ARECLS Vol.11, 2014, 15-34.

DO TURKISH BILINGUALS OF ENGLISH PROCESS TURKISH PREDICTIVE CONDITIONALS DIFFERENT THAN TURKISH MONOLINGUALS?[*]

CIHAT ATAR

Abstract

This study aims at testing if Turkish L2 users of English process predictive conditionals different than Turkish monolingual speakers in accordance with Multi-competence Theory (Cook, 2003). For data collection grammaticality judgment tasks (GJTs) are used and unlike traditional GJTs, contexts are added to clarify the tasks. The participants consist of 15 monolingual and 15 bilingual Turkish university-graduates. The results are evaluated using both descriptive statistics such as mean, median and standard deviation and also SPSS to show that the differences found between the groups are statistically significant. The analysis of the results shows that there is a statistically significant difference between monolingual and bilingual Turkish speakers. This finding implies that second language (L2) users have a different language system than monolinguals and they should be evaluated and compared for both their first language (L1) and L2 on their own terms rather than monolingual native speaker norms.

Key Words: Multi-competence Theory, predictive conditionals, language transfer, L2 users, bilinguals

Introduction

In the literature since Weinreich's (1953) claim that either language of a bilingual[1]deviates from the norms of the monolingual[2]speakers, most of the work on cross-linguistic influence has focused on the effects of L1 on L2, but there is so little research about the effects of L2 on L1. Cook (2003: 5) states that four distinctive

*The data of this article was obtained from the Atar (2012) thesis entitled "Do Turkish bilinguals of English process Turkish predictive conditionals different than Turkish monolinguals?" submitted to Newcastle University, the UK.

characteristics of L2 users[3] are stated in comparison to monolinguals. The third one states: "L2 users' knowledge[4] of his/her L1 is in some respects not the same as that of a monolingual". This is mainly because their two or more languages in their mind interact and affect each other. This claim is supported by several studies which will be discussed in the background part. As a result, the research question of this study is:

The rationale and focus of the research

The research question of this study is "Do the Turkish bilingual speakers of English process predictive conditionals different than monolingual Turkish speakers?".As mentioned in the previous part, there are a few studies which show that the third proposition of the MCT is indeed at work for L2 users. However since Weinreich's seminal work on L1 influence on L2, this area has been ignored or maybe did not attract researchers' attention much (Cook, 2003). Therefore, this area needs much more research to understand the exact nature of L2 effect on L1.

Background

Cross-linguistic phenomena between English and Turkish

As for the cross linguistic phenomena, both in predictive (Type I) and generic/habitual (Type 0) conditionals in Turkish, the main clause usually has present tense, the aorist, (or modal constructions) (Lewis, G., 2000; Kerslake and Goksel, 2005).

For example:

Suyu ısıtırsan, kaynar. (generic conditional)

Water- ACC heat- AOR- CON.2SG boil-AOR.3SG

'If you heat water, it boils.

Çok	**çalışırsan**	**sınavı**	**geçersin.**
Very much	work-AOR-CON.2SG	exam.ACC	pass-AOR.2SG

*'If you study hard, you will pass **the** exam' (single time, a specific exam)*

However, English has future tenses (or modal constructions or imperatives) in the main clauses of predictive conditionals and a present tense in main clauses of generic/habitual conditionals as shown in traditional grammar books and corpus-based studies (Sinclair, 1998; Aarts, 2011)

If you heat water, it boils. (generic)

… verb+ present+3rd SG

If you study hard, you will pass. (predictive)

… verb+ future simple+ 2nd SG

Future tenses in the main clauses of predictive conditionals are ungrammatical structures in Turkish unlike English and they are used in predictive conditionals in Turkish only if it is known that the premise of the conditional is certain or very likely to happen (Lewis, 2000). Therefore, Turkish monolingual speakers are not supposed to use future tenses in predictive conditionals except for certain/planned future conditions. Consequently, in accordance with Cook's (2003) claim that L2 should have an effect on L1, it is hypothesized in this study that learning English may have an effect on the Turkish of bilingual Turkish speakers and as a result of this difference, a reverse language transfer may make this impossible construction possible for Turkish bilingual speakers.

