the ongoing action may not be immediately apparent. Crucially, no response is intrinsically affiliative or disaffiliative; rather, these stances are interactionally achieved and contingent on how the response is understood within its sequential and contextual environment. The affiliative value of a response depends not only on its content but on how it is received and interpreted in relation to the prior action. Although speakers typically design their turns to project a recognizable next action (Schegloff, 2007), recipients retain interpretive agency—they may take up the projected activity, resist it, or reframe it altogether. Thus, digital learning environments can enhance language proficiency and facilitate the development of meaningful social relationships in second language interactions by promoting both alignment and affiliation. Although IC has been thoroughly examined in various institutional and everyday contexts, online environments require certain context-specific modifications of L2 IC. The context is not solely institutional or informal but is also technologically mediated, which redefines participant roles, turn-taking norms, and the availability of semiotic resources (Gibson, 2020; Satar, 2013).

In the growing digital ecosystem, comprehending the principles of topic management, alignment, and affiliation is crucial. While topic management, encompassing initiation, maintenance, transition, and termination has been extensively studied across various contexts (Drew & Holt, 1998; Fraser, 2009; Holt & Drew, 2005; Jeon, 2012; König, 2013; Maynard, 1980; Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984; Melander & Sahlström, 2009; Riou, 2015; Zellers, 2013), there remains a lack of research connecting L2 IC with topic maintenance (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). This is the first study, to the researcher's knowledge, examining interactional aspects of topic management, alignment, and affiliation, considering these constructs as indicators of L2 interactional competence by analyzing their co-construction

across turns-at-talk and the actions they perform during VE exchange. The data analyses sequentially document the alignment and affiliation resources utilized in a video-mediated task-based interaction for the co-construction of topics and maintenance of alignment and affiliation. These findings suggest that the ability to establish and improve alignment and affiliation, along with the maintenance of a topic, constitutes an integral component of L2 IC. This study addresses the gap identified by Skogmyr and Balaman (2018) by examining an online interactional environment that documents L2 IC. The pedagogical significance of on-task and off-task conversations in building rapport and enhancing L2 IC offers valuable insights for ELT practitioners and task designers. Whether on-task or off-task, alignment and affiliation play a crucial role in facilitating productive communication and engagement. Implications of the study will be explored further in the following section.

5.4. Implications of the Study

The present study has explored resources for alignment and affiliation used within topic management in both on-task and off-task interaction in video-mediated dyadic Virtual Exchange. Based on its findings, this study offers significant implications for both research and practice, particularly in understanding interactional dynamics within Virtual Exchange, Video-mediated Online Interaction, and Task-based Language Learning. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on topic management, alignment and affiliation in online interaction. Moreover, they hold relevance for task designers and practitioners in additional language teaching where interaction is central.

The study provides a nuanced understanding of how L2 learners manage topics in online dyadic interactions, emphasizing the importance of topic management. This adds to the existing research on L2 IC in second language acquisition (SLA) (Kasper & Wagner, 2014; Seedhouse, 2004). The study's findings indicate that topic management is essential for promoting meaningful interaction. Teachers can improve student participation by guiding them in initiating, maintaining, and shifting topics, thereby ensuring that all students have opportunities to contribute. This, in turn, helps develop

their L2 IC, equipping them with one of the essential communication skills for real-world interactions. Furthermore, topic management enhances coherence, allowing students to generate more organized and significant contributions. Teachers can facilitate this by modeling resources, including the use of explicit markers for reciprocation of speakership to promote collaborative topic maintenance. Furthermore, integrating activities such as group discussions and role-playing exercises offers students practical opportunities to develop and enhance their topic management skills. The findings highlight the necessity for training in topic management and multimodal communication practices. Teaching L2 learners interactional resources for topic management, such as how to initiate, make transitions between topics, equips them with essential skills for effective communication in a globally interconnected environment. Topic management is essential a component of classroom interactional competence (CIC) (Walsh 2013; Young, 2013), defined as the ability of teachers and learners to utilize interaction as a means of facilitating and enhancing learning (Walsh, 2013, p. 124).

Language learners can develop skills to manage transitions between on-task and off-task discussions, thereby maintaining alignment and affiliation while accomplishing task objectives. The study examines both on-task and off-task interactions, emphasizing the significance of informal social exchanges in promoting alignment and affiliation, aspects frequently neglected in conventional SLA research. Considering humor's function in fostering affiliation, educational practices might include activities that promote a humor-friendly atmosphere, such as improvisational exercises or light-hearted discussions (Sumruk & Jenks, forthcoming, Sumruk, Durmuş, & Balaman, 2025). Such activities promote spontaneity and connection among students, thereby enhancing engagement and interaction within the learning environment. Furthermore, educators might exemplify resources for alignment and affiliation, including variations in intonation and collaborative turn completion, to assist students in cultivating a more organic conversational rhythm. Collaborative turn construction is identified as a potent affiliative resource that assists interactants in (re)establishing attachment while maintaining a topic. It is one of the fundamental principles when the participants' IC is taken into account (Huth, 2020, p. 8; Lam, 2021).

Likewise, Sert (2019) illustrates in his longitudinal study that collaborative turn completion indicates an individual's L2 intercultural competence (Dings, 2014; Lam, 2021; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Sert, 2019; Taguchi, 2014). Through the use of humor and the modelling of successful interactional practices, teachers can help students develop their social skills and improve their L2 IC. Konzett-Firth (2023) observes that learners' turn starts evolving from minimal to non-minimal and from vocal to verbal, reflecting a developmental trajectory also noted in earlier research. Verbal and more elaborate expressions of affiliation or disaffiliation have been linked to higher levels of L2 IC (cf. Burch & Kley, 2020), as they indicate deeper engagement with the interaction (Mundwiler & Kreuz, 2018). This progression aligns with learners' growing ability to monitor ongoing talk for transition opportunities, develop topics, and recognize emerging actions—allowing them to respond with more timely, appropriate, and independent contributions, less reliant on explicit linguistic or sequential cues.

Affiliation is not always established immediately; it frequently necessitates continuous interactional effort, particularly in intricate discussions. Since learners need resources to rebuild affiliation after instances of disaffiliation, educators can introduce activities that explicitly teach face-saving techniques, such as hedging, rephrasing, and stance modification. By using these resources, students can sustain constructive social dynamics and handle delicate situations in interactions. Reflection-based activities, in which students analyze transcripts of their interactions, can be particularly effective in promoting awareness. Identifying instances of disaffiliation and examining potential repair practices enables students to cultivate a more thorough understanding of conversational management and enhance their skills to sustain affiliation across diverse communicative contexts. Utilizing metaphors, inclusive language, and stance-indicating phrases enhances coherence and promotes affiliation in video-mediated interaction. Affiliation and alignment are crucial not only in facilitating mutual understanding but also in fostering motivation in language learning contexts. Students who develop strong affiliative bonds in interactive environments are more inclined to participate in collaborative learning, undertake interactional risks, and sustain their engagement in discussions, despite encountering linguistic

difficulties (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This highlights the necessity of creating language-learning tasks that facilitate relational dialogue in conjunction with task execution. Structured tasks facilitate alignment; however, affiliation is frequently enhanced through flexible and spontaneous interactions. Teachers could implement free discussion periods to facilitate less goal-oriented exchanges among students, thereby promoting a more natural conversational flow.

The findings challenge the traditional view of off-task talk as merely disruptive. Instead, off-task interactions contribute positively to engagement, rapport-building, and L2 IC. In this study, alignment and affiliation are viewed not just as ways for learners to build rapport, but as key interactional skills that reflect their developing L2 IC. By jointly managing topics and responding to each other's contributions in meaningful ways, learners demonstrate their ability to co-construct talk across turns. These resources—showing agreement, offering support, or continuing a shared line of thought—not only sustain the conversation but also create space for extended topical talk, where ideas, feelings, and perspectives are exchanged. This kind of collaborative interaction is crucial for learning, as it opens opportunities for deeper engagement with language. Even in digital settings, where some affordances might be limited, learners still find ways to align and affiliate through available tools, making these resources important markers of both social connection and language development. Off-task talk promotes genuine dialogue, which is especially important in TBLT. This facilitates the organic emergence of self-selected topics, promoting a conversational environment that reflects natural language usage. These instances offer significant learning opportunities by enabling participants to engage in spontaneous L2 interactions, thereby improving their abilities to navigate real-world communicative contexts. Additionally, extended time in task-based interactions facilitates opportunities for off-task exchanges, allowing participants to develop skills in managing conversational shifts and spontaneous discussions.

From a methodological standpoint, the study highlights the significance of multimodal conversation analysis. The integration of verbal, embodied, and

material resources demonstrates that interaction is constructed beyond mere verbal communication. This aligns with recent conversation analysis studies highlighting the significance of gesture, gaze, and prosody in interaction (Deppermann & Streeck, 2018; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013; Uyar & Balaman, 2024). Conversation Analysis (CA) serves as a comprehensive methodological framework for the detailed examination of social interaction. The study emphasizes naturally occurring data, detailed analysis, and participant perspectives, providing distinctive insights into the structure of talk-in-interaction.

The analysis reveals the sophisticated practices individuals employ to navigate complex social interactions, highlighting the structured nature of seemingly disorderly behavior. The study's analysis of multimodal actions illustrates the role of bodily conduct in conjunction with verbal communication to coordinate actions, providing a comprehensive perspective on interactional organization. Instructors may highlight the importance of embodied actions in online environments, urging students to incorporate gestures, facial expressions, and screen-based actions to enhance interaction. Research on Virtual Exchange IC (VE-IC) (Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025) underscores the significance of multimodal resources in enhancing engagement and mutual understanding in digital communication. Furthermore, equipping students with training in digital communication practices, including effective screen-sharing, cursor movements, digital pointing, and the utilization of virtual whiteboards, can effectively substitute for physical gestures in online environments and enhance their engagement in online discussions. Developing these skills enables students to navigate online interactions more effectively, fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment that compensates for the diminished physical presence.

The findings enhance the understanding of L2 IC by empirically illustrating that alignment and affiliation are fundamental to the management of topics in video-mediated encounters. It contributes to the growing research on online L2 IC by providing a thorough examination of how participants manage topics, align with each other, and establish affiliation in video-mediated encounters. As has been already discussed in literature and shown

by findings of this study, L2 IC is not an individual construct; rather, it is collectively achieved by dyads who contribute to the continuing issue at different levels and with varying responsibilities, thus co-constructing IC within a local context (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011). Learners often demonstrate their L2 IC by jointly maintaining topics and aligning with each other's contributions during online exchanges. Through responsive turns, elaborations, and uptake of prior utterances, they collaboratively build coherence and sustain the flow of interaction. Despite potential limitations in the affordances of digital platforms—such as reduced access to non-verbal cues or turn-taking overlaps—these environments still enable the co-construction of meaning. It has been revealed by numerous studies that online task-based interaction enhances learners' L2 IC (Balaman & Sert, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Sert & Balaman, 2018). Learners adapt by using available interactional resources to signal engagement, manage topics, and show alignment, illustrating that meaningful collaboration and mutual understanding can still be achieved in digital contexts.

Although topic management—including initiation, maintenance, transition, and termination—has been widely studied, there is still limited research linking these processes directly to L2 IC, particularly in the context of online peer interaction. This study addresses this gap by exploring how learners collaboratively maintain topics through the use of alignment and affiliation resources in digital settings. These interactional moves—such as showing agreement, building on peer contributions, or signaling shared understanding—play a crucial role in sustaining conversations and fostering mutual engagement. Importantly, the digital environment itself shapes how topics are co-constructed and maintained, often in ways that differ from face-to-face interaction. Features like limited access to embodied actions, or platform-specific interactional tools influence how learners manage participation and topic flow. By examining these dynamics, the study highlights how topic maintenance serves not only as a discourse-level skill but also as an indicator of learners' evolving L2 IC in online settings. Given the growing importance on and scarcity of research on online communication in language learning, it is critical to understand these interactional dynamics in order to enhance the efficacy and quality of L2 acquisition in digital settings

(Skogmyr Marian & Balaman, 2018). The research indicates that successful engagement in online settings necessitates not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to facilitate discussions, interpret social signals, and interact with others in manners that promote rapport and mutual understanding, as evidenced by CA studies on the significance of interaction in language learning (Balaman & Sert, 2017b; Licoppe & Morel, 2012; O'Dowd & Dooly, 2020; Satar, 2016; Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025).

Findings on IC from conversation analytic research (Balaman, 2016; Hall, 2007; Hellermann, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011; Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Markee, 2008; Pekarek Doehler, 2010; Pekarek Doehler & Fasel Lauson, 2015; Seedhouse, 2004; Waring, 2008) have increasingly influenced not only L2 teaching, testing, and assessment (Galaczi, 2008, 2014; He & Young, 1998; Hırçın Çoban, 2017; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2011; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Young, 2000) but also teacher education programs (Bozbıyık, 2017; Sert, 2010, 2015; Walsh, 2011, 2013). The current study builds on these works by offering pedagogical insights into how learners' use of alignment and affiliation resources—when employed in sequentially appropriate ways—facilitates the co-construction of intersubjectivity in interaction. These findings underscore the importance of designing classroom activities that foreground interactional practices, encouraging learners to attend to their interlocutors' actions, respond contingently, and maintain shared topics. By explicitly raising learners' awareness of these practices and providing opportunities to practice them, educators can support the development of L2 IC in meaningful and collaborative ways.

