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COMMUNICATION OF CHILDREN AT PLAY:  
ANALYSIS OF AUTHENTIC DATA RECORDED IN THREE IRISH FAMILIES

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## Poděkování

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## Anotace

Předmětem bakalářské práce je komunikace tří pětiletých dětí při hře. Zvuková data pro analýzu byla pořízena u tří příbuzných rodin, poté byla přepsána do písemné podoby a analyzována. První část práce představuje téma a mluvčí, následuje přiblížení postupu práce s daty. Pro výzkum jsou využity postupy konverzační analýzy, díky níž lze do hloubky zkoumat řeč a komunikaci. Třetí část obsahuje samotnou analýzu řeči a interakce dětí. V závěru jsou shrnuty výsledky pozorování, a srovnání postupů jejich komunikace. Cílem práce je zmapovat časté jevy v komunikaci dětí, a nastínit způsob jejich myšlení. Tyto výsledky by mohly napomoci při jednání s dětmi a podpořit vzájemné pochopení a zaujetí vhodných postupů v komunikaci.

## Abstract

The focus of the thesis is communication of three five-year-old children at play. The data were gathered at three related families, then transcribed and analysed. The first part of the work introduces the topic and the speakers. It is followed by methodology, which explains the application of Conversation analysis on the data. The third part of the thesis contains the analysis of talk and interaction of the three children. The results of observations and a comparison of the strategies in talk are summarised and discussed in the conclusion. The aim of this work is to observe and describe frequent occurrences in the talk of children and to give an insight into their way of thinking. This outcome could be useful when communicating with a child and possibly help in choosing the right strategy in interaction with them.

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# 1 Introduction

I have always found the language of children interesting for its creativity, irregularity, and colourfulness. Combining my interest with my connections in Ireland thus provided me with a ready-made opportunity to undertake my own research into child communication. In Ireland, I had previously worked for 16 months as an au-pair for three related families. All the three families that I worked for were of a very similar social status; the parents were educated, family-oriented and employed. This created a balanced background in which the children were raised. In addition, the children in each family were about the same age, which created a fairly exclusive combination of factors for the examination and comparison of their conversational interaction.

## 1.1 Aim of the thesis

The focus of this work is communication of children at play. The children were observed engaging in various acts of creativity and play. Their interaction was recorded and examined with an aim to describe children's use of language at play. In order to determine what interactional strategies the children were using to communicate, the transcripts of their recorded talk were subjected to examination by employing Conversation analysis (CA).

## 1.2 Description of families and speakers – Buckley, Kenny, O'Donnovan

Firstly, I would like to introduce the main speakers, their families, and background. The analysis is aimed at three children: Ailish, Oran, and Joe. Each of them was around the age of five at the time when the recordings were made. Ailish and Oran were 4 years and 10 months, Joe was 4 years and 9 months. A more detailed description of the families and a list of all speakers follows.

The family of Ailish:

Mother (37), father (37), Ailish a girl, (5), sister Abaigh (7) and brother Dara (3).

The family has very good relationships, there is an overall friendly and loving atmosphere. They are financially secured, living in a family house in the countryside, beside a farm. The children are playful, creative and friendly.

The family of Oran:

Mother (39), father (40), Oran a boy, (5), sister Ella (3), brother Oisín (2), sister Ayda (5 months). The family lives in a very similar, friendly environment to that of Ailish. They live in a family house beside a farm they own, where the father works and children love to spend time. The children are playful and active.

The family of Joe:

Mother (37), father (36), Joe a boy, (5), sister Annie (1,5).

The family are also nice and friendly, they live in a family house near a small village. The father owns and runs a farm. The mother runs a small business, a dog grooming salon. Joe is very active, interested in sports and his father's farm.

A list of speakers:

The family of Ailish speakers' identification in the transcript:

A: Ailish (5)

Ab: Abaigh (7)

M1: mother

T: Tereza, researcher

Oran speakers' indications:

O: Oran (5)

M2: mother

Ai: father

E: Ella (3)

Ois: Oisín (2)

T: Tereza, researcher

Joe speakers' indications:

J: Joe (5)

A: Annie (1,5)

T: Tereza, researcher



## 2. Methodology

During the time spent with the children, I was observing the different ways of their communication, their use of language and the way their interaction was conducted. In order to undertake the research, I visited the families and audio recorded the children at play. The duration of the complete set of recordings was more than seventeen hours. The recordings therefore had to be reviewed and selected. One criteria for the selection was quantitative; the amount of recorded interaction was set to approximately 20 minutes per child. Second criteria was qualitative. Out of the large amount of recordings it was necessary to select those which featured compact interactions and which were audible, therefore suitable for further transcriptions. With the use of conversation analytic conventions, the extracts were transcribed. Finally, the transcripts were analysed by applying the methodology of Conversation Analysis (CA); attention was concentrated on the communication and interaction of the children.