The literature review on the studies about language transfer from L2 to L1 shows that there are several studies about L2 effect on L1. These studies confirm that MCT is at work although the number of these studies is restricted and this is in fact the justification for undertaking this research. For instance, in his study Flege (1987) showed that bilingual French speakers' voice onset time is different than the monolinguals and it is an

approximation of their L1 and L2. Another example is by Cook et al. (2003) which concluded that there is a change in the syntactic processing of bilinguals. In this study how Japanese, Spanish, Greek and English bilinguals assign subjects to sentences in their L1 is studied. The results indicate that there is a considerable difference in the syntactic processing of bilinguals and monolinguals in their mother language. In another study, the change in the syntax of bilinguals' L1 is shown empirically by Hartsuiker et al. (2004). Similarly, Dinçtopal's (2007) study suggests that Turkish L2 users of English process complex genitive noun phrases modified by a relative clause in Turkish and English differently than both the monolingual Turkish and English speakers. These studies confirm the third hypothesis of MCT and they show that bilinguals are different than monolinguals in some respects.

As for the literature review about real conditionals in English and Turkish – including corpus studies for English grammar- it is found that in terms of logic and semantics, there is not a difference and real conditionals are used in the same situations in both Turkish and English (Radden, G. and Dirven, R., 2007; Master, P., 1996; Sinclair, J., 1998; Aarts, B., 2011). The difference between English and Turkish in real conditionals lies in the tenses used in the main clauses of these conditionals. Both in predictive and generic/habitual conditionals in Turkish, the main clause usually has present tense, the aorist, present modals and imperatives in Turkish unlike English which has future tenses (or modal constructions or imperatives) in predictive conditionals.

Shortly, it can be concluded here that Turkish real present conditionals include both generic and specific meanings but without a context they are ambiguous. Turkish has two types of conditionals in the logical form like English although it is not expressed explicitly in morphology and Turkish clearly differs from English in that it has present tenses in the main clauses of predictive conditionals.

	Tenses in the main clauses of English conditionals	Tenses in the main clauses of Turkish conditionals
Generic/habitual Conditionals	Present tenses, present modals and imperatives	Present tenses, present modals and imperatives
Predictive conditionals	**Future tenses** and present modals	**Present tenses** and present modals (future tenses are used only when there is a prior decision or the event is almost certain to happen)

Table 1 Summary of the tenses used in real conditionals in Turkish and English

The Multi-competence Theory

The term multi-competence, as Cook puts it (1991), means the knowledge of two or more languages in a bilingual mind. MCT suggests that the L1 and L2 of a bilingual are in the same mind and they are processed by the same capacity. Therefore the knowledge of these languages must form a super-system and they affect each other rather than being completely isolated (Cook, 2003).

MCT suggests that L2 users' first language knowledge is not the same as monolingual native speakers' knowledge (Cook, 2002). This is because, learning another language has effects on L1 just as L1 has effects on L2. So the main argument of MCT is that the languages of bilinguals are affected by each other. So, what MCT proposes is a dynamic model for bilinguals in which the relationship of their languages changes constantly.

Multi-Competence Theory, Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism

As for MCT's attitude towards language acquisition and the phenomenon of interlanguage of bilinguals, MCT sees interlanguage as the L2 itself, which is the transitional language between L1 and L2, unlike traditional approaches (Corder, 1971;

Nemser, 1971; Selinker; 1972). Therefore, MCT suggests that L2, the interlanguage of a bilingual- can never be like the monolinguals' language. The reason is an L2 learner already has a language in his/her mind and this naturally affects the acquisition of other languages (Bassetti and Cook, 2011). Therefore, it can be suggested that bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one mind (Grosjean, 1989).In addition, especially thinking that language learning itself shapes thinking and thought, it is indispensable that the L2 of a bilingual is affected by the mind which has already been shaped by another language(Cook, 2011). This effect -however- is a mutual one because learning anL2 also affects the thinking and cognitive style thus the L1 of a bilingual.

Factors affecting L2 influence on L1

There are several factors affecting L2 influence on L1. The level of proficiency is an obvious factor affecting the degree of L2 influence on L1 (Kecskes and Papp, 2003; Cook, 2003). Up to a certain proficiency level, learning another language is nothing more than educational learning which only increases the knowledge one owns (De Bot, 1992; Cook, 2003). In the initial stages of language learning, what happens is merely classifying the newly learnt language into the already existing L1 system and this cannot cause changes in the cognitive system. Cook (2003) argues that the L2 proficiency level that is able to affect L1 starts when learners are able to 'use' their language in daily life circumstances. If a learner is frequently exposed to an L2 and uses it in the daily life issues at ease, this means that that learner has proficiency.