When learners are equipped to use alignment and affiliation resources effectively, they are better able to share ideas, emotions, and perspectives—key components of successful communication in both classroom and real-world contexts. The results highlight the essential requirement to incorporate L2 IC into second language curriculum, particularly in online learning contexts. In these situations, students need to become proficient in both language and the nuances of digital communication, including how to use multimodal resources, take turns, and use affiliation and alignment resources (Kasper & Wagner, 2014). This corresponds with Conversation

Analysis's emphasis on the management of discourse and interaction, which has been demonstrated to be essential for language development (Sacks et al., 1974). By explicitly addressing these skills, educators can equip learners with the tools they need to engage effectively in both online and face-to-face interactions. Pekarek Doehler (2019) highlights the necessity of including learners in authentic, meaningful social practices, both within and beyond the classroom, to promote the diversification of interactional resources and improve their ability to navigate turn-taking, (dis)agreement, and other social actions. This approach corresponds with overarching educational objectives, including the advancement of global citizenship and intercultural communication, which are especially pertinent in an increasingly interconnected world. Consequently, incorporating IC into L2 curricula will improve learners' ability to engage in meaningful, productive conversations, ultimately resulting in superior learning outcomes and richer communication experiences.

The findings have important implications for ELT practitioners and task designers. As Harumi (2023) suggests CA-informed materials and pedagogical frameworks can enhance learners' awareness of interactional norms, contribute to their spontaneous speaking skills, and cultivate their interactional repertoires through activities such as contextualized practice, reflection, and discovery tasks. In this sense, research findings and the analytical framework provided by CA significantly contribute to the development of speaking material resources. By incorporating structured yet flexible task designs, educators can create learning environments that balance task completion with opportunities for relational and affective communication (Dooly & Tudini, 2022; Illés & Akcan, 2016).

Digital learning tools can also be utilized to facilitate multimodal engagement, thereby improving L2 IC. Understanding the significance of off-task interactions can guide the design of task-based activities that promote informal exchanges among participants. Integrating opportunities for personal storytelling, humor, and empathic communication allows educators to create a more engaging and supportive learning environment. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approaches could go beyond task completion and

incorporate tasks that foster deeper affiliation among learners. Promoting student participation in collaborative storytelling or debate formats fosters dynamic interaction, enabling the development of rapport and the enhancement of social connections through shared narratives and negotiated viewpoints. Incorporating reflective discussions after tasks aids learners in developing awareness of their use of alignment and affiliation resources, allowing for the refinement of interactional skills and enhancement of social cohesion in digital communication.

The present study demonstrated that VE could enhance ordinary conversation, thereby providing opportunities for meaningful L2 interactions. In classroom settings, teachers typically establish the agenda explicitly through syllabi and lesson plans, while also managing topics implicitly via turn-taking. They often initiate topics through questions or prompts to elicit student responses, followed by feedback or evaluation—forming the well-known IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern. However, previous research suggests that moving beyond this teacher-centered structure can enhance and diversify learning opportunities, foster student engagement, and promote student participation (Dolce & van Compernolle, 2020; Sert, 2017). In a context of heightened human mobility, language educators may consider employing video-mediated VEs to foster and strengthen global citizenship (Çiftçi & Savaş, 2018; O'Dowd, 2020; Üzüm et al., 2020). Konzett-Firth (2020) argues that findings of her in-class study may have significant consequences for online L2 interaction as well, implying that educators should promote open-ended, meaning-focused dialogues in virtual settings. The shift from text-based communication to dynamic and interactive exchanges can be enhanced by employing VEs and digital tools that enable both synchronous and asynchronous interactions.

Teachers can enhance student engagement and autonomy by focusing on L2 IC and utilizing the flexibility of online environments, reflecting effective practices seen in traditional classroom settings. In this context, VE offers a valuable space where such shifts can occur more naturally, as students engage in peer-to-peer interaction across cultures and contexts, often taking greater ownership of topic maintenance and interactional roles. Given that the

participants in this study have not received explicit instruction on managing topics or (re)building and maintaining alignment and affiliation, it can be suggested that the research setting enables them to collaboratively cultivate an L2 IC sensitive to context—an achievement they may find challenging in a monolingual L2 classroom. Thus, the study's insights into authentic interactional practices hold relevance for educational and professional training contexts. Pedagogically, we argue that it is important for task designers not to underestimate time required for task completion, and in fact bult in some additional time for participants to initiate and develop off-task talk as a space for authentic intercultural interactions. Implementing role-play scenarios and collaborative storytelling can enhance learners' ability to maintain topics, fostering alignment and affiliation more naturally by creating opportunities for spontaneous, personal contributions that promote deeper connections. This study aligns with recent findings in applied CA that contribute to instructional design and professional communication training (Pekarek Doehler & Balaman, 2021).

In particular, the findings emphasize the importance of designing tasks that facilitate collaborative meaning-making, allowing participants to actively negotiate their contributions rather than passively receiving information. Educators can establish a learning environment that fosters both authentic engagement and alignment by integrating structured activities with open-ended or more informal discussions. Additionally, virtual exchanges may include pre-task socialization activities to facilitate the development of affiliative bonds among participants prior to structured interactions. Informal exchanges foster a sense of connection and comfort, enhancing the engagement and collaboration of subsequent discussions. Furthermore, promoting the use of inclusive language, humor, and shared experiences can help reduce the potential detachment of online communication. Establishing a socially supportive environment can improve interactional dynamics and facilitate more meaningful engagement in virtual exchanges.

This research contributes to existing literature by providing a detailed analysis of interactional organization of online task-based VE environments. By advancing theoretical discussions, refining methodological approaches,

and informing pedagogical and applied practices, the findings contribute to both the academic and practical domains. The study underscores the dynamic and emergent nature of interaction, illustrating how participants actively shape the trajectory of communication through multimodal and sequential resources. The subsequent chapter will address the limitations of the current study and propose directions for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

This study explored the resources for alignment and affiliation used in topic management in a Virtual Exchange environment. By analyzing the micro-level details of video-mediated dyadic interaction through Conversation Analysis, the research uncovered how participants establish and maintain alignment and affiliation in both on-task and off-task exchanges. As discussed in the previous chapter, the findings offer valuable insights for both research and pedagogy, contributing to a deeper understanding of interactional processes in virtual learning environments. In the last chapter of the study, limitations and measures implemented to mitigate them and suggestions for further research will be presented. The dissertation will be concluded with a brief personal reflection of the research process.

6.2. Limitations of The Study

This study offers important insights into research and pedagogy; however, several limitations must be recognized. As the VE interaction and data collection were all managed online through screen recording, several challenges emerged during these processes. Technical issues encountered during virtual exchanges included connectivity disruptions and audio distortions. Additionally, there were instances of incomplete or missing recordings due to participants' inability to record their screens. This inability arose from various factors, such as lack of access to a computer while

attending the meeting via smartphones, forgetting to initiate the recording, or insufficient storage space on their devices. This problem was anticipated and a guideline for screen recording software and app use was prepared earlier. In addition to this, the project team provided instant technical support throughout the data collection process. A further technical issue was the unstable internet connection, which occasionally leads to a double-barreled latency problem, hindering the co-interactant's ability to understand and respond promptly, as the interactant's voice is delayed. This also complicated the transcriber's task (Balaman, 2016; Ekin, 2018). The quality and completeness of the data were occasionally influenced by these factors, necessitating careful consideration during the data selection process. To mitigate these anticipated challenges, a large amount of data was collected to allow for the omission of problematic recordings while still ensuring a robust dataset for analysis.

This research examines dyadic interactions in a particular virtual exchange context, featuring participants from Turkish and Tunisian backgrounds. The restricted scope may influence the applicability of the findings to different contexts. To improve the validity and reliability of findings, the study implemented several measures, including ensuring transparency through the provision of detailed transcripts and data extracts, which enable readers to examine and potentially contest analytic claims (Peräkylä, 2011) and organizing collaborative data analysis by taking the excerpts from the data to data sessions organized by different organization (see 3.8. for further explanation).

While all dyads in this study engaged in identical tasks to reduce the impact of task design on interaction, variations in genre (e.g., narrative versus problem-solving) may have affected interactional patterns. Participants' familiarity with task genres may have impacted their ability to manage topics and negotiate turns. However, this might be true for any tasks chosen making it hard to eliminate task genre's effect on interaction. There might also be discrepancies between task-as-workplan and task-as-a-process (Seedhouse, 2005). Yet, it is impossible for us to compare these as task design part is beyond the scope of this study.

The present study focused on intermediate-level learners, potentially restricting its relevance to other proficiency levels. Furthermore, differing levels of digital literacy and access to technology may have affected participation and interaction dynamics. However, beginner and advanced learners may require different types of tasks which will make it even harder for the researcher to eliminate the effect of task type on interaction. Participants were provided with a concise orientation on the digital tools utilized in the study to address digital literacy challenges.

The study was conducted over a limited timeframe, restricting observations of long-term developments in foci phenomena. Despite the short duration, multiple sessions were analyzed to capture recurring interactional patterns. Future research may implement a longitudinal design to examine the enduring impact of virtual exchange on topic management, alignment and affiliation, language learning, and intercultural competence. Potential directions for further research are given in the next section.

6.3. Suggestions for Future Research

The study's findings offer valuable insights into the complexities of online task-based interactions, highlighting participants' abilities in (re)establishing alignment and affiliation in both on-task and off-task topic management. Future research should investigate several key areas to enhance our understanding of these phenomena within online interaction contexts.

We already know that "topic" is notoriously difficult area of research focus as it is not always easy to pin point when a topic ends and another one starts (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Çimenli, 2017; Çimenli, Sert & Jenks, 2022; Schegloff, 1990; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015). Therefore, additional CA studies across diverse contexts are essential for a comprehensive understanding of "topic". An example of such research could involve examining topic management in group interactions. Group interactions entail intricate turn-taking and topic negotiation processes (Schegloff, 2007), thus analyzing them would enhance understanding beyond dyadic interactions and offer a more comprehensive view of interactional dynamics.

As virtual exchanges connect speakers across diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, future research could examine how affiliation resources vary across different cultural norms and communicative expectations. Investigating the ways in which multilingual learners negotiate meaning, manage turn-taking, and establish rapport in cross-linguistic interactions may yield valuable insights into intercultural communication and linguistic relativity within digital contexts. Future research is encouraged to investigate, delineate, and analyze the role of interculturality in interactional competence within virtual exchanges, along with the concept of intersectionality in the techno-pedagogy of language educators. This includes aspects such as digital competence, linguistic competence, communicative competence, and intercultural competence, which are essential for effective virtual exchange (Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025). Investigating intersectionality in language teachers' techno-pedagogy, including aspects such as digital competence, linguistic competence, and intercultural competence is also recommended to enhance successful VE practices.

Digital platforms are undergoing continuous evolution. Future research may investigate the influence of various technological affordances on interactional dynamics. As digital tools become increasingly embedded in communication, examining how interactional structures adapt in virtual environments (Mondada, 2021) could provide valuable insights. Comparative research on video conferencing, virtual reality (VR), and AI-driven platforms may provide insights into the effects of digital presence, multimodal cues, and topic management, alignment, and affiliation. Examining the role of VR in enhancing engagement via embodied interaction and the function of AI tools in enabling real-time conversational scaffolding may yield significant pedagogical insights for language acquisition and virtual collaboration.

A potential area for future research involves examining how task engagers and task designers negotiate agency, alignment, and affiliation within various cultural and linguistic contexts. Considering the increasing focus on cross-linguistic CA studies (Clift & Raymond, 2020), comparative analyses may provide enhanced insights into the variability of interactional practices across different contexts. Investigating how cultural norms influence conversational

practices would not only expand CA's cross-cultural scope but also contribute to discussions on intercultural communication.

Future research may also investigate the impact of various task types on the depth and quality of affiliation in digital interactions. For example, Havadar and Balaman (2023) suggest that paired role play tasks can serve as an avenue for fostering co-participation and facilitating L2 learners' creation of context-sensitive and recipient-designed contributions. Structured and open-ended tasks, along with collaborative and competitive formats, can produce different degrees of engagement and personal investment. Investigating the impact of personal narratives, debate formats, or spontaneous discussion prompts on interactional cohesion may improve task-based language teaching and digital learning practices. By allowing participants to engage in debates or share personal stories, tasks can foster a more informal and intimate interaction, leading to stronger affiliative bonds.

Comparative studies across varying proficiency levels may elucidate whether lower-level learners experience greater difficulties in establishing affiliation and how they adapt to linguistic constraints. Such studies could yield insights into how learners at different stages navigate alignment and affiliation, thereby informing the development of targeted resources to enhance effective communication and affiliation. Lower-level learners tend to depend more on nonverbal cues and formulaic expressions, whereas advanced learners are likely to employ humor, metaphor, or prosody to build rapport, thus serving as a significant indicator of L2 interactional competence, as demonstrated by the previously stated research and associated literature (Burch & Kley 2020; Mondada 2011; Salaberry & Kunitz 2019).