### 2.1 Introducing Conversation Analysis (CA)

Conversation analysis, (CA) is an “approach within the social sciences that aims to describe, analyse and understand talk as a basic and constitutive feature of human social life” (Sidnell 1). CA was first established by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, each of them specialised in Sociology (Sidnell, Stivers 1). Furthermore, CA can be classified as an interdisciplinary field that links Sociology, Linguistics and Communication (Sidnell, Stivers 1). Through CA it is possible to analyse talk in interaction, the way it is held, and how speakers react to each other. Therefore it is a fitting discipline for undertaking a research focused on communication. Using a method of CA for transcribing recorded situations enables the researcher to look into the interaction closer and connect his findings with those of other analysts.

### 2.2 Data collecting and transcribing

In order to collect the data for my thesis I visited Ireland and I stayed for several days with each of the three families. This allowed the children to settle and to get used to my presence again. Re-establishing my relationship with the families was very easy and quick for I had continued to maintain contact with the families and visited them whenever possible. The children were soon behaving naturally around me, following

their daily routines, the only difference was that I was there to accompany them. “Conversation analysis places a great deal of emphasis on the use of extracts from transcriptions of tape-recorded, naturally occurring interactions in its research” (Hutchby, Wooffitt 69). With the consent of the parents, I commenced recording the children's interactions. The recording device was unseen and placed close to where the activities were performed. I was able to record for as long as I required without the children being curious about the device or possibly be affected by knowing that they were being recorded. “By recording the conversations of people engaged in everyday interaction (initially using audio-recorders, but increasingly video-recorders), these interactions can be transcribed in detail and listened (or watched) repeatedly, which in turn allows for a close examination of how talk-in-interaction is organized” (Butler 19). More than 17 hours of recordings were collected. The recordings were of various types and quality, since none of the situations were directed or controlled. It could easily develop in a child leaving the room, an interruption occurring, or an unexpected noise degrading the quality and audibility of the recording. All recordings therefore had to be listened to and the parts which were suitable for executing the research were selected. The final issue to be considered was the duration of the selected excerpts. The subsequent outcome of this was the selection of approximately 20 minutes of recorded interaction per child. These were then transcribed using standard Conversation Analytic conventions. A glossary of transcription symbols employed is included in the Appendix.

### 2.3 Application of CA to the analysis of the data

Using the methodology of CA for the analysis of recorded situations enables the researcher to look closely into the interaction and undertake a fine-grained analysis of what is occurring through talk. The obtained findings may then be re-inspected against the original data or may advance the understanding of talk-in-interaction in contextually similar situations.

In the case of the present research, children's talk was first recorded then transcribed. Collecting the data was done during a visit in the families. The researcher participated in the play activities with the children, letting the children unwind the interactions as was natural to them. There were no tasks prepared in advance for the children, neither any sort of tests in order to avoid undesirable directing of the

situations. This condition enabled the researcher to observe the children's talk and interaction as it occurs naturally in the environment of their families. The transcriptions were completed by employing standard conversation analytic conventions.

Transcription symbols were used.

The application of CA to the analysis enables the researcher to observe in detail all connections in the examined interaction, the cause factor and the child's reaction. The data transcribed turn-by-turn present well arranged conversations, the researcher is thus able to trace frequently used phrases or strategies in communication of Ailish, Oran, and Joe. In case of two or more similar situations, it is easy to compare those in order to find out how each child reacts. The sequential analysis creates a good opportunity to compare the situations, the children's use of language during their play. Therefore the use of CA results as a suitable method for executing a research in communication in interaction.

### 3 Analysis

The analysis is divided into three parts containing transcripts of each child, that means Ailish, Oran, and Joe. The parts are named after the examined child and further marked with a number of the transcript, 1 through 5, for there are five transcripts for each child. The transcripts are divided into shorter extracts, according to the topic which is discussed or in order to highlight certain occurrence. The excerpts have a number which specifies the order of the extract in the transcript. To simplify references, the excerpts are named as well; i.e. "Ailish 1.3 – Drawing" marks analysis of Ailish, transcript number one, third extract. The complete transcripts are given in Appendix 2. Each part of the analysis starts with a brief description of the child which is the object of research. The description is followed by a list of speakers participating in the extracts, to facilitate orientation in the transcripts. A short introduction to the unfolding situation is given at the beginning of each excerpt. The analysis as such is conducted with attention paid to several issues. The situation, speakers and their role, the way the interaction is held, and especially with a concern about the language used and results of the communication. Each of these points brings diversity and uniqueness into the situations and affects the communication and interaction.