The other factor affecting L2 influence on L1 is the nature of transfer. Transfer can be any kind of influence on concepts, skills, knowledge or linguistic features in either direction: from L1 to L2 or L2 to L1. One common nature of the transfer in the initial stages of language acquisition is that language transfer is mostly unidirectional, from L1

to L2 and the influence of L2 on L1 is very little (Jessner, 2002; Bassetti and Cook, 2011). However, the more proficient a learner gets, the more integrated his/her language faculty gets and bidirectional transfer takes place.

Considering these arguments, it is possible to suggest that proficiency has an effect on multi-competence and reverse language transfer. Despite the disputes regarding this topic, the idea that the higher the level of an L2 user, the more integrated and bidirectional the transfer is is supported by some research (Kecskes and Papp, 2000; Cook, 2003; Francis, 2000; Jessner, 2002). Finally although the exact level of proficiency needed for integration is not known, as discussed above, it is empirically shown that generally in the initial stages of language learning, language transfer is from L1 to L2. However as a learner gets more proficient, language transfer becomes bidirectional.

Methodology

Research Questions

Main Question: Do the Turkish bilingual speakers of English process predictive conditionals different than monolingual Turkish speakers?

This study also has a secondary question which aims at testing if the assumption of the main research question that Turkish monolinguals use present tenses in generic and predictive conditionals is valid or not:

Secondary Question: Do Turkish monolingual speakers use generic/habitual conditionals as described in traditional grammar books?

Participants

The participants consist of 15 Turkish monolinguals and 15 bilingual speakers of English whose L1 is Turkish. The monolinguals are made up of 15 teachers from two

primary schools in Turkey. As for the 15 bilingual participants, they are Turkish users of English living in the UK. All of the bilingual participants also at least have a BA degree and none of them are early bilinguals. All of the bilingual participants actively use English in daily life. All the participants in this study were chosen according to the bio-data they filled in the study.

Data Collection

The task of this study consists of 24 Grammaticality Judgment Tasks (GJT) which supply 3 options for each context. Typically GJTs consist of a single sentence and participants evaluate its grammaticality (Schmid, 2002; Guasti 2004). However, the focus of this study is the comparison of generic/habitual and predictive conditionals which are really difficult to distinguish without a clear context. So, in each of the 24 tasks, very clear contexts are provided so that predictive and habitual/generic conditionals are tested reliably. Finally, as this study is comparing present and future tense usage, in the conditional tasks, modals are deliberately excluded from the main clauses as they are finite structures which means that they cannot have tense inflection, except for 'have to'. (Aarts, 2011).

There is a scale from 1 to 6 for each sentence in a context, but rather than giving numbers, some expressions are used in the scale. Giving some expressions like 'bad but it may be used' or 'it sounds good' helps the participants choose how they feel about the option (Tremblay, 2005; Sorace and Keller, 2005).

As for the internal design of the tasks, the contexts in all tasks have three options and unlike a test there does not have to be only one true answer. The tasks are basically made up of three basic groups which are tasks about the conditionals, tasks about relative clauses and several tasks whose options are either mostly true or false.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis firstly the mean, median and the standard deviation of the results are calculated to have a general idea about the data. Then, SPSS is used to see if the difference between monolingual and bilinguals is significant or not.

Results and Discussion

The evaluation of the monolingual's results

The results of monolinguals show that out of 6, the average point for the use of present tenses in the main clause of habitual/generic contexts is 4,99 while it is 2,92 for the future tense usage (Table 2). The standard deviation for present tense usage in habitual/generic contexts is 0,44 while it is 0,59 for future tense usage. The median of the present tense usage is 5 while it is 2,8 for future tenses.