Spontaneous, off-task conversations facilitate authentic communication, genuine self-expression, and the development of stronger affiliative bonds. Future research may explore the role of off-task talk in language learning, social bonding, and learner motivation. Furthermore, research may investigate methods by which educators and task designers can incorporate opportunities for informal interaction within organized learning settings while maintaining instructional objectives.

Humor also plays a significant role in mitigating interactional challenges and reinforcing social ties. Future research may investigate the role of humor in digital environments for (re)establishing affiliation, addressing misunderstandings, or managing communication failures. Utilizing humor, storytelling, and sharing personal anecdotes, individuals foster a sense of unity and collective experience. This approach has the potential to enhance group cohesion and promote more seamless transitions back to on-task interaction (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). By integrating laughter and shared amusement, participants sustain an affiliative tone, fostering further contributions to the interaction (Heath & Luff, 2013; Holmes, 2000; Looney & He, 2020; Looney & Kim, 2018; Satar & Çimenli Olcars, 2025; Sumruk et al., forthcoming; Sumruk & Jenks, 2025).

This dissertation has focused on moment-by-moment interactions; however, longitudinal research is necessary to examine the development of alignment and affiliation over time in online learning environments. Examining the effects of repeated interactions on social cohesion, sustained engagement, and learning outcomes would provide a deeper insight into digital relationship-building in L2 communication. In conclusion, the analysis underscores the need for further research into the complexities of online task-based interactions, particularly regarding topic management, development of meaningful social bonds and L2 IC. Future research can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the multimodal nature of interaction and inform pedagogical practices for promoting effective communication and collaboration in online learning environments by investigating the influence of digital environments, task design, and proficiency levels on alignment and affiliation.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

This research journey, which has been filled with many challenges and successes, has been both illuminating and transforming for me. My comprehension of these online communicative practices has been significantly enhanced by the investigation of topic management, alignment, and affiliation, as well as the complex web of online task-based interactions.

One of the most profound realizations has been the complexity and richness of virtual exchanges. This understanding has made me more appreciative of the subtle dynamics at play in cross-linguistic interactions.

In conclusion, this research process has not only expanded my academic knowledge but has also enriched my personal growth. I'm now better able to handle the changing terrain of digital learning and more sensitive to the nuances of online communication. The insights gained will continue to guide my future endeavors in VE, online interaction, language education and intercultural communication.

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APPENDICES

A. TASKS AS PDF

All tasks are available at :

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1TAZ3DhSwF6oU1nJwK3rmQuG14Uzclf26

B. Jefferson (2004) Transcription System

[ ]	Overlapping utterances – (beginning [) and (end])
=	Contiguous utterances (or continuation of the same turn)
(0.0)	Represent the tenths of a second between utterances
(.)	Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less)
:	Elongation (more colons demonstrate longer stretches of sound)
.	Fall in pitch at the end of an utterance
-	An abrupt stop in articulation
?	Rising in pitch at utterance end (not necessarily a question)
WORD	Loud/forte speech
word	Underline letters/words indicate accentuation
↑↓	Marked upstep/downstep in intonation
hhh	Exhalations
.hhh	Inhalations
(hhh)	Laughter within a word (can also represent audible aspirations)
>text<	Surrounds talk that is spoken faster
<text>	Surrounds talk that is spoken slower
(text)	Approximations of what is heard

C. Multimodal Transcription System (Mondada, 2018)

* *	Descriptions of embodied movements are delimited between
+ +	two identical symbols (one symbol per participant's line of action) and are synchronized with corresponding stretches of talk/lapses of time.
*--->	The action described continues across subsequent lines
--->*	until the same symbol is reached.
>>	The action described begins before the extract's beginning.
-->>	The action described continues after the extract's end.
. . . .	Preparation.
------	Full extension of the movement is reached and maintained.
,,,,,	Retraction.
ava	Participant doing the embodied action is identified when (s)he is not the speaker.
fig	The exact moment at which a screen shot has been taken is indicated
#	with a symbol showing its temporal position within turn at talk/segments of time.

D. OMITTED LINES

Extract 6 Omitted Lines

```
1  YOP: (0.7) %<how> %would i %say
   yop         %-looks upper left-%
   yop                 %-looks at upper right--> line 2
2       it hh.% it's a source of %(1.7)% %↑cliches% %i found the
   yop  -------%                    %looks%twrds left
   yop                                      %head mov%ement
   yop                                                 %---4-> line 3
3       word in french% %%couldn't find i-t in english ↑anyway
   yop  -------------4-%  %---1--> line 5
   yop                      %-----9----> line 5 9:leans on her left side
4  DEN: uh huh
5  YOP: it's a source% of (.) %%VARIAtion %↑so: hh. %we don't
   yop                %-----1----%            %---8---> line 6
   yop  --------------9-----------%                    %---4--> line 6
6       really want every single (.)% <err> population on earth% to
   yop  -----------------8-------------%------------4---------------%
7       %have the- ↑%the same patterns%% (.) to have %the same
   yop               %--strong nodding---%                %-strong
   yop  -------------------8--------------%           nodding--> line 8
8       %%m- mindset%%% (.) to have %the same %culture% hh.%% (.)
   yop  %slightly looks %down.         %---strongly nodding-----%
   yop   %leans forward%                          %--looks down--%
   yop  -------------%
9       %each:%
   yop  %looks up%
10 DEN: huh huh
11 YOP: %%↑each %population should (0.2) %might- stick% to (.)
   yop  %---4---> line 12
   yop   %looks u%pper right                %shoulder move%ment
12      its: own cultures% %(0.2)% and [differences
   yop  -----------4-------% %looks %down
13 DEN:                                 [oh yeah
14 YOP: that %what makes us% (0.5)
   yop         %looks twds low%er right
```

Extract 11 Omitted Lines

1 AYA: **Okay انـا ثـلاثـة وعشرون عمري**
umri ishrin-wa-salasa-ene ((i am 23 years old))
2 **(1.1)**
3 AYA: **Did [i-t did i say it(.) correct↑**
4 SAN: **[huh hum**
5 **(0.7)**
6 SAN: **↑yes i- it is ↑correct (.) but you say**
7 **انـا عمري ثـلاثـة وعشرون=**
Asrune wa salasa umri ene ((i am 23 years old))
8 AYA: **ثـلاثـة وعشرون**
Asrune selese ((23 years old))
9 SAN: **ثـلاثـة وعشرون you know**
Asrune selese ((23 years old))
10 AYA: **انـا عمري ثـلاثـة وعشرون**
Asrune selese umri ene ((i am 23 years old))
11 AYA: **انـا عمري انـا عمري ثـلاثـة وعشرون**
Asrune ve selese umri ene umri ene
((i am 23 years old))
12 SAN: **↑yes correc[t**
13 AYA: **[and انـا من تـركيـا**
turkiye min ene ((i am from turkiye))
14 **(1.2)**
15 SAN: **↑$nice$**
16 AYA: **heh (0.3) $i get (.) a littl:e (.) ex↑cited now (0.4)**
17 **$hhh nerv- n↑ervo[us$ ehe**
18 SAN: **[((inaudible))**
19 AYA: **↑i:i (.) forgot (.) the (.) the v-oc->a the< words**
20 SAN: **(0.4) its ↑okay (0.3) i will say it in ↑arabic i will**
21 **↑introduce myself just a little**
22 AYA: **↑Ok::[ay**
23 SAN: **[errm**
24 AYA: **i wonder your ↑arabic**
25 **(1.1)**
26 SAN: **سنة وعشرون ثـلاثـة انـا عمري]Ω انـا اسمي سيـريـن**
Sene ve asrune selese umri ene san ismi ene
((i am 23 years old – my name is san))
27 **(1.5)**
28 AYA: **سنة huh**
Sene ((year))
29 SAN: **سنة means years=**
Sene ((year))
30 AYA: **=years (.) we have to:(.)**
31 SAN: **yeah**
32 AYA: **put i:t o:n the (.) err.(0.2) end of the ↑sentence**
33 SAN: **yes yes انـا من تـونـس**
tunisia min ene ((i am from tunisia))
34 AYA: **انـا من تـونـس (.) you are from ↑tunisia (0.3) an::d (.)**
tunus min ene ((i am from tunisia))
35 SAN: **yes**
36 AYA: **can you speak in ↑your (.) mother tongue (.) ↑arabic?**
37 **(0.5)**

38 SAN: ↑Ok:ay, i will (.) but you notice it's not very ↑different
39 Okay↑ انا من تونس انا عمري ٢٣ انا سيرين
tunus min ene, 23 umri, san ene
((i am san, 23 years old, i am from tunisia))
40 AYA: an::d (.) instead انا من تونس
tunus min ene ((i am from tunisia))
41 you said انا من تونس (.) ↑right?
tunus min ene ((i am from tunisia))
42 SAN: و و و means it's like and (.) and (.) and=
Ve ve ve (('and'))
43 AYA: =↑and err. okay (.) like a ↑collocation.
44 SAN: انا (inaudible)) i am from tunisia (.) و (0.3) you know و
ene ve ve
((me-i)) ((and)) ((and))
45 SAN: ↑right?
46 AYA: ↑yes
47 SAN: وانا من تونس
tunus min vee ne ((and i am from tunisia))

Extract 15-Omitted Lines

1 (3.2)
2 NIR: in ↑english for example they are adding (.) >at the<
3 beginning of (.) the sentence of the (.) ↑word
4 (0.3) [they are
5 BAC: [uh huh
6 NIR: adding some (0.2) prepositions (.) or >something like that<
7 BAC: >hum hum<
8 NIR: >↑at the beginning< (0.5) of the ↑word (.) BUT we are
9 comBINING (.) err
10 (0.8)
11 NIR: words (0.2) at the ↑end >of the< (.) ↑word
12 (0.5)
13 BAC: <Oh>
14 NIR: we are ↑combining to (0.4) them↓ to each other
15 BAC: ↑OKAY >give me an ↑example< i mean give me err (.)
16 ↑turkish verb (.) a<nd> err (0.2) in the preSENT ↑>of
17 course< (0.3) >and then< err (0.6) ~conjugate it~ <to> a
18 (0.3) simple ↑PAST

E. ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL / ETIK KURUL ONAYI

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY
T: +90 312 210 22 91
F: +90 312 210 79 59
ueam@metu.edu.tr
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 /

14 OCAK 2022

Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr.Hale Işık GÜLER

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Betül ÇİMENLİ'nin "A Conversation Analytic Study into Multicultural Virtual Exchanges" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **0012-ODTUİAEK-2022** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY
İAEK Başkan

F. CURRICULUM VITAE

Betül ÇİMENLİ OLCARS
Research Assistant
Bartin University
Department of English Language Teaching

ORCID ID:
Email:

Education

PhD 2018-	Middle East Technical University (METU) Graduate School of Social Sciences **English Language Teaching (Language Studies Track)**
M.A 2014-2017	Hacettepe University, Türkiye Institute of Educational Science Faculty of Education **English Language Teaching** MA thesis on "Rolling the Ball Back: Topic Maintenance in Computer Mediated English as a Lingua Franca Interactions"
B.A February 2013-June 2013	Karkonoska Państwowa Szkoła Wyższa, Poland Faculty of Education **English Language Teaching** **Erasmus Program - Exchange Student**
B.A 2008-2013	Hacettepe University, Türkiye Faculty of Education **English Language Teaching**

Work Experience

October 2022-October 2023	**Visiting Researcher** Applied Linguistics & Communication Newcastle University, UK
February 2018-	**Research Assistant** Department of English Language Teaching Bartın University, Türkiye
September 2014-February 2018	**Language Instructor** University of Turkish Aeronautical Association, Türkiye

September 2013-June 2014	**Language Instructor and Coordinator** English Tunes Language School, Türkiye	

Courses Taught

2023 Course Title:	*Teaching Assistant* Spoken Interaction in Language Learning and Testing Contexts	(Newcastle University Applied Linguistics and Communication with Prof. Seedhouse)
2021 Course Title:	*Main Lecturer* Erasmus + Language Course	(Bartın University, Continuing Education Research and Application Centre)
2013-2018 Course Title:	*Main Lecturer* English Preparatory Program	(UTAA, Department of Foreign Languages)
2016-2017 Course Title:	*Main Lecturer* Academic Writing Skills	(UTAA, Department of Flight Training)
2016-2017 Course Title:	*Main Lecturer* Academic Presentation Skills	(UTAA, Department of Computer Engineering)

Editorial, Reviewer and Consultant Posts

2018-	Language Reviewer	Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education (BUEFAD)
2018-	Language Reviewer	Bartın University Academic Writing Centre

Publications

Hırçın-Çoban, M. & **Çimenli, B.** (2022). Collaborative turn construction in paired speaking tests across different proficiency levels. *Classroom Discourse*. https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2022.2090397

Çimenli, B., Sert, O. & Jenks, C. (2022). Topic maintenance in video-mediated virtual exchanges: Rolling the ball back in L2 interactions. *System*, 108, 1-21, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102834

Çimenli, B. & Akdoğdu, E., (2020). The relation between stereotyped thoughts and self-efficacy beliefs related to a foreign language in a

higher education context. Academy Journal of Educational Sciences, 4(2), 87-92. http://dx.doi.org/10.31805/acjes.811004

Köse, N., Civan, İ., **Çimenli, B**. Kuru-Gönen, İ., Şentürk, B. Köroğlu, M. & Tovar, E. (2020). English language MOOC to improve speaking skills: A needs assessment study. In Pixel (Ed.). 13th Innovation in Language Learning Conference: Virtual edition (pp. 56-61). Florence/ Italy

Çimenli, B. & Hırçın Çoban, M. (2019). Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Self-Regulated Learning Strategies of Prep School Students and Their Relation with Language Proficiency Levels. *Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education), 8*(3), 1072-1087.