### 3.1 Ailish – analysis of talk

Ailish is a creative, communicative, happy girl who loves to be surrounded by her family, she is friendly and likes to co-operate with people. Her favourite entertainment is drawing and colouring. At the time when the recordings were gathered she was learning to write, therefore – both drawing and writing featured in the recorded interactions.

Ailish1

List of participants:

A: Ailish (5)

M1: mother

Ab: Abaigh (7)

T: Tereza, researcher

Ailish, Abaigh and Tereza are at the kitchen bar drawing, while the mother is cooking.

A 1.1 – Sheep family

3 A.: I actually drew a sheep. I drew a sheep!

4 M1.: Mhm.: it's cool.

5 A.: Sooo, then (5s), oh that colour. I can try again. (7s) I'll draw you a bigger  
6 sheep. (21sdrawing) look, a mommy sheep and a baby sheep. And a kid sheep.

7 M1.: That's cool, I like it.

8 A.: Like that, mommy. An adult sheep and a [kid sheep].

9 Ab.: [Look at my] sheep mommy

10 T.: Hi hihi, poor sheep, it's way better

11 M1.: Fluffy and (2s) [cozy]

12 A.: And will I [do the] biggest one that's the daddy

In this situation Ailish has drawn a picture and expresses her good feelings about it, line 3. She is even surprised at her own skill – “I actually drew a sheep” – and feels the urge to share her success – “I drew a sheep!”; conveyed through an exclamatory utterance. Gaining the attention of her mother and her appreciation, line 4, Ailish's

enthusiasm is boosted. She decides to draw an even better picture. Line 5 contains an interesting insight into the child's thinking. Since Ailish is commenting on the things she is doing or thinking out loud, line 5 illustrates the development of her cognitive processes and on how she builds on her past activities and experiences. At first, she is thinking about how to make her next drawing: "Soo then", followed by a five-second pause. She then switches to planning what colour to use; looking at the crayons, she makes a decision and picks one, apparently more suitable than the previous one. This moment is displayed verbally as "Oh, that colour". Ailish then decides to draw it again, with the use of the new colour. A seven-second pause ensues whilst she is drawing. She then announces a new idea: "I'll draw you a bigger sheep." 21 seconds of drawing follow. Ailish can dive deeply into her drawing, during which time she keeps silent. Her silence suggests either an interest in the activity or a good ability to concentrate when she has a certain goal. When she is finished, she again reaches for her mother's attention, line 6, "look". Mother reacts to that, line 7, after which Abaigh starts drawing attention to her own work, overlapping with Ailish, lines 8 and 9.

This drawing activity develops by both girls improving their pictures, adding more characters and making up a story about what they are doing. Ailish draws the whole family of sheep with a logic based on her own experience, "...the] biggest one that's the daddy", line 12.

Abaigh develops a story about a sheep having gone swimming and that is now sinking. The story engages both of the adults. At that time, Ailish is silent and when Abaigh's story is finished, she suggests extending the family of her sheep with an au-pair sheep. Ailish's drawing derives from her own experience where daddy is the tallest member of the family and that an au-pair can be part of the family as well. By linking her experience of an au-pair and transferring the idea into the picture of a family of sheep shows that the mind of a child is not, at this point, bound by rationality; she is able to associate things that do not go together in real life. This association surprises both of the adults, M1 and Tereza, who react spontaneously, overlapping in their speech, lines 32, 33. The excerpt follows.

#### A 1.2 – Au-pair sheep

31 A.: OK, shall I do the au-pa:ir one?

- 32 T.: Haha [you have au-pair sheep?]  
33 M1.: [Au-pair sheep?] Where's that sheep from? [Scotland?]

As the situation progresses, Ailish is talking about what she has made. Realising in line 49 that neither her mother nor Tereza are participating, she decides to engage Tereza in drawing again.

#### A 1.3 – Drawing

- 49 A.: Why don't you f::... why aren't you drawing? Why aren't you drawing?  
50 T: I made some sheep but they're not very good.  
51 A.: I like the bird. A:nd, ...[will I draw the sheep for you?]