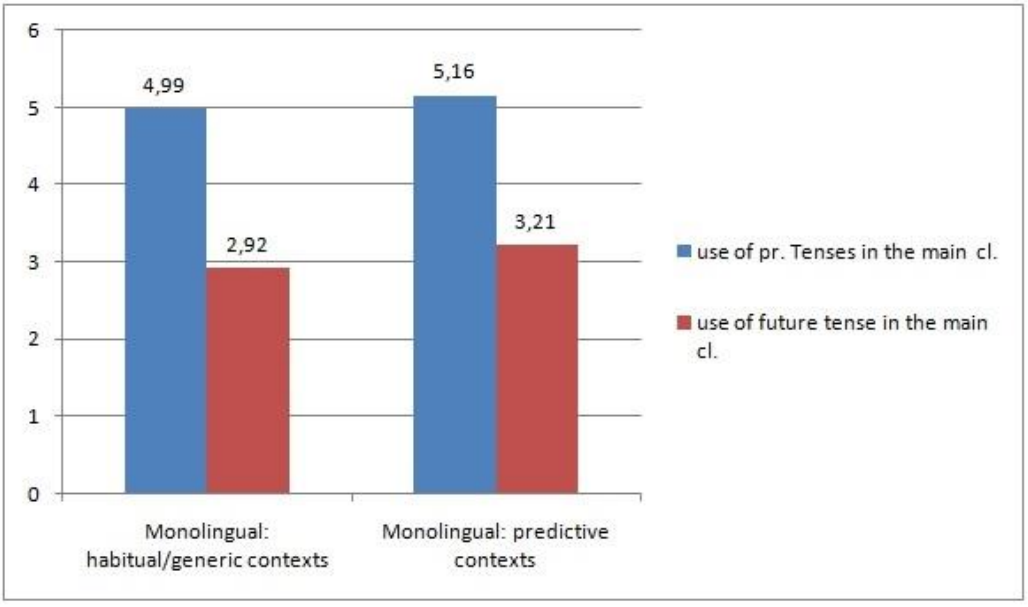

Table 2 The results of the monolinguals

As for the SPSS nonparametric paired samples test results, as seen the Table 3, the significance for the difference between present tense and future tense usage in habitual/generic conditionals by monolinguals is .000 ($p<0.05$). The t-score is -9.039 and this is higher than the 95% confidence interval of the difference which is -2.540 for the lower and -1.566 for the higher level.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	VAR1 – VAR2	-2.05333	.87983	.22717	-2.54057	-1.56610	-9.039	14	.000

Table 3 The difference between present tenses and future tenses in the main clauses of habitual/generic conditionals for monolinguals

The mean difference of 2.07 out of 6 and the SPSS result with significance of.000 ($p < 0.05$) in addition to the t-score higher than the 95 % confidence interval show that monolinguals' present tense usage in habitual/generic conditional main clauses is statistically different than future tense usage.

As for the results of predictive conditional contexts as seen in Table 2, the average for present tense usage for monolinguals is 5,16 while it is 3,21 for future tenses. The standard deviation for present tense usage is 0,36 while it is 0,52 for the future tense usage. The SPSS results in Table 4 show that the significance of the difference between present tense and future tense usage is .000 ($p < 0.05$). The t-score is -8.010 and this is much higher than the 95% confidence interval of the difference which is -2.518 for the lower and -1.454 for the higher level.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	VAR1 – VAR2	-1.98667	.96056	.24801	-2.51860	-1.45473	-8.010	14	.000

Table 4 The difference between present tenses and future tenses in the main clauses of predictive conditionals for monolinguals

These results show that, similar to generic/habitual contexts, there is a significant difference between the acceptance of present and future tenses in the main clauses of

predictive conditionals. The mean difference of present and future tense usage is 1.95 out of 6 which equals to 33%. This high percentage is proven to be statistically significant with .000 ($p < 0.05$) which rules out the possibility of chance.

To sum up the discussion about the monolinguals, they overwhelmingly prefer present tenses compared to future tenses as described by grammar books and this difference is proven to be statistically significant. In this respect, these results support the secondary research question of this paper. This means that the main research question of this paper is based on a sound base because these results confirm the premise of this paper that Turkish monolinguals do not use future tenses in predictive conditionals unlike bilingual Turkish speakers.

The evaluation of the bilingual's results

The results on Table 5 show that the average acceptability of present tenses in the main clauses of the habitual/generic contexts is 5.43 while the acceptability of the future tense is 2.53. The standard deviation for the present tense usage is 0.34 and it is 0.67 for future tense usage. The median of the present tense usage is 5.4 while it is 2.4 for the future tenses.