Çimenli, B. & Sert, O. (2017). Orientations to Linguistic Form in Meaning and Fluency Contexts in a Turkish as a Foreign Language Classroom. In G. Schwab, S. Hoffmann, & A. Schšn (Eds.). Interaktion im Fremdsprachenunterricht: BeitrŠge aus der empirischen Forschung MŸnster: LIT Verlag.

Çimenli, B. (2015). On pronunciation teaching and semiotics. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 199, 634 – 640.

Demir, A., Yurtsever, A., **Çimenli, B.** (2015). The relationship between tertiary level EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their willingness to use communicative activities in speaking. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 199, 613 – 619.

Conference Presentations

56th BAAL Conference 2023 (British Association for Applied Linguistics Conference), York/the UK/23-25 August 2023, with Dr. Müge Satar and Prof. Dr. Olcay Sert

Title: Off-task topic development during side sequences in Virtual Exchange via videoconferencing

ICCA 2023 (International Conference on Conversation Analysis), Brisbane/Australia/ 26 June–2 July 2023

Title: A Conversation Analytic Investigation of Screen-based Activities in Establishing Mutual Understanding in Multicultural Virtual Exchanges **(*Supported by TUBITAK 2224-A Support Program for Participating in Scientific Activities Abroad*)**

AILA 2021 (World Congress of Applied Linguistics)**,** Groningen/The Netherlands/ 9-14 August 2021

Title: A Conversation Analysis Inspired Investigation of Stylistic Variation (A Focused Multimodal Presentation) **(*Supported by AILA Solidarity Program for Young Researchers*)**

34. Ulusal Dilbilim Kurultayı (National Linguistics Congress), Online, 29-30 April 2021, Roundtable with Eröz, B., Mısır, H., Özbakış, Ö., Erdoğan-Öztürk, Y.

Roundtable Title: Uygulayıcı Topluluklar'da Bireysel ve Grup Kimliği Oluşumunun Farklı Yöntemlerle Toplum Dilbilimsel Olarak İncelenmesi (Social Linguistic Analysis of Individual and Group Identity Formation in Community of Practices (CoP) with Different Methods)

Paper Title: Bir Uygulayıcı Topluluk Eylemi Olarak Dedikodunun Konuşma Çözümlemesi

Yöntemiyle İncelemesi (A Conversation Analytic Investigation of Gossip as a Community of Practice in Dyadic Conversation)

2nd ILTERG (International Language Teacher Education Research Group) Conference, Online, 16 October, 2020, with Özbek Gürbüz, N.

Title: Investigation of short term directed motivational currents in freshman students in ELT departments.

5th International Scientific Research E-Congress (IBAD), Online. 1-2 September, 2020, with Civan, İ., Köse, N., & Tovar, E.

Title: Speak English- MOOC- English language MOOC to improve speaking skills an Erasmus+ strategic partnership project for adult education [Oral Presentation].

13th Innovation in Language Learning Conference, Online, 12 November 2020, with Köse, N., Civan, İ., **Çimenli, B.** Kuru-Gönen, İ., Şentürk, B. Köroğlu, M. & Tovar, E.

Title: English language MOOC to improve speaking skills: A needs assessment study [Oral Presentation].

FLE Joint Conference in Collaboration with IATEFL TTEdSIG and TESOL Türkiye, Ankara/Türkiye/TOBB University, 21-22 June 2019

Title: The Relation between Stereotyped Thoughts and Self-Efficacy Beliefs of a Foreign Language in a Higher Education Context

ICOP-L2 2019, Västerås/Sweden/Mälardalen University, 29-31 May 2019

Title: Trouble Resolution in Understanding in Online Dyadic Conversations

ICRAL 2018, Malatya/Türkiye/İnönü University, 11-12 October 2018

Title: A Conversation Analytic View of Topic Maintenance in Online Dyadic Interactions

EDUCCON 2017, Ankara/Türkiye/Ankara University, 7-8 December 2017 (Invited Speaker)

Title: Lesson Study Practice in English Language Preparatory Program (UTAA)

ICOP-L2 2017, Neutchatel/Switzerland/University of Neuchatel, 18-20 January 2017
Title: Rolling the Ball Back: Maintaining Progressivity and Topic Development in Online ELF Interactions **(*Supported by TUBITAK 2224-A Support Program for Participating in Scientific Activities Abroad*)**

GlobELT 2015, Antalya/Türkiye/Hacettepe University, 17-19 April 2015
Titles: 1. On Pronunciation Teaching and Semiotics
2. The Relationship between Tertiary Level EFL Teachers' Self-Efficacy and Their Willingness to Use Communicative Activities in Speaking

SIAL Graduate Conference, Ankara/Türkiye/Hacettepe University, 8 April 2015
Title: Orientations to Form in a Meaning and Fluency Context in a TFL Classroom

SILL Conference, Mersin/Türkiye/Çağ University, 19 September 2015
Title: Motivation: from Past to the Future

Seminars/Workshops
Doing multi-language/cross-cultural studies by using CA, by Tanya Stivers, ICCA 2023 Pre-Conference Workshops, University of Brisbane, 27 June 2023, Brisbane, Australia

Advances in multimodality, by Lorenza Mondada, ICCA 2023 Pre-Conference Workshops, University of Brisbane, 26 June 2023, Brisbane, Australia

LANSI Workshop on Longitudinal CA, by Simona Pekarek Doehler, Organized by Teachers College, Colombia University, Online, 14 January 2022, Participant

Analysing Classroom Interaction, by Mryte Gosen, Elisa Kupers, Naomi de Ruiter, Jan-Willem Strijbos, Karianne Skovholt, Hanna De Jeagler, and Marjin van Dijk, University of Groningen Summer School, The Netherlands, Online, 5-9 July 2021, Participant

Exploring Social Interaction (ESI), Talks and workshops, organized by Johannes Wagner, Denmark, Online, 23-25 June 2021, Participant

Conversation Analysis and Social Work Conference, by David Wilkins, Elisabeth Stokoe, Mark Alexander, Marie Flinkfeldt, Clara Iversen, Sabine Jorgensen, Steve Kirkwood, Eric Laurier, Richard Martin, David Monterio, Eve Mullins, Jon Symonds, Joe Webb, Online, 15 December 2020, Participant

Use of Conversation Analysis Methodology to Analyse Social Interaction: A Case of Kindergarten Interaction (workshop), by Ufuk Girgin, Yasemin Acar, Erdem Akbaş, Emine Yavuz, Almila

Elif Altan, Murat Boran, Dürdane Tor, and Gürkan Moralı, Online, ILTERG 2 Conference, 17 October 2020, Participant

ZOSMIA 2020, by Lorenza Mondada, Anja Stukenbrock, Pentti Haddington, Jürgen Streek, Heiko Hausendorf, Leelo Keevalik, Online, Zurich Online School in Multimodal Interaction Analysis, 9-12 November 2020, Participant

Pre-Conference workshops, by Silvia Kunitz, Niina Lija, Evelyn Berger, Klara Skogmyr Marian, and Ufuk Balaman. Västerås/Sweden/ Mälardalen University, 29 May 2019, Participant

Üniversitelerde İngilizcenin Eğitim Dili Olarak Kullanılması: Bütüncül Bir Yaklaşım (Using English as a Medium of Instruction at Universities: A Holistic Approach), National Symposium, Ankara/Türkiye/Middle East Technical University (METU), 19 April 2019, Participant

Creative Teaching Methods in the Field of Culture, International Staff Week, Jakobstad, Finland, Novia University of Applied Sciences, 25-29 March 2019, Participant **(*Supported by European Union in scope of Erasmus + Staff Mobility Program*)**

Two-day Advanced CA workshop, by Paul Drew and Laura Thompson, Loughborough/ United Kingdom/Loughborough University, 2-3 February 2017, Participant

Pre-Conference workshops, by Johannes Wagner, Evelyn Berger, and Olcay Sert. Neuchatel/Switzerland/University of Neuchatel, ICOP-L2 Conference, 18 January 2017, Participant

Pre-Conference workshops, by Soren Eskildsen, Evelyn Berger, Olcay Sert, Adam Brandt and Hatice Ergül. Ankara/Türkiye/Hacettepe University, SIAL Conference, 8 April 2015, Participant

<u>Projects</u>

Digital Transformation of Language Teacher Education with Data-Informed Evidence (DigiLTE)(Veriye Dayalı Kanıtlarla Dil Öğretmeni Eğitiminin Dijital Dönüşümü), Erasmus + Cooperation partnerships in higher education (KA220-HED), (Project Number: 2023-2-TR01-KA220-HED-000184847), 2024-(to be completed in 2026), Researcher

Learn the Language of Science through Games: Science and English Education with Content-Integrated Language Learning Method *(Bilimin Dilini Oyunlarla Öğren: İçerikle Entegre Edilmiş Dil Öğrenimi Yöntemiyle Fen ve İngilizce Eğitimi),* BAP, (Project number: 2021-SOS-A-003), 2021-(to be completed in 2022), Researcher

Developing a New In-Service Training Framework for Teaching Staff in English-Speaking Universities *(Eğitim Dili Ingilizce Olan*

Universitelerde Öğretim Elemanlarına Yönelik Yeni Bir Hizmet İçi Eğitim Çerçevesi Geliştirilmesi), TÜBİTAK 1001, (Project number: 121K227), 2021-(to be completed in 2024), Researcher & Trainer

Digitizing Pedagogical Task Design for Interactional Competence (DIGITAK4IC), Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Higher Education, Digital Education Readiness, (KA226) (Project Number: 2020-1-TR01-KA226-HE-098066, 2021)- (completed in 2022), Researcher

Speak English- MOOC- English Language MOOC to Improve Speaking Skills, Erasmus + Strategic Partnership for Adult Education (KA2) (Project number: 2019-1-TR01-KA204-074155), 2019- (completed in 2022), Researcher

Grants/Awards

2023	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBITAK) 2224/A Support Program for Participating in Scientific Activities Abroad
2023	International Conference on Conversation Analysis (ICCA) 2023 Conference Award
2023	Comité International Permanent des Linguistes (CIPL) Travel Award for PhD students
2022	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBITAK) 2214-A
2023	International Research Fellowship Programme for PhD Students
2021	AILA Solidarity Award- AILA 2020 Congress
2019	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) 2211/A General Domestic PhD Scholarship
2017	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBITAK) 2224/A Support Program for Participating in Scientific Activities Abroad

G. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

VİDEO ARACILI SANAL DEĞİŞİMLERDE KONU YÖNETİMİNDE UYUM VE YAKINLIK KURMA KAYNAKLARINI İNCELEYEN BİR KONUŞMA ÇÖZÜMLEMESI ARAŞTIRMASI

GİRİŞ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye ve Tunus'tan ikinci dil (L2) konuşmacıları arasındaki ulus ötesi sanal değişimleri incelemektedir. Sanal Değişim (SD) bağlamında, kültürlerarası iletişim ve küresel vatandaşlık genel teması etrafında geliştirilen ortak görevler üzerinden konu yönetiminde kullanılan uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmanın Arka Planı

Bu çalışma, sanal değişim (SD) ortamlarında gerçekleştirilen eşzamanlı video tabanlı görev temelli etkileşimlerde, katılımcıların uyum (alignment) ve yakınlık kurma (affiliation) süreçlerini konu geliştirme bağlamında nasıl yönettiklerini incelemektedir. SD, farklı dilsel ve kültürel geçmişe sahip öğrencileri çevrim içi ortamda bir araya getirerek özgün dil kullanımına olanak tanıyan bir etkileşim alanı sunar. Bu tür ortamlarda, katılımcılar arasında ortaklık eksikliği beklenebilir; ancak bu durum, etkileşimsel yeterlik (interactional competence, EY) açısından önemli öğrenme fırsatları doğurur. Özellikle farklı sosyal, politik ve dilsel normlar arasında köprü kurmak için katılımcıların konu yönetimi, uyum ve yakınlık gibi etkileşimsel kaynakları aktif biçimde birlikte inşa etmeleri gerekir.

Konuşma çözümlemesi (Conversation Analysis - KÇ) yöntemi, konuların ve görevlerin nasıl başlatıldığı, sürdürüldüğü ve sonlandırıldığına odaklanarak bu etkileşimleri mikro düzeyde inceleme olanağı sunar. Konu, KÇ kapsamında sabit bir birim değil, etkileşimle inşa edilen bir olgudur. Konular görevlerin bir parçası olabilir, ancak görevle aynı şey değildir. Görevler önceden belirlenmiş hedeflere yöneliktir; konular ise konuşma sırasında doğal biçimde ortaya çıkabilir. Bu çalışma, görev-temelli dil öğretiminde "görev-olarak-süreç" yaklaşımını benimseyerek, görevlerin sınıf içi bağlamda nasıl etkileşimsel olarak gerçekleştirildiğini inceler.