In this excerpt, Ailish attempts to encourage Tereza to draw as well. Tereza drew a picture of similar kind as Ailish, featuring sheep and birds in a field. When Tereza expresses her discontent with her own drawing, line 50, Ailish makes efforts to encourage Tereza's drawing by “I like the bird”. She offers to help Tereza draw the sheep and thus to overcome the source of Tereza's discontent at the first place: “[will I draw the sheep for you?]”. Ailish's care for the people around her and her empathy is apparent in the excerpt. When she senses some trouble, in this case Tereza's struggle to draw a sheep, she does not only comfort Tereza with the statement “I like the bird”, line 51, she furthermore proposes to draw a sheep for Tereza.

In the short extract above, Ailish demonstrates that she is working on a number of levels when creating her drawing. The easiest of these to observe is in how she constructs her picture in terms of colour, size and the content. Secondly, she demonstrates her cognitive abilities through the act of talking out loud, through which she is exploring her rationale for the drawing and attempts to integrate this into the world as she knows it at this point. Finally, she tests some of these ideas with her mother and Tereza to seek confirmation that her thinking is legitimate. This results in their amusement over the idea of an au-pair sheep. In the world of Ailish, such an association is perfectly normal. As her experiences of the world grow, she will be able to alter her perception and adopt a new view, one that fits the world of adult.

The child's logic is thus not limited by the issue of possibility; it is able to draw on virtually any input. For example, if there is an au-pair in her family, why could not there be one in the family of the sheep in the picture? In these short extracts, Ailish demonstrates her ability to think creatively, make considered choices, make links, and construct questions designed to engage others. She also demonstrates her skills in using language to create empathy or motivation displaying a complex understanding of these techniques. Clearly, she is acquiring and developing her language and communicative skills.

Ailish 2

List of participants:

A: Ailish (5)

M1: mother

T: Tereza, researcher

Ailish and Tereza are in the kitchen going to play together. The mother is also present. Ailish who is not a school child yet practices to write her name.

#### A 2.1 – Spelling

2 A.: What would you draw? I'll draw it then. What would A. I. S. H..ehh.. what  
3 would A.I.S.H.spell?

4 M1: Aish

5 A.: Aish? Aish?

6 M1.: Aish. Who's Aish?

7 A.: Aish? Haha. And I did that.

8 M1.: Forgot the l.

9 A.: I forgot a and the l. I forgot the l and the i mommy.

Ailish was writing her name on a paper but as she finishes, she realises she made a mistake and spelled it incorrectly. She then attempts to gain attention by spelling out loud what she has written and asking what word came as a result, lines 2 and 3. Her mother responds to that, line 4, simply saying the word “Aish” in order to reply Ailish's

question. Ailish is surprised by the result of her writing and repeats the word in an interrogative mood which suggests that she looks for confirmation that she heard her mother correctly, line 5. Upon that, the mother repeats once again the word to make clear to Ailish what she wrote and follows that with a question “Who's Aish?”, line 6. This is in fact a joke made by her mother. Aish does not exist and is simply a misspelling of Ailish. The mother is therefore able to point out the mistake in an amusing manner which does not embarrass or chastise her daughter. Ailish does not feel bad about her mistake and is amused by the outcome of what she wrote, “I did that”, line 7. Her mother then alerts Ailish that there is a letter missing, “Forgot the l”, line 8. She does not list all the missing letters, by which she leaves space for Ailish to work out the rest. Ailish seizes the opportunity and names the missing letters, line 9. The extract provides an interesting example of child's learning by demanding attention of an adult person.

#### A 2.2 - Frame

- 11 A.: What should I write? What should I draw? What are you gonna draw?  
12 T.: I don't know. What shall I draw?  
13 A.: Ok. I can.., when..can you put.. make umm.. a frame with a line like that...  
14 like that. And then you put the (noise) line like that ..up to there, and then you  
15 colour inside. (5s)  
16 A.: Look, will I show you what to do? So you make the space down there..you  
17 need to make a space down there. Right here.  
18 T.: Hm  
19 A.: So see. Can you see what I'm after making? The:n  
20 T.: You made a frame

In line 11, Ailish wants Tereza to give her some idea about the next activity they could engage in. Tereza however does not offer a suggestion and reflects the question back to Ailish, line 12. By doing so, Tereza preserves the roles and maintains Ailish's control over the situation, allowing Ailish to think about what to make. Ailish comes up with an idea of drawing a frame. She explains to Tereza how to do it, indicating in gestures where to make particular lines. Tereza reacts with “hm”, line 18. This is



performed as a back channel cue, signalling to Ailish that she still has Tereza's attention. In line 19, Ailish requires a more involved reaction; she presses Tereza with an explicit question "Can you see what I'm after making?" to which Tereza reacts with "You made a frame" (line 20). By the use of an explicit question, Ailish achieves her aim to engage Tereza fully in the drawing activity and avoids Tereza to continue to employ more non-committal interactions.