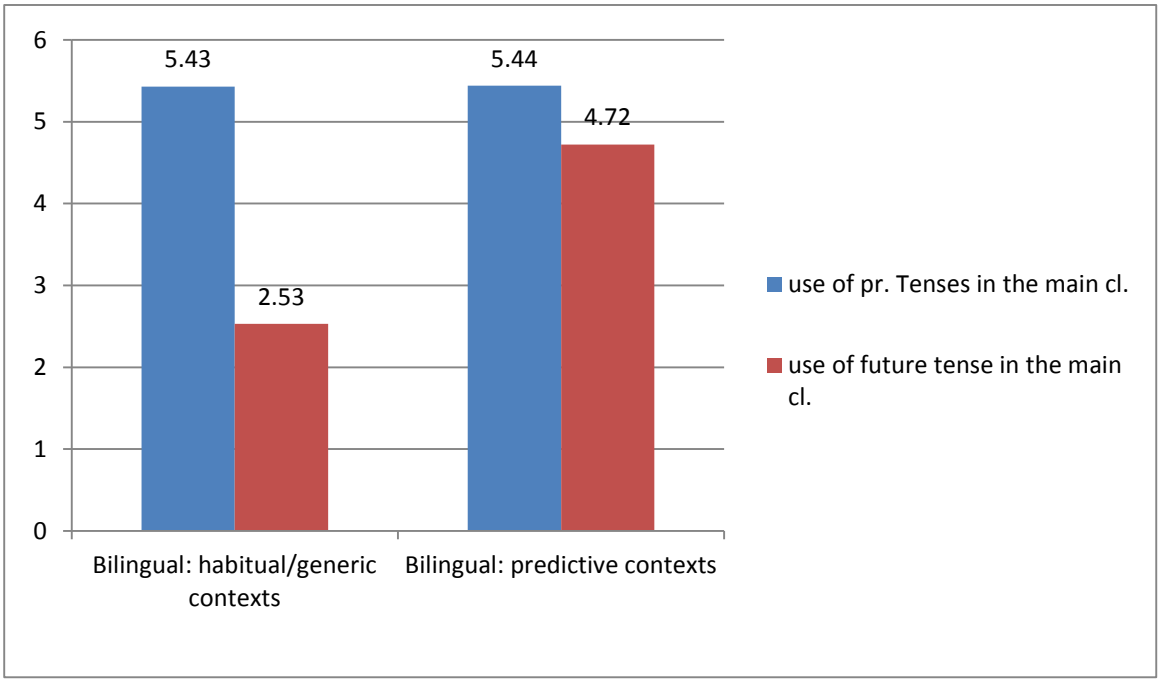

Table 5 The results of the bilinguals

The SPSS results in Table 6 show that the significance of the difference between present tense and future tense usage in habitual/generic conditional contexts is .000 ($p < 0.05$). The t-score is 11.910 and the 95% confidence interval of the difference is 2.317 for the lower and 3.335 for the higher level.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	VAR1 – VAR2	2.82667	.91921	.23734	2.31762	3.33571	11.910	14	.000

Table 6 The difference between present tenses and future tenses in the main clauses of habitual/generic conditionals for bilinguals

These results show that bilinguals use present and future tenses in generic/habitual conditionals quite similar to monolinguals. The average difference of present and future tenses in habitual/generic contexts is 2.90 out of 6 which equals to 48% out of 100. This quantitative difference can be interpreted as evidence for the difference between present and future tenses in habitual/generic conditionals. Also SPSS results indicate that this

high difference is statistically significant with a .000 ($p < 0.05$) significance level. These results show that present tenses are the norm for generic/habitual contexts for the bilinguals and the standard deviation of 0.34 for present tenses show that the participants behave in a very similar way.

In predictive conditional contexts, the average score given by the bilinguals for present tense usage is 5,44 and it is 4,72 for the future tenses as seen in Table 5. The standard deviation of the participant scores for present tenses is 0,28 while it is 0,70 for future tenses. The median for present tense scores is 5,4 while it is 5 for the future tense scores.