Ayrıca çalışma, çevrim içi etkileşimlerde genellikle göz ardı edilen "görev dışı konuşma"yı da ele alır. Bu tür konuşmalar, bireysel kimlik inşası, sosyal uyum ve L2 etkileşimsel yeterliğin gelişimi açısından önemli olabilir. Öğrenciler arasında bağ kurma, gerginlik azaltma veya kişisel ilgi paylaşımı gibi işlevleri yerine getiren görev dışı konuşmalar, pedagojik açıdan da dikkate değerdir.

Uyum, yapı bakımından konuşmanın sürdürülmesini sağlar; uygun dönüş alma, sıra düzenine uyma gibi öğeleri kapsar. Yakınlık ise duygusal düzeyde destek, empati ya da ortaklık sergilemeyi içerir. Bu iki süreç birbirinden ayrı fakat birbirini tamamlayan işlevlerdir. Ayrıca uyum ve yakınlık kurma, sadece işbirliğine değil, aynı zamanda bireysel ajans ve özerkliğin de etkileşim içinde nasıl ortaya çıktığını gösterir. Katılımcılar, kendi ifadelerini yapılandırırken diğerlerini yanıt vermeye yönlendirerek etkileşim üzerinde etkili olurlar.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, SD ortamlarında etkileşimsel yeterliğin nasıl somutlaştığını, öğrencilerin hem sözel hem de bedensel kaynakları nasıl kullandıklarını inceleyerek açığa çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu tür etkileşimler, görev-temelli dijital dil öğrenme ortamlarında pedagojik açıdan önemli ipuçları sunmaktadır.

Araştırmanın Amacı ve Önemi

Bu çalışma, video aracılı sanal değişim (SD) etkileşimlerinde katılımcıların konuşmaları nasıl yönettiklerini sözlü ve sözlü olmayan kaynaklar aracılığıyla incelemek için Konuşma Analizi (KÇ) yöntemini kullanmaktadır.

Özellikle Orta Doğu ve Kuzey Afrika gibi yeterince temsil edilmeyen bölgelerdeki etkileşimlere odaklanarak, SD'de konuşmanın ardışık ve çok kipli düzenlenişi üzerine yapılan araştırmalardaki boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Jestler, bakışlar ve bedensel eylemler gibi söz dışı kiplerin anlam inşasındaki rolünü vurgulayan çalışma, katılımcıların konu geliştirme sürecinde uyum ve yakınlık kurma yollarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu etkileşimsel uygulamalar, öğrencilerin dijital ortamlarda konuşmaları bağımsız bir şekilde sürdürebilmelerini sağlar ve öğretim bağlamlarında modellenebilir niteliktedir. Çalışma, SD pedagojisine katkı sunarak yapılandırılmış görevlerin yanında anlık ve doğal etkileşim fırsatlarının da sağlanmasının, ikinci dil etkileşimsel yeterliğini (L2 EY) geliştirmek açısından önemli olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Araştırma Soruları

Bu çalışma, hem görev içi hem de görev dışı etkileşimlere odaklanarak, bu konuşma bağlamlarında ortaya çıkan ortak ve özgül kaynakları belirlemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu kapsamda aşağıdaki iki alt araştırma sorusu ele alınmaktadır:

1. Video aracılı sanal değişimlerde görev içi konu yönetimi sırasında kullanılan uyum ve yakınlık kaynakları nelerdir?

Birinci araştırma sorusu, katılımcıların görev odaklı konuşmalar sırasında uyum ve yakınlık kurmak amacıyla başvurdukları etkileşimsel kaynakları belirlemeye odaklanmaktadır. Satır satır mikro analiz yoluyla, öğrencilerin hem görevleri birlikte nasıl yönettikleri hem de sosyal bağları nasıl beslediklerini incelenmektedir.

2. Video aracılı sanal değişimlerde görev dışı konu yönetimi sırasında kullanılan uyum ve yakınlık kaynakları nelerdir?

İkinci araştırma sorusu, görev dışı konuşmalar sırasında kullanılan uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarını incelemektedir. Bu tür konuşmalarda odak, görev tamamlamaktan ziyade daha gayri resmî ve sosyal etkileşimlere kaymaktadır. Bu etkileşimlerin analiz edilmesiyle, yakınlığın görev bağlamının ötesinde nasıl sürdürüldüğü ve sosyal konuşmaların SD içindeki

rolü ortaya konmaktadır. Bu durum, söz konusu kaynakların ikinci dil etkileşimsel yeterliğinin (L2 EY) birer bileşeni olabileceğini göstermektedir.

Temel Kavramların Tanımları

Bu bölüm, çalışmanın temel kavramlarını tanımlayarak kullanılan terimlerin kuramsal çerçeve içerisindeki anlamlarını açıklamaktadır. Terimlerin çoğu alana özgü olup, farklı disiplinlerdeki kullanımlardan anlam bakımından farklılık gösterebilir. Çalışma bağlamında *görev*, *konu*, *konu yönetimi*, *konuyu sürdürme*, *uyum*, *yakınlık*, *uyumsuzluk* ve *yakınlık eksikliği* gibi kavramlar detaylandırılmaktadır.

Görev (Task), hem pedagojik olarak önceden tasarlanmış bir yapı hem de öğrencilerin görev sürecinde bu yapıya verdikleri etkileşimsel yanıtlar yoluyla şekillenen bir süreç olarak ele alınır. *Konu* ise sınırları belirsiz ve sıklıkla iç içe geçen bir yapıdadır. *Konu yönetimi* terimi, bir konunun başlatılması, sürdürülmesi, değiştirilmesi ve sonlandırılmasını kapsayan çok katmanlı bir süreci ifade eder ve bu çalışmada çizgisel bir ilerlemeyi ima eden "konu gelişimi" terimi yerine tercih edilmiştir. Konuyu sürdürme, katılımcıların ortak iş birliğiyle bir konunun konuşma süresince geçerliliğini koruma sürecidir. *Uyum*, etkileşimsel olarak yapısal düzeyde bir iş birliğini ifade ederken, *yakınlık* duygusal ve değerlendirme düzeyinde bir destek gösterimidir. Öte yandan *uyumsuzluk*, beklenen etkileşim akışından sapmayı, *yakınlık eksikliği* ise duygusal ya da değerlendirme desteğinin verilmemesini belirtir. Görev içi (on-task) etkileşimler, görev tasarımında belirlenmiş konular etrafında gerçekleşirken, görev dışı (off-task) etkileşimler, katılımcılar tarafından spontane olarak başlatılan ve görevle doğrudan ilişkili olmayan, genellikle kişisel ya da sosyal içerikli konuşmaları kapsar. Bu ayrım, görev-tabanlı sanal değişim bağlamında etkileşimin çok yönlü doğasına işaret eder ve görev-as-plan ile görev-as-süreç arasındaki farklılıklara dikkat çeker.

LITERATÜR TARAMASI

Sanal değişim (SD) uygulamaları, öğrenenlere ek dillerde anlamlı etkileşimlerde bulunma fırsatları sunarak hem dil öğrenimini hem de

kültürlerarası iletişimi teşvik eder. SD, farklı eğitim bağlamlarında uygulanmakta ve dil yeterliği, dijital okuryazarlık, kültürlerarası yeterlik (ICC) ve iş birliğine dayalı öğrenme gibi birçok alanda faydaları olduğuna dair kapsamlı araştırmalar yapılmaktadır. Bu çeviri, video aracılı görev temelli SD etkileşimlerinde uyum (alignment), yakınlık (affiliation) ve konu yönetimi gibi etkileşimsel uygulamaların temel boyutlarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Konuşma Çözümlemesi (KÇ) ile şekillenen araştırmalar, teknolojinin eğitim bağlamlarındaki etkileşim dinamiklerini dönüştürücü bir rol oynadığını vurgular. Video aracılı etkileşimler, katılımcıların bakış, jest, duruş ve yüz ifadeleri gibi bedensel kaynakları kullanmalarına olanak tanıdığı için metin tabanlı etkileşimlerden önemli ölçüde farklıdır. Ancak bu etkileşimler, ekran düzeni, gecikme süresi ve sınırlı görsel alan gibi teknolojik olanaklar ve kısıtlamalar tarafından da şekillendirilir. Bu unsurlar, uyum, yakınlık ve öznel karşılıklılığı (intersubjectivity) etkileyerek karşılıklı anlamanın korunması için açık etkileşimsel çaba gerektirir.

Araştırmalar, eşzamanlı video aracılı etkileşimlerin öğrencileri etkili şekilde iş birliği yapmaya, çok modlu kaynakları kullanmaya ve sosyal açıdan duyarlı etkileşimsel uygulamalara yönlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Örneğin, öğrenciler eksik bedensel ipuçlarını telafi etmek için tonlama özellikleri, görsel-sözel tekrarlar ve dijital araçlardan yararlanırlar. Bu tür uygulamalar, özellikle ikinci dil (L2) öğrenenler için önemlidir; çünkü sınırlı ipuçları uyumsuzluklara ya da konu kapanışlarının farkında olmadan gerçekleşmesine neden olabilir.

KÇ çerçevesinde, uyum ve yakınlık, alıcının davranışlarını açıklayan birbirine bağlı ama ayrı düzeylerde işleyen iki kavramdır. Uyum, katılımcılar arasında sürece dair iş birliğini tanımlar ve süregelen etkileşimlerin yapısal ve sıralı düzenlenmesini kolaylaştırır. "Hı hı" gibi minimal yanıt işaretleri ya da baş sallamak gibi tepkiler, konuşan-alıcı rol dengesini koruyarak uzun konuşma haklarının sürdürülmesini sağlar. Uyumsuzluk ise bu yapısal düzeni sekteye uğratır ve genellikle açıklama ya da müzakere gereksinimini yansıtır.

Yakınlık ise daha çok duygusal ve sosyal düzeyde işler. Dayanışma, empati ya da karşılıklı anlama gibi unsurları yansıtan eylemleri içerir. Yakınlık içeren

tepkiler kişilerarası bağı güçlendirir ve SD bağlamında ilişkisel uyumu destekler. Uyum ve yakınlık arasındaki etkileşim, katılımcıların iletişimsel zorluklarla başa çıkabilme becerilerini doğrudan etkiler.

Konu yönetimi, etkileşimsel yeterliğin önemli bir bileşenidir ve bir konunun başlatılması, sürdürülmesi, değiştirilmesi ve sonlandırılması süreçlerini kapsar. SD bağlamında, konular ortak hedefler ve etkileşimsel katkılar doğrultusunda birlikte inşa edilir. Katılımcılar, önceki eylemleri gelecek eylemlerle ilişkilendirerek konu yönetimini yapısal bir biçimde yürütürler.

SD etkileşimlerinde konu yönetimi yalnızca görev odaklı söylemlerle sınırlı kalmaz; görev dışı konuşmalar da önemli bir rol oynar. Görev dışı konuşmalar, asıl etkinlikten bağımsız, genellikle kişisel ya da sosyal nitelikli konulara odaklanır ve ilişki kurma, gerginliği azaltma ve sosyal bağları güçlendirme gibi işlevlere hizmet eder. Görev hedeflerinden sapma gibi görünse de bu tür konuşmalar, katılımcılar arasında daha geniş ilişkisel dinamiklere katkı sağlar ve iş birliğine dayalı öğrenmeyi destekler. Görev dışı konuşmalar üzerine yapılan araştırmalar, bu etkileşimlerin karmaşık yapısını vurgulamakta ve öğrenenlerin bu konuşmaları nasıl algıladığı ve yönettiğine dair anlayışın geliştirilmesi gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Eğitmenler görev dışı davranışları çoğu zaman ilgisiz olarak değerlendirse de, öğrenciler bu etkileşimleri bağlamsal anlamı güçlendiren ve sosyal ilişkileri geliştiren bir araç olarak görmektedir.

Bu bulguların, SD bağlamında öğretmen eğitimi ve öğretim uygulamaları açısından önemli yansımaları vardır. Öğretmenlerin, sınıf içi etkileşimlerin incelikli doğasını ve özellikle görev içi ve görev dışı davranışlar arasındaki etkileşimi fark etmeleri önemlidir. Uyum, yakınlık ve konu yönetimi süreçlerini anlamak, anlamlı katılımı ve kültürlerarası öğrenmeyi destekleyen etkili SD etkinlikleri tasarlamalarını sağlayabilir. Ayrıca, farklı dijital araçların ve çok modlu kaynakların SD ortamlarına entegre edilmesi, öğrencilerin iletişimsel zorlukları aşmalarını ve etkileşimsel yeterliklerini geliştirmelerini kolaylaştırabilir. Görev tasarımı ve uygulama biçimleri, katılımcılar arasındaki etkileşimleri şekillendirmede ve iş birliğine dayalı bilgi inşasını desteklemede belirleyici bir rol oynar.