In this transcript the development of the child's learning is displayed. Ailish, who is learning to sign her name attempts to write it, however, an error occurs. She realises the mistake and furthermore she is able to determine the missing letters. By communicating with her mother she indicates that she understands the mistake and also reacts to it in a jolly, amused way. Her attitude suggests that she is a rather content, even-tempered child, not anxious about making mistakes. That is probably one of the results of the family environment in which she is raised. In the following excerpt, we can observe Ailish's independence when it comes to making decisions. Transcript A 2.2 thus illustrates the ability of Ailish to take on a role of a leader, distribute tasks and encourage others in participation. When her first attempt to make Tereza an initiator of their drawing activity fails, she competently takes control over the situation. Linguistically, she reacts to Tereza's back-channel responses by continuing in her drawing, happy that she was being paid attention to. However, when Ailish requires a more involved response, she forms a question in order to achieve her goal.

Ailish 3

List of participants

A.: Ailish

T.: Tereza, researcher

In Ailish 3, the main participants are Ailish, Abaigh and Tereza. This extract again features drawing and writing as the core activities. Tereza co-operates with Ailish on making a picture while Abaigh works alone, all of the participants are sharing the same set of crayons.

A 3.1

6 A.: What shall I colour? What k...what shall I colour on the side? I'd say the

7 same way. (25s drawing)  
8 A.: Look. Ok, will I put it in the line ...from here down to here. And then you  
9 put a...then you put a little line down there. Look! And now you're gonna colour  
10 in half.

The exchange starts in a similar way as extract Ailish 2, here Ailish again asks a question out loud. It is not clear if this is directed at Tereza by asking “what shall I colour?”, line 6. Not waiting for a reply, Ailish answers her own question. She instantly acts on her own creativity, requiring Tereza's attention but not necessarily any suggestions from her. By thinking out loud, Ailish is happy to make her own decision regarding the colouring of her picture. She starts drawing, for 25 seconds she is concentrated on her own work.

In line 8, Ailish starts with informing what she is about to do: “Ok, will I put it in the line ...from here down to here”, line 8. Following this, Ailish smoothly includes Tereza in the activity. Switching from Ailish's own plan of what to do next to giving a task to Tereza, lines 8, 9, Ailish proves her developed sense for social interaction. Her aim is to make Tereza participate, and she is able to include her in the activity verbally. The naturally expressed suggestion is accommodated.

### A 3.2 – Half and a half and a half

The situation is unchanged, Ailish is sitting at the table with Tereza. Papers and colours are laying on the desk along the previously drawn pictures.

15 A.: What's your favourite?... like uh:... should ..what should I do in a half and a  
16 half and a half?

Looking at the pictures, Ailish starts the exchange with a question “What's your favourite?”, line 15. She aims to find out which of the pictures Tereza likes the most. Without waiting for a response, Ailish continues. With only short pauses, she changes her curiosity to thinking about the next drawing. Lines 15 and 16 present a further example of a child's creativity to use language and to apply it to concepts that are still new or too complex for them. Ailish describes dividing the picture, saying “half and a

half and a half”. For her, the word “half” apparently means a synonym for a part or section, simply expressing her wish to have the picture divided into three parts. At this point, she is unaware that this is an incorrect use of the word “half” and being unaware makes no effort to self-correct herself. She is, however, still able to communicate her ideas.

The excerpt continues by demonstrating how communication is multi-faceted and, as in this example, relies on oral explanation and visual guidance in order to teach a child how to draw a bird.