The SPSS results in Table 7 show that the significance of the difference between present tense and future tense usage in predictive conditional contexts for bilinguals is .004 ($p < 0.05$). The t-score is 3.408 and the 95% confidence interval of the difference is 0.261 for the lower and 1.151 for the higher level.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	VAR00009 - VAR00010	.70667	.80309	.20736	.26193	1.15140	3.408	14	.004

Table 7 The difference between present tenses and future tenses in the main clauses of predictive conditionals for bilinguals

These results provide the most interesting and insightful results of this study. Firstly, from the average of the present tense usage of 5.44, it can be said that the Turkish bilinguals behave like monolingual Turkish speakers and they accept the usage of present tenses in the main clauses of predictive conditionals which is ungrammatical in English. However, looking at the acceptability rates of future tenses, the average of 4.72 is again very high descriptively. 4.72 is very close to 5, which is labeled as 'correct usage' in the scale of the study. This means that Turkish bilinguals violate the grammatical predictive

conditional structure in Turkish by accepting the use of future tenses. These results of the bilinguals suggest that they behave like monolinguals and accept the present tense usage in both habitual/generic and predictive conditionals while they also accept the future tenses in the main clauses of only predictive conditionals as English do although it is ungrammatical in Turkish.

Monolinguals and bilinguals

The main objective of this study is to see if there is a difference between monolingual and bilingual Turkish speakers in their processing of the future tense usage in the main clauses of predictive conditionals. As Table 8 shows, while monolinguals rate the usage of future tenses with an average score of 3.21, the average score of bilinguals for the acceptability of future tenses is 4,72. The mean difference between them is 1.51 out of 6. The median for the monolinguals is 3.2 while it is 5 for the bilinguals.

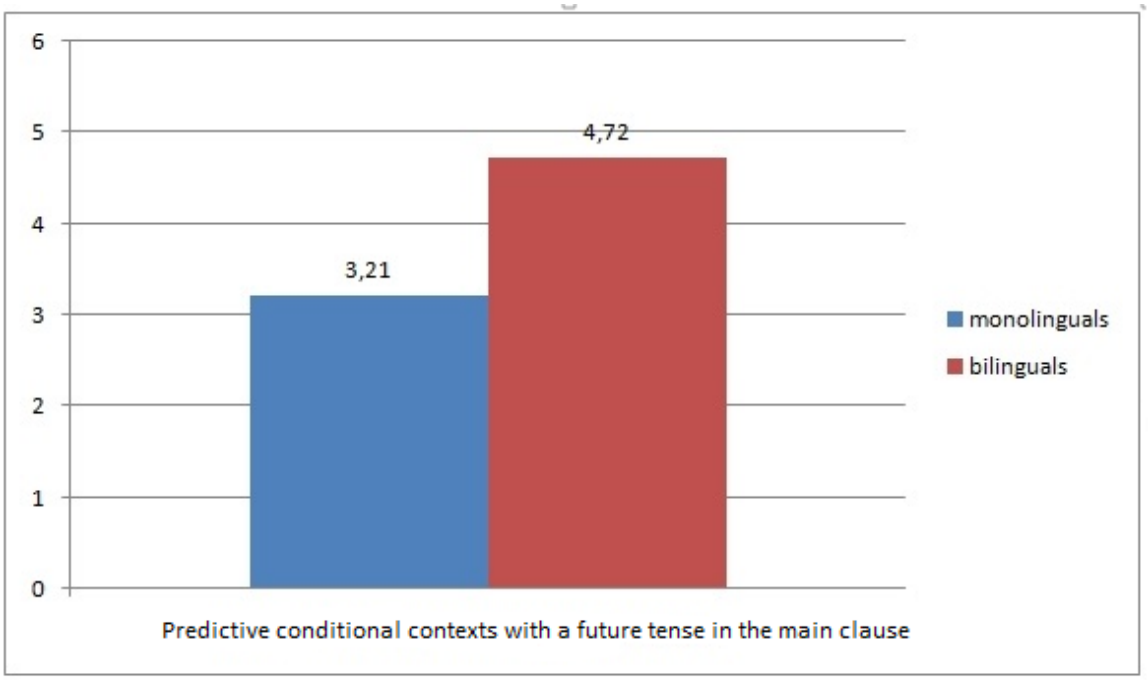

Table 8 The comparison of monolinguals and bilinguals in predictive conditionals

In addition, the results of the Mann-Whitney Test in Table 9 show that the significance of the difference between monolinguals and bilinguals is .000 ($p<0.05$). The z-score of this difference is calculated as -3.638 which confirm that the significance of the difference is valid for more than 95% of the results.