Sonuç olarak, sanal değişim ortamları, özgün dil kullanımı ve kültürlerarası iletişim için değerli fırsatlar sunarken, katılımcılara özel zorluklar ve sorumluluklar da yükler. Bu etkileşimsel süreçlerin KÇ perspektifiyle incelenmesi, SD bağlamında etkili iletişim için uyum, yakınlık ve konu yönetiminin önemini vurgular. Bu bulgular, dijital ortamda ikinci dil etkileşimsel yeterliğini daha derinlemesine anlamaya katkıda bulunarak, ileride yapılacak araştırmalar ve pedagojik uygulamalar için sağlam bir temel sunar.

YÖNTEM

Bu çalışma, Digitask4IC projesinin üç aşamasından (Görev Tasarımı, Görev Uygulaması ve Yansıtma) elde edilen 400 saati aşkın veriye dayanmakla birlikte, yalnızca ikinci aşama olan "görev uygulaması" sürecine odaklanmaktadır. Araştırma süreci daha önce 3.4 numaralı bölümde detaylı şekilde açıklandığı için bu bölümde yalnızca görev uygulama aşamasındaki veri toplama yöntemleri ele alınmıştır.

Görev uygulama aşamasında, Türkiye ve Tunus'tan öğrencilerden oluşan ikili gruplar, daha önce Türkiye, Avusturya ve İspanya'daki öğrenciler tarafından ortaklaşa tasarlanan görevleri tamamlamak üzere Zoom üzerinden beş kez bir araya gelmiştir. Bu eşzamanlı görüşmeler sırasında katılımcılar, görevlerine Digitask4IC platformu üzerinden erişmiş ve görevleri tamamlamışlardır. Ekran faaliyetleri Screencast-o-Matic (yeni adıyla Screenpal) adlı yazılımla kaydedilmiş; videolar katılımcılar tarafından yüklenmiş ve araştırmacılar tarafından Google Drive'a aktarılmıştır. Katılımcılar, veri toplamaya başlamadan önce araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanmış detaylı bir bilgilendirme listesi ve video ile yönlendirilmiştir. Ayrıca Digitask web uygulaması, veri toplama süreci öncesinde kapsamlı testlerden geçirilmiş ve çeşitli eğitimciler tarafından değerlendirilmiştir.

Çalışmada 30 ikili (dyad), yani toplamda 60 katılımcı üç kümeye (her biri 10 ikiliden oluşan) ayrılmıştır. Ancak, bazı ikililerin düzensiz ya da eksik veri sunmaları nedeniyle veriler dışlanmıştır. Örneğin, 1. kümeden ikili 2; 2.

kümeden 15, 20 ve 21; 3. kümeden ise ikili 25 yeterli kayıt sunamadığı için analiz dışı bırakılmıştır. Ayrıca bazı teknik sorunlar nedeniyle bazı kayıtlar eksik ya da kullanılamaz durumdadır. Sonuç olarak yaklaşık 102 saatlik kullanılabilir veri elde edilmiştir. Ancak bu miktar, tek bir doktora çalışması için fazla olduğu için yalnızca 3. kümeden elde edilen veriler çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Bu küme, en az veri kaybının yaşandığı ve görev döngüsünü tamamlayan ikililerin çoğunlukta olduğu küme olması nedeniyle seçilmiştir. 3. kümeden elde edilen 39.34 saatlik video-veri, daha derinlemesine niteliksel analiz için yeterli ve dengeli bir veri seti sunmuştur. 3. kümenin verilerinin daha eksiksiz ve düzenli olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu sebeple sadece bir kümeye odaklanmak, katılımcı etkileşimlerini bağlamsal olarak derinlemesine incelemek adına nitel araştırma yaklaşımıyla uyumludur. Aynı görevleri yerine getiren ikililer arasında yapılan karşılaştırmalar, bulguların güvenirliğini ve geçerliliğini artırmaktadır.

Bu bölümde daha sonra, bu veriler üzerinde kullanılan yöntem olan Konuşma Çözümlemesi (KÇ) ve veri transkripsiyon süreci ele alınmıştır. Transkripsiyon, KÇ'de yalnızca bir hazırlık adımı değil, aynı zamanda analiz sürecinin kendisidir. Jefferson (2004) transkripsiyon kuralları (söylem özellikleri için) ve Mondada (2018) kuralları (bedensel hareketler için) birlikte kullanılmıştır. Transana yazılımı, duraklamalar ve prosodik detayların zamanlamasını daha hassas belirlemek için kullanılmıştır. Ancak her transkripsiyon sürecinde olduğu gibi, bazı kararlar transkriperi etkileyebilir ve tamamen nesnel olamayabilir.

Transkriptlerde:

- Courier New fontu tercih edilmiştir.
- Sıralı satır numaraları verilmiştir.
- Bedensel hareketler ayrı satırlarda, açık renkle gösterilmiştir.
- Dil çevirileri kalın fontla eklenmiştir.

Çalışma, KÇ ilkelerine bağlı kalarak şu adımları izlemiştir:

1. Motivasyonsuz gözlem: Videolar tekrar tekrar izlenmiş, herhangi bir teori ya da araştırma sorusu olmaksızın dikkat çeken olaylar belirlenmiştir.
2. Temel ortografik transkripsiyon: Tüm veri setinin yazıya dökülmesi sağlanmıştır.

3. Fenomen belirleme: Özellikle "uyum ve yakınlık (alignment & affiliation)" gibi konular öne çıkmıştır.
4. Detaylı transkripsiyon: Seçilen bölümler detaylı şekilde transkribe edilmiştir.
5. Multimodal detaylar: Özellikle bedensel ifadeler ve ekran aktiviteleri detaylandırılmıştır.

Koleksiyon oluşturma sürecinde, veri oturumları ile diğer KÇ araştırmacılarının katkıları alınmış, analiz tekrar gözden geçirilmiş ve yaklaşık 100'den fazla alıntı (extract) seçilmiştir. Bu alıntılardan 15 tanesi tezde detaylı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Kodlama sistemi: Extract numarası, anahtar kelime, ikili numarası, katılımcı takma adları, toplantı numarası ve süresini içermektedir (örneğin: Extract 1: University (D1/Beo-Ana/M3/1.05')).

Bu transkripsiyon süreci ve koleksiyon oluşturma çalışması, çevrim içi etkileşimlerde konu sürdürme, uyum ve yakınlık gibi olguları ayrıntılı biçimde analiz etmek için sağlam bir zemin sunmaktadır. Ancak sürecin sınırlılıkları da vardır. Transkripsiyon sırasında bazı yorumlayıcı kararlar alınması zorunlu olmakta; ayrıca kayıt kalitesi ve yazılım sorunları bazı detayların eksik kalmasına neden olabilmektedir.

Etik açıdan çalışma, üniversite etik kurulundan onay alınarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılar detaylı bilgilendirme ve yazılı onam sürecinden geçirilmiş; gönüllü katılımları sağlanmıştır. Katılımcılar:

- Kendi ekran kayıtlarını yapacakları,
- Kayıtları sadece araştırmacılarla paylaşacakları,
- İstedikleri zaman projeden çekilebilecekleri,
- Kişisel bilgilerinin korunacağı,
- Verilerin akademik bir çalışmada kullanılacağı

konularında bilgilendirilmişlerdir. Gerçek isimler hiçbir aşamada kullanılmamış, ekran görüntüleri bulanıklaştırılmış, diğer tanımlayıcı veriler silinmiştir. Katılımcılar bu etkinlikleri ders kapsamında yapsa da araştırmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır. Araştırmaya katılmayanlar yine de görevleri tamamlamış ancak verileri çalışmaya dahil edilmemiştir. Toplanan tüm veriler sadece araştırma ekibinin erişebileceği şekilde, şifreli ve güvenli ortamlarda saklanmıştır. Araştırmanın amacı, katılımcıların dil

becerilerini ölçmek değil, doğal konuşma örneklerini analiz etmektir. Böylece araştırma, KÇ yöntemine uygun biçimde, katılımcıların doğal ortamda gerçekleştirdikleri çok modlu etkileşimleri analiz ederek L2 etkileşimsel yeterlilik alanına katkı sağlamayı hedeflemiştir.

BULGULAR

Video Aracılı Sanal Değişim Etkileşimlerinde Görev-İçi Konu Yönetiminde Uyum ve Yakınlık Kaynakları

Bu bölümde sunulan 1–10 numaralı kesitler, katılımcıların görev temelli konuşmalarda nasıl uyum ve yakınlık kurduklarını ve bu süreçte hangi kaynakları kullandıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Kesitler, görevlerin yerine getirilmesi sırasında hem etkileşimsel hem de pedagojik hedeflerin gerçekleştirildiğini, dijital ortamda anlamın birlikte kurulduğunu ve konuşmanın sürdürüldüğünü göstermektedir.

Kesit 1, karşılıklı onaylamalar, örneklemeler ve beden dili kullanımıyla katılımcıların nasıl uyum sağladığını gözler önüne serer. Özellikle baş sallama gibi jestlerin, çevrim içi etkileşimlerde aktif katılımı desteklemede önemli bir kaynak olduğu görülmektedir. Anlam kurulumunda tekrarlar, açıklamalar ve takip soruları da önemli rol oynamaktadır.

Kesit 2, rol yapma etkinliğinde yakınlık kurmanın yollarını sergiler. Katılımcıların yükselen tonlama ve "try-marking" ifadeleri ile etkileşim kurdukları; duygusal tutumları (affective stance) hem sözel hem jestsel yollarla aktardıkları görülür. Bu çok modlu kaynaklar, çevrim içi görevlerde sosyal uyumu korurken görev odağını sürdürmelerini sağlar.

Kesit 3, görev bağlamında mizahın, özellikle disafiliatif (yakınlığı zedeleyici) bir anın ardından nasıl yeniden yakınlık kurulmasına katkı sağladığını gösterir. "Rolling the ball back" (Çimenli, Sert & Jenks, 2022) stratejisiyle konuşmayı sürdürecek sorular sormak, ortak konuya katkıda bulunmayı ve uyumu artırmayı mümkün kılar. Paylaşılan deneyimler ve karşılıklı anlayış, yakınlığın temel yapı taşları olarak öne çıkar.

Kesit 4, onay ifadeleri, güçlü anlaşmalar ve varsayımsal ifadeler aracılığıyla katılımcıların nasıl uyum ve yakınlık sağladığını gösterir. Ayrıca, dijital göstergeler (ekran yönetimi, imleç hareketi gibi) "dijital işaret etme" (Mondada, 2014) örnekleri olarak görev odaklı açıklamalara katkıda bulunur. Beden diliyle desteklenen bu açıklamalar, katılımcılar arasında güçlü bir yakınlık oluşumunu destekler.

Kesit 5, uyumun sürdürüldüğü ancak yakınlığın eksik kaldığı bir etkileşim örneğidir. Katılımcılar görevle ilgili ifadeleri açıklar, anlamaya çalışır ancak kişisel görüş paylaşımı ve duygusal etkileşim zayıftır. Bu durum, sadece yapısal uyumun yeterli olmadığını, yakınlık için duygusal birlikteliğin de gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Kesit 6, başlangıçtaki disafiliatif durumun nasıl yönetildiğini ve yeniden nasıl yakınlık kurulduğunu ortaya koyar. Sessizlikler, duraksamalar, kafa hareketleri ve bakış yönlendirmeleriyle desteklenen bu süreç, "bedensel uyum" (embodied alignment) kavramıyla açıklanabilir. Epistemik konumlanmalar ve tutum değişimleri, yüz kaybını önleyerek taraflar arasında yeniden yakınlık kurulmasına olanak tanır.

Kesit 7, katılımcıların sosyal açıdan hassas bir konuya dair yüzeysel düzeyde uyum ve yakınlık sergilediklerini gösterir. Belirsizlik, bilgi eksikliği ifadeleri ve kaçınma stratejileri, daha derin bir etkileşimi engeller. Bu durum, sadece göreve katılımın değil, fikir paylaşımının da yakınlık kurmada ne kadar önemli olduğunu vurgular.

Kesit 8, ortak yapı tamamlama, kapsayıcı dil kullanımı ("we"), metaforlar ve jestlerin uyum ve yakınlık kurmada etkili kaynaklar olduğunu gösterir. Katılımcıların paylaşılan anlayış geliştirmesi ve görevle ilgili fikirlerini karşılıklı olarak desteklemesi, iletişimin hem içerik hem ilişki boyutunda zenginleşmesini sağlar.

Kesit 9, daha önce yaşanan disafiliatif bir andan sonra işbirlikçi yapı tamamlama, açık uçlu sorular ve beden dili kullanımıyla yeniden uyum ve yakınlık kurulduğunu gösterir. Katılımcılar karşılıklı olarak görüşlerini geliştirir, birbirlerinin katkılarını destekler ve konuyu birlikte derinleştirir.

Kesit 10, kısa bir görev-içi sekans boyunca yüzeysel düzeyde uyum ve yakınlığın nasıl kurulduğunu gösterir. Katılımcılar arasında mizah ve ortak deneyimlerle kurulan etkileşim, akıcı bir şekilde sürdürülür. Ancak dil üretimi ve konuya derinlik kazandırma sınırlıdır; bu durum, görevin yapısal özelliklerinin katılımcıların potansiyelini sınırlayabileceğine işaret eder.

Genel olarak, görev-içi konuşmalarda uyum ve yakınlık sağlamak başarılı görev yürütümünde kritik öneme sahiptir. Bununla birlikte, görevlerin önceden yapılandırılmış olması, katılımcıların kişisel anlatı ve derinlikli fikir paylaşımı geliştirmesini sınırlayabilir. Bu da bazen güçlü yapısal uyuma rağmen yüzeysel bir sosyal bağ kurulmasına neden olabilir.

Video Aracılı Sanal Değişim Etkileşimlerinde Görev-Dışı Konu Yönetiminde Uyum ve Yakınlık Kaynakları

Bu bölümdeki kesitler, görev dışı konuşmalarda katılımcıların nasıl daha kişisel ve samimi etkileşimler kurduklarını, bu süreçte uyum ve yakınlığı nasıl oluşturduklarını ortaya koyar. Görev dışı anlar, katılımcıların kişisel hikâyelerini anlattıkları, ortak kültürel referanslarla etkileşim kurdukları ve sosyal bağlarını güçlendirdikleri önemli fırsatlar sunar.

Kesit 11, ortak dilsel ifadeler (ör. "yani") ve mizah aracılığıyla kurulan uyum ve yakınlığı örnekler. Katılımcıların Türkçeye dair farkındalıklarını mizahi bir dille paylaşmaları, dilsel ortaklığı pekiştirirken karşılıklı anlama ve dayanışmayı da güçlendirir. Jestlerle desteklenen bu süreçte, hem sözel hem beden dili kaynakları yakınlığı kuvvetlendirir.

Kesit 12, kişisel anlatılar, empatik ifadeler ve kültürel referanslar üzerinden kurulan yakınlığı ortaya koyar. Bac'ın Nir'e yönelik umut verici söylemleri, samimi bir destek örneği sunar. "İnşallah" gibi kültürel referanslar, karşılıklı aidiyet ve güven duygusu yaratır. Bu tür ifadeler, sadece duygusal yakınlık değil, aynı zamanda kültürel ortaklık da kurar.

Kesit 13, katılımcıların görevle ilgili bir konudan (linguistic landscape) kişisel bir anlatıya geçiş yaptığı ve bu geçişi mizahla desteklediği bir etkileşim örneğidir. Mizah, yakınlık kurmada etkili olurken konu değişimlerinin doğal ve akıcı bir şekilde gerçekleşmesini sağlar.

Kesit 14, ortak ilgi alanlarının keşfi ve kültürel benzerliklerin fark edilmesiyle kurulan güçlü yakınlık sekansını sunar. "Oh my god, I can't believe we have so much in common" gibi ifadeler, Pomerantz'ın (1986) "aşırı örnekleme" olarak adlandırdığı yapıların yakınlığı artırma işlevine örnektir. Bu tür ifadeler, şaşkınlık ve coşku yoluyla hızlı bir sosyal bağ oluşturur.

Kesit 15, dil odaklı bölümler aracılığıyla görev ve görev dışı konular arasında nasıl geçiş yapıldığını gösterir. Katılımcılar "gel" fiilini farklı biçimlerde tartışarak hem dilsel farkındalık geliştirir hem de karşılıklı onay, yapı tamamlama ve jestlerle uyum ve yakınlık kurar. Bu süreç, "language-focused episodes" (Markee, 2000) olarak bilinir ve öğrenmeye yönelik doğal geçişleri temsil eder.

Veri seti, görev dışı konuşmaların çoğunlukla katılımcıların görevi erken tamamlamasıyla ortaya çıktığını göstermektedir. Bu boşluklar, katılımcıların kişisel deneyimlerini ve ortak ilgi alanlarını paylaşmaları için bir fırsat sunar. Bu da Markee'nin (2005) KÇ çalışmalarıyla örtüşmektedir. Görev dışı konuşmalar sadece sosyal bağ kurmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda dilsel etkileşimi de teşvik eder.

Genel olarak, görev dışı konuşmalar sayesinde kurulan uyum ve yakınlık, katılımcılar arasında daha güçlü sosyal bağlar oluşturur. Ortak deneyimlerin, kişisel hikâyelerin, mizahın ve kültürel referansların etkin şekilde kullanılması, etkileşimin kalitesini ve sürdürülebilirliğini artırır. Bu nedenle, görev tasarımlarında görev dışı etkileşimlere de alan tanınması, hem dil gelişimi hem sosyal bağ kurulumu açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır.

TARTIŞMA

Bu tez çevrim içi görev temelli öğrenme ortamlarında katılımcıların ikinci dil etkileşimsel yeterliklerini (L2 EY) nasıl geliştirdiğini, özellikle uyum (alignment) ve yakınlık (affiliation) süreçlerini detaylıca ele almaktadır. Bulgular, çok modlu iletişim, kültürel referanslar ve destekleyici söylemin yakınlığı güçlendirme ve L2 EY'yi geliştirme açısından kritik öneme sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Katılımcılar zamanla dönüşümlü konuşma alma,

fikir birliği ya da ayrılığı ifade etme ve çeşitli etkileşim bağlamlarında niyetlerini aktarma becerilerini ilerletmektedir. Sözlü olmayan ifadelerden sözel ve minimal olmayan ifadelere geçiş, daha yüksek düzeyde katılım ve gelişmiş etkileşimsel yeterlik olarak yorumlanmaktadır.

Katılımcıların etkileşimdeki geçiş noktalarını fark edip uygun zamanda ve biçimde tepki verebilmesi, onların dilsel ve yapısal ipuçlarından daha bağımsız, özerk hareket edebildiklerini göstermektedir. Özellikle zaman kısıtlamaları, görev dışı konuşmalar için fırsatlar yaratmakta, görevden görevin dışına geçiş anları ise daha kişisel ve samimi konuşmaların zeminini hazırlamaktadır. Bu geçişler, ton, tempo ve konu seçimindeki değişikliklerle belirginleşmekte; katılımcılar arası dayanışma ve karşılıklı anlayışı derinleştirmektedir (Holmes, 2000). Bu geçişlerin akıcı şekilde gerçekleştirilmesi, etkileşimin yapısına dair katılımcıların farkındalığını ve konu sınırlarını birlikte yönetebilme becerilerini ortaya koymaktadır.

Çevrim içi ortamlar, görevlerin yerine getirilmesi için etkili koordinasyon ve iletişim becerilerini zorunlu kılar. Bulgular, görevle ilgili ve ilişki kurmaya yönelik iletişimin bir arada yürütüldüğünü, bunun da L2 EY'nin temel bir yönü olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Katılımcıların görev içi ve dışı konuşmalar arasında geçişleri etkili bir şekilde yönetebilme becerisi, onların etkileşimsel yeterlik düzeylerinin bir göstergesidir (Abe, 2023). Görev içi konuşmalar daha çok yapılandırılmış ve hedef odaklıyken, görev dışı konuşmalar daha spontane olup bireysel ilgi ve deneyimlerin paylaşılmasına olanak tanır. Görev içi konuşmalarda yakınlık, genellikle görev yönetiminin bir yan ürünü olarak ortaya çıkarken, görev dışı konuşmalarda sosyal bağ kurmak başlıca amaçtır. Katılımcılar, görev dışı konuşmalarda bile zaman sınırlamalarının farkındadır ve bunu açıkça ifade ederler. Bu durum, onların "dijital görev yönetimi" (Dooly & O'Dowd, 2018) ve "teknik-pedagojik bilgi" (Hampel & Stickler, 2012) becerilerini yansıtmaktadır. Bu çalışma, görev içi ve dışı etkileşimlerde kullanılan uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarını karşılaştırarak, her iki bağlamda da anlamlı iletişim ve ilişki kurma yollarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Çalışma, çevrim içi görev temelli dil öğretiminde yapılandırılmış görev etkileşimlerinin yanı sıra, spontane ve duygusal iletişim fırsatlarının da

önemini vurgulamaktadır. Mizah, kişisel anlatılar, empati gibi spontane anlar, öğrenenler arasında kişiler arası bağın kurulmasına, motivasyonun artmasına ve özgün dil kullanımının gelişmesine katkı sağlar. Katılımcılar arasındaki etkileşimde uyum ve yakınlık, bağlama bağlı ve karmaşık süreçler olarak şekillenir; verilen tepkilerin yakınlık taşıyıp taşımadığı, bu tepkinin sıralı bağlamda nasıl yorumlandığına göre değişir.

Etkileşimsel yeterlik yalnızca bireysel dilsel becerilere değil, aynı zamanda katılımcıların devam eden etkileşimi nasıl izlediğine ve diğer katılımcıların eylemlerini nasıl kavradığına da bağlıdır. Çevrim içi bağlam, katılımcı rollerini, dönüş alma normlarını ve kullanılabilir anlamsal kaynakları yeniden tanımlayarak L2 EY'nin bağlama özgü bir şekilde yeniden ele alınmasını gerektirir (Gibson, 2020; Satar, 2013). Bu nedenle, konu yönetimi, uyum ve yakınlık süreçlerinin dijital ortamlarda nasıl şekillendiğini anlamak büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Konu yönetimi; başlatma, sürdürme, geçiş ve sonlandırma gibi yönleriyle birçok çalışmada ele alınmış olsa da, bu süreçlerin L2 EY ile olan bağlantısı yeterince araştırılmamıştır (Galaczi, 2008, 2014). Bu çalışma, video destekli görev temelli etkileşimlerde konu yönetimi, uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarının birlikte ele alındığı ilk çalışmalardan biridir. Kesitsel analizler, katılımcıların konu oluşturma ve bu konuyu sürdürme sırasında kullandığı uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarını ayrıntılı şekilde belgelemiştir. Araştırma, Skogmyr ve Balaman'ın (2018) dile getirdiği çevrim içi L2 EY araştırma eksikliğine cevap vererek, öğretmenler ve görev tasarımcıları için görev içi ve dışı konuşmaların pedagojik önemine dair önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

SONUÇ

Bu çalışma, video-aracılı ikili sanal değişim (SD) etkileşimlerinde görev içi (on-task) ve görev dışı (off-task) konuşmalarda konu yönetimi kapsamında katılımcılar tarafından kullanılan uyum (alignment) ve yakınlık (affiliation) kaynaklarını incelemektedir. Bulgular, hem araştırma hem de uygulama açısından önemli çıkarımlar sunmakta; sanal değişim, video-aracılı çevrim içi

etkileşim ve görev temelli dil öğrenimi (TBLT) bağlamlarında etkileşimsel dinamiklerin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, ikinci dil öğretiminde etkileşim odaklı tasarımlar yapan görev tasarımcıları ve uygulayıcılar için de doğrudan uygulama alanı sunmaktadır.

Çalışma, ikinci dil öğrenen bireylerin çevrim içi ikili etkileşimlerde konu yönetimini nasıl sağladığını derinlemesine analiz etmekte ve konu yönetiminin L2 etkileşimsel yeterlik (EY) için ne kadar kritik olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda, öğrencilerin konu başlatma, sürdürme ve geçiş yapma becerilerinin desteklenmesi, onların iletişimde daha etkin olmalarını sağlayarak gerçek dünya etkileşimlerinde başarılı olmaları için gerekli becerilerin gelişimine katkı sunmaktadır. Öğretmenler bu becerileri, açık yönlendirme ifadeleri, konuşmacı sırası devri işaretleri ve iş birliğine dayalı konu sürdürme pratiklerini modelleyerek öğretebilir. Grup tartışmaları, rol yapma etkinlikleri gibi yapılandırılmış ancak esnek etkinlikler, öğrencilerin bu becerileri uygulamalı olarak geliştirmelerine olanak tanır.

Bulgular, özellikle görev içi ve dışı geçişlerin yönetilmesinde öğrencilerin hem teknik hem de pedagojik bilgiye sahip olmaları gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu geçişler, sadece yapılandırılmış görev hedeflerine ulaşmakla sınırlı değildir; aynı zamanda öğrencilerin kişisel bağlantılar kurmalarına, empati geliştirmelerine ve etkileşimi daha samimi bir hâle getirmelerine olanak tanır. Görev dışı konuşmalar genellikle mizah, kişisel anekdotlar, hafif şakalaşmalar gibi spontane unsurlar içerdiğinden, sınıf ortamında bu tarz paylaşımları teşvik edecek esnek alanlar yaratılması önerilmektedir. Bu tür spontan etkileşimler, öğrenciler arasında bağ kurmayı kolaylaştırmakta, sosyal duygusal katılımı artırmakta ve otantik dil kullanımını desteklemektedir.

Araştırma, mizahın yakınlık kurma işlevini vurgularken, mizahın kullanıldığı doğaçlama etkinlikler, öğrenciler arasında bağlantı kurma ve daha rahat bir öğrenme ortamı oluşturma açısından yararlı görülmektedir. Öğretmenlerin, tonlama farklılıkları, ortak dönüş tamamlama (collaborative turn completion) gibi pratikleri modellemesi, öğrencilerin etkileşimde daha doğal ve ritmik konuşmalar geliştirmesine yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu tür ortak dönüşler,

katılımcıların birbirlerine bağ kurarak konuşmayı sürdürmelerini sağlar ve L2 EY açısından önemli bir beceridir (Sert, 2019; Huth, 2020; Lam, 2021).