Test Statistics[b]

	GJT
Mann-Whitney U	25.000
Wilcoxon W	145.000
Z	-3.638
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000[a]

a. Not corrected for ties.

b. Grouping Variable: Participants

Table 9 Mann-Whitney test: the comparison of monolinguals' and bilinguals' future tense usage in the main clauses of predictive conditionals

The mean difference of 1.51 out of 6 and the statistical significance of .000 ($p< 0.05$) rule out the possibility that this difference might be by chance. Moreover, the z-

score of -3.638 in the Mann-Whitney test shows that the difference between the two groups in this study is a statistically significant one. These results strongly show that the hypothesis of this study is true and Turkish bilinguals in this study process future tenses differently than the monolinguals in terms of morphology.

Implications of the study

Firstly, the discussion in the factors session in the background part suggested that although there is not a certain finding, the research show that the higher the proficiency level, the more integration is observed in the minds of L2 learners (Kroll, 1993; Jessner, 2002; Cook, 2003). The comparison of the monolinguals and bilinguals in this study shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The bilinguals use a structure which is only possible in their L2 English unlike the monolinguals. It can be claimed here that proficiency level probably causes this difference as it is the only difference between the groups.

As seen in the results Turkish bilinguals use the structures of both Turkish and English monolinguals for predictive conditionals. The study results show that for monolinguals there is not a significant difference in the use of future tenses in habitual/generic conditionals and predictive conditionals which shows that the Turkish of the monolinguals is not affected. This is in parallel with Kroll (1993), Jessner (2002) and Cook's (2003) claim that the link between the two languages in a very low level bilingual's mind is only unidirectional, from L1 to L2, and thus L2 influence on L1 does not take place unlike proficient bilinguals who have a bidirectional link in their minds thanks to proficiency factor. So, this study seems to support the findings of the previous research that the more proficient bilinguals get, the more L2 influence on L1 takes place.

This bi-directionality allows the L2 to have an effect on L1 thus supporting the third claim of MCT as shown in the results of this study.

One final implication of this study is that bilinguals should not be used in the linguistic studies which require native speakers. As the study results suggest in this paper, the L1 of bilinguals are affected by their L2 especially when proficiency level increases. Therefore, bilinguals should be excluded from purely monolingual studies and if they are taken into a linguistic test, their L1 should only be compared to bilinguals sharing their L1 and L2 background rather than monolinguals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this study is to see if Turkish bilinguals process predictive conditionals different than monolinguals. The research suggests that there is a statistically significant difference between monolinguals and bilinguals in this study. These results are also shown to be significant by SPSS results. The secondary aim of this study is to see if monolingual Turkish speakers actually use habitual/generic conditionals as described in grammar books. The research findings show that monolinguals mostly use habitual/generic conditionals as described in grammar books.

As for the limitations, firstly this study is a very restricted one in terms of its representativeness. Only university graduates participated in this study and only 15 participants are included in each group. Therefore the findings and implications in this study are restricted solely to this research context.

Finally, as explained in the methodology part, modals are not included in the main clauses of the conditionals in this study as they are finite structures. Therefore this paper missed an issue about conditionals. However, this was essential for the purposes of this study as it is explained in the methodology part.

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Abbreviations

ACC,: Accusative form

AOR: Aorist

CON: Conditional

2SG: Second person singular

3SG: Third person singular

Notes

Note 1: in this paper, the term bilingual is used for people with the knowledge of two or more languages who can use both of them without a significant problem and it excludes early bilingualism-

Note 2: in this study, the term monolingual is used for people who has the knowledge of only one language or people with a very limited exposure to an L2 which they never use actively-

Note 3: In the term 'L2 users', in accordance with Cook's (2003) idea of 'users', the focus is on a person's ability to use his/her language in daily life without any significant difficulty unlike traditional definitions of L2 learner which see the language knowledge of beginner or intermediate learners as incomplete. In conclusion, the term L2 user is used for people who can 'use' a language as a part of their daily lives without a significant difficulty while L2 learner refers at the learning process of a language learner.

Note 4: In this paper, by language knowledge, the aspects of syntactic and phonological systems are meant rather than the language in a general sense which includes the conceptual system and lexicon.

Note 5: Because of the word limitation, detailed information about the justification of the methodology, GJTs, participants and the sampling is omitted. If needed, please contact the author for further information.