Özellikle mizah, dönüş tamamlama, jest ve mimik gibi kaynakların örneklendirilmesi, öğrencilerin kendi etkileşimlerinde bu kaynaklara yer vermelerini kolaylaştırır. Daha karmaşık konuşmalarda yakınlığın kurulamaması ya da bozulması durumunda, öğrencilerin yeniden yakınlık kurma kaynaklarına ihtiyaç duydukları açıktır. Bu noktada yüz kurtarıcı stratejiler, yeniden ifade etme ya da duruş değiştirme gibi kaynakların öğretilmesi; öğrencilerin zorlayıcı konuşma durumlarında bile sosyal dinamikleri koruyarak yakınlıklarını sürdürmelerine olanak tanır. Etkileşim kayıtlarını çözümleyerek yapılan yansıtma temelli etkinlikler, öğrencilerin hem kendi konuşmalarını fark etmelerini sağlar hem de onarım stratejileri geliştirmelerine yardımcı olur.

Video-aracılı etkileşimde, uyum ve yakınlık yalnızca karşılıklı anlayışı kolaylaştırmakla kalmaz; aynı zamanda öğrencilerin motivasyonlarını da artırır. Sosyal bağları güçlü olan öğrencilerin, iş birliğine dayalı öğrenmeye daha açık oldukları, daha fazla etkileşimsel risk aldıkları ve zorluklar karşısında konuşmalara daha uzun süre katılım gösterdikleri bilinmektedir (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Bu bağlamda yapılandırılmış görevlerin yanında öğrenciler arasında kişisel anlatımların, esprilerin ve empatik paylaşımların da teşvik edilmesi, daha samimi ve anlamlı bir öğrenme ortamı yaratır.

Araştırma, geleneksel olarak dikkat dağınıklığı veya sapma olarak değerlendirilen görev dışı konuşmaların, öğrencilerin etkileşime katılımını, birbirleriyle bağ kurmalarını ve L2 EY gelişimini olumlu etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Uyum ve yakınlık, yalnızca sohbet geliştirme yolları değil; aynı zamanda öğrencilerin gelişen etkileşimsel yeterliklerinin de birer göstergesidir. Özellikle kendi seçtikleri konularda uzayan konuşmalar, öğrencilerin düşüncelerini ve duygularını paylaşmalarına olanak tanıyarak derinlemesine katılım sağlar. Çevrim içi ortamlarda beden dili gibi bazı kaynaklara erişim sınırlı olsa bile, öğrenciler dijital araçları kullanarak uyum ve yakınlık gösterebilmekte, bu da hem sosyal bağ kurma hem de dil gelişimi açısından önemli fırsatlar yaratmaktadır.

Yöntemsel açıdan bakıldığında, araştırma multimodal konuşma çözümlemesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sözel olmayan kaynaklar (jest, bakış, beden hareketleri) ve maddesel kaynaklar (ekran paylaşımı, dijital işaretleme) ile sözel ifadelerin birlikte analiz edilmesi, etkileşimlerin yalnızca konuşma temelli değil, beden ve materyal ile bütünleşik biçimde kurulduğunu göstermektedir. Bu, hem sınıf hem de dijital ortamda öğrenenlerin çok modlu iletişim stratejileri geliştirmesini gerekli kılmaktadır. Araştırmada kullanılan KÇ yöntemi, etkileşimin doğallığını ve yapılandırılmış doğasını detaylı biçimde ortaya koymuş; katılımcıların karmaşık sosyal durumlarda kullandıkları stratejileri görünür kılmıştır.

Sanal değişim (SD) ortamlarında başarılı olmak, yalnızca dil yeterliliği değil; aynı zamanda etkileşimi kolaylaştırma, sosyal sinyalleri yorumlama, karşılıklı anlayışı sağlama gibi karmaşık becerilerin bir arada kullanımını gerektirir. Araştırma, bu becerilerin birlikte inşa edildiğini ve bireysel değil karşılıklı olarak üretildiğini göstermektedir (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011). Öğrenciler, dönüşleri takip ederek, önceki konuşmalara atıfta bulunarak ve karşılıklı katkı sağlayarak ortak bir anlam inşa ederler. Bu ortak anlam üretimi, L2 EY'nin en temel göstergelerindendir. Araştırma ayrıca dijital ortamda bu süreçlerin nasıl gerçekleştiğini; platform özelliklerinin, kaynaklara erişimi nasıl etkilediğini ve konu yönetimi süreçlerini nasıl şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu bulgular, KÇ temelli araştırmaların L2 öğretimi, değerlendirmesi ve öğretmen eğitimi üzerindeki etkilerini pekiştirmekte; sınıf içi uygulamalar açısından da yol gösterici niteliktedir. Özellikle uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarının sırayla uygun biçimde kullanılması, etkileşimde ortak anlam yaratımını kolaylaştırmakta ve öğrencilerin dilsel olduğu kadar sosyal becerilerinin de gelişimini desteklemektedir. Müfredat tasarımında L2 EY'ye yer verilmesi, özellikle çevrim içi dil öğrenme bağlamlarında, öğrencilere hem dilsel hem de etkileşimsel beceriler kazandıracaktır.

Öğretmenler, öğrencilerin bu becerileri geliştirmelerini desteklemek amacıyla yapılandırılmış görevlerin yanı sıra, kişisel anlatımlara ve ilişkisel konuşmalara alan açan esnek etkinlikler tasarlayabilir. Ayrıca mizah, empatik ifadeler ve ortak deneyimlerin kullanımı, öğrenciler arasında sosyal bağların

güçlenmesine katkı sağlayacaktır. Ön görev sosyalizasyon etkinlikleri, öğrenciler arasında yakınlık oluşmasına zemin hazırlayarak daha etkili ve katılımcı bir öğrenme ortamı yaratacaktır. Bu açıdan, bulgular görev tasarımcıları için de önemli ipuçları sunmaktadır. Görev sürelerinin, görev dışı konuşmalara da yer bırakacak biçimde esnek planlanması; ilişkisel etkileşimlerin doğal biçimde ortaya çıkmasına ve öğrencilere otantik iletişim ortamları sağlanmasına olanak tanıyacaktır.

Sonuç olarak bu araştırma, görev temelli video-aracılı etkileşimlerde konu yönetimi, uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarının etkileşimsel yeterlik ile olan bağlantısını hem teorik hem de uygulamalı düzlemde derinlemesine incelemiş; bu bağlamda eğitim uygulamaları, dijital pedagojiler ve öğretim materyalleri için değerli çıkarımlar sunmuştur. Öğrenenlerin çevrim içi ortamlarda çok modlu kaynakları kullanarak nasıl etkili bir etkileşim sürdürebildikleri, bu becerilerin nasıl geliştirilebileceği ve bu doğrultuda öğretim süreçlerinin nasıl şekillendirilmesi gerektiğine dair önemli bilgiler sağlamıştır. Eğitimcilerin ve görev tasarımcılarının bu sonuçları dikkate alarak hem dil gelişimini hem de sosyal etkileşim becerilerini destekleyen bütüncül öğretim ortamları oluşturmaları önerilmektedir.

Gelecek Çalışmalar İçin Öneriler

Bu çalışma, çevrim içi görev temelli etkileşimlerin karmaşıklığını ve katılımcıların görev içi ve görev dışı konu yönetiminde uyum (alignment) ve yakınlık (affiliation) kurma becerilerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, çevrim içi etkileşim bağlamlarında bu tür kaynakların nasıl kullanıldığını anlamaya yönelik önemli ipuçları sunarken, gelecekteki araştırmalar için de çeşitli önerilerde bulunur. Öncelikle, "konu" (topic) kavramı KÇ alanında çalışılması zor bir olgu olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bir konunun nerede başlayıp nerede bittiğini belirlemek çoğu zaman kolay değildir (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Çimenli, 2017; Schegloff, 1990). Bu nedenle, farklı bağlamlarda yapılacak yeni KÇ çalışmaları, konu yönetimi konusundaki anlayışımızı derinleştirecektir. Özellikle grup etkileşimlerinde konu ve sıra yönetiminin daha karmaşık olduğu göz önüne alındığında, bu tür etkileşimler üzerine yapılacak analizler ikili etkileşimlerin ötesine geçerek etkileşim dinamiklerini daha geniş bir çerçevede ele alma fırsatı sunar.

SD'ler, farklı kültürel ve dilsel geçmişe sahip bireyleri bir araya getirdiğinden, gelecekteki araştırmaların, kültürler arası farklılıkların yakınlık kurma stratejilerine nasıl yansıdığını incelemesi önerilmektedir. Çok dilli öğrenicilerin anlamı müzakere etme, sıra alma ve etkileşim kurma süreçleri, dijital ortamlarda kültürlerarası iletişimi ve dilsel göreceliliği anlamada önemli katkılar sağlayabilir. Ayrıca, dil öğretmenlerinin dijital yeterlik, dilsel ve kültürlerarası yeterliklerini içeren teknopedagojik becerilerini incelemek, başarılı SD uygulamaları açısından önemlidir.

Teknolojik platformların sürekli evrim geçirmesi, etkileşimsel yapılar üzerinde de etkili olmaktadır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar, video konferans, sanal gerçeklik (VR) ya da yapay zekâ destekli araçların sunmuş olduğu olanakların konu yönetimi, uyum ve yakınlık kurma süreçlerini nasıl etkilediğini karşılaştırmalı olarak inceleyebilir. VR'nin bedensel katılımı artırma işlevi ve yapay zekânın gerçek zamanlı konuşma destek araçları olarak işlevi, dil öğrenimi ve dijital iş birliği açısından pedagojik çıkarımlar doğurabilir.

Görev katılımcıları (task engagers) ve tasarımcılarının (task designers) farklı kültürel bağlamlarda uyum ve yakınlık süreçlerini nasıl müzakere ettikleri de araştırılmalıdır. Çapraz kültürlü KÇ çalışmaları, etkileşimsel pratiklerin bağlama özgü değişkenliğini anlamada katkı sunabilir.

Ayrıca, farklı görev türlerinin dijital etkileşimlerdeki yakınlık düzeyini nasıl etkilediği araştırılmalıdır. Yapılandırılmış, açık uçlu, rekabete ya da iş birliğine dayalı görevler; farklı düzeylerde katılım ve kişisel yatırım gerektirir. Kişisel anlatılar, münazara formatları ya da anlık tartışmaların konu bütünlüğü üzerindeki etkisi, görev tasarımında dikkate alınmalıdır. Görev türleri ile etkileşimsel bağlılık arasında bağ kurmak, öğrenici merkezli ve anlamlı etkileşimlerin teşvik edilmesine katkı sunacaktır.

Dil yeterliği düzeylerine göre karşılaştırmalı çalışmalar, düşük düzeydeki öğrenicilerin uyum ve yakınlık kurmada karşılaştıkları zorlukları ve bu zorluklara verdikleri tepkileri daha iyi anlamamızı sağlayabilir. Bu tür çalışmalar, özellikle düşük yeterlik düzeyindeki öğrenciler için daha fazla görsel, bedensel veya kalıplaşmış ifadelerin tercih edildiğini, ileri düzeyde ise mizah, metafor ve tonlamanın daha etkili kullanıldığını ortaya koyabilir.

Görev dışı konuşmalar, içten ve özgün iletişim ortamları yaratarak öğreniciler arasında daha güçlü sosyal bağlar kurulmasına yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu tür konuşmaların dil öğrenimi, sosyal bağlılık ve motivasyon üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek, görev tasarımı açısından değerli bilgiler sunabilir. Mizah, hikâye anlatımı ve kişisel anı paylaşımı gibi kaynaklar, sosyal uyumu güçlendirme ve etkileşimi sürdürme açısından işlevsel kaynaklardır.

Bu çalışmanın anlık etkileşimlere odaklanmasına rağmen, gelecekte yapılacak uzunlamasına araştırmalar, çevrim içi ortamlarda uyum ve yakınlığın zaman içinde nasıl geliştiğini ve öğrenme çıktılarını nasıl etkilediğini ortaya koyabilir. Özellikle tekrarlanan etkileşimlerin sosyal uyum ve sürdürülebilir katılım üzerindeki etkileri araştırılmalıdır. Sonuç olarak, çevrim içi görev temelli etkileşimlerin içerdiği çok modlu doğa, uyum ve yakınlık kaynaklarının kullanımı, görev tasarımı, dijital ortam özellikleri ve dil yeterlik düzeyleriyle birlikte daha ayrıntılı bir şekilde araştırılmalıdır. Bu tür çalışmalar, hem pedagojik uygulamalara hem de etkileşimsel yeterliğin gelişimine katkı sağlayacak kapsamlı bir anlayış sunacaktır.

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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Çimenli Olcars
Adı / Name : Betül
Bölümü / Department : İngiliz Dili Öğretimi / English Language Teaching

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (**İngilizce** / English): *A CONVERSATION ANALYTIC INVESTIGATION OF RESOURCES FOR ALIGNMENT AND AFFILIATION IN TOPIC MANAGEMENT DURING VIDEO-MEDIATED VIRTUAL EXCHANGE*

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