### A 3.3 – A bird

- 21 A.: What can you draw to my picture?  
22 T.: I know an easy way to draw a bird. You make one line, it's like one wing and  
23 then another line, and it's the other wing, and here is the beak..[th]at's the bird  
24 flying  
25 A.: [Yeah] like up and up to there like that?  
26 T: Very goo:d!  
27 A: And  
28 T: Or you can make..the beak.. the:n the head  
29 A.: Yeah like [the]...  
30 T.: [Then] the body, then the tail ..It doesn't..it's not very good though  
31 A.: I think it's good.... to me. But that's easy

In line 21, Ailish utilises her technique of asking Tereza a question inviting her to add something to her picture. This time, Tereza adopts a different approach to the question than that from the past two examples. Here she maintains the authority with which Ailish poses her question and uses the opportunity to teach Ailish how to draw a bird.

Lines 22 and 23 contain Tereza's explanation of the method, it is followed by Ailish's clarification, line 25, in which she verifies that she understands the task correctly and is able to successfully follow Tereza's instructions. Tereza's response “very good!” suggests that Ailish has successfully drawn a bird. Up to line 30, there is a

continual exchange between Tereza and Ailish on how to draw each part of the bird's body.

This is an example of talk in interaction between an adult and a young child. In this case they are both able to react to each other, ask for more information, seek clarification as well as provide deeper explanations. The excerpt thus displays the process of teaching and of being taught. Ailish orients to the instructions that are both given and demonstrated to her by Tereza and is able to follow them immediately. Ailish understands the clarification points, which results in her successful performance of the task. Ailish's interest in learning may also be noted. Even though at first she only required Tereza to add a drawing into her picture, Ailish was ready to accept that she should draw the picture herself using a method to which she has just been introduced.

Ailish 4

List of participants:

A.: Ailish

M1.: mother

Ab.: Abaigh

Illustrates a family home situation, where the mother is considering going to the cinema with her husband, leaving the children with their former au-pair. In order for this to happen, the mother is demanding good behaviour of her children.

A 4.1 - Cinema

- 1 M1: So will you be good if daddy and me go to the cinema?
- 2 Ab.: Yea[h]
- 3 A.: [Ye]a:h ... for Tere[za]!
- 4 M1.: [That] means going to bed when Tereza says so
- 5 Ab.: When are you going?
- 6 M1.: I don't know, we might go tonight or tomorrow night
- 7 A.: Ton[ight!]
- 8 Ab.: [Tonight!] tonight!
- 9 M1.: Maybe, if you will go to bed for Tereza we will

- 10 A.: We will!  
11 Ab.: Yeah

In this transcript several overlaps appear, lines 2, 3, 4, 7, 8. They are of a very common type, evenly belonging to Ailish and Abaigh. Lines 2,3 and 7, 8 are the responses of both daughters, quickly reacting to their mother's question, line 1: "M1: So will you be good if daddy and me go to the cinema?". The girls respond both saying "Yeah", moreover, Ailish adds "for Tereza" to her response, giving a fuller answer to the question "will you be good...?". Ailish's response indicates that she wishes Tereza to baby sit. Her mother builds on the response in line 4, reinforcing the idea of Tereza being in charge "M1: That means going to bed when Tereza says so".

It is common for the parents in this family to use the expression "for somebody", such as in "be good for .....", or "go to bed for .....". The parents can then insert the name of the appropriate person in order to make sure the children understand who is in charge during the parents' absence, in this case, Tereza. This idea further continues in line 9, "M1: Maybe, if you will go to bed for Tereza we will".

Ailish is familiar with this type of demand from the parents, and therefore responds positively to it. Overall, interaction in this piece of data is evenly distributed, containing the mother's question and a request which are responded to by both girls. Through to line 11 the only time when this is not the case are lines 4 and 5. In line 4, the mother adds an explanation to what "being good" implies; in this case, going to bed when Tereza tells them. Interestingly the girls do not respond directly to their mother's instruction. It is not clear why not, it could be they agree and accept this condition or they are too excited to pay attention. Abaigh changes the direction of the conversation by asking her mother when she will be going, line 5.

The stereotypes in communication appear here, when a particular family uses an expression frequently, the children adopt it and start using it. Such is the case with Ailish, claiming that she will be good "for Tereza".

## Ailish 5

### List of participants

A.: Ailish

T.: Tereza, researcher

Ailish is writing and drawing with Tereza. Ailish comes up with an idea about their creative productivity and brings up an opportunity to co-operate with Tereza.

### A 5.1 – Spelling II

1 A.: Ok, shall we write Tereza and Ailish? I'll write Ailish on this and Tereza and  
2 that's like it's your birthday (1,5s) on the back and I'm working on the front.

3 T.: Ok

4 A.: So that's what we'll do. () A.

5 T.: Now I

6 A.: I'll just do that. I. L. I. S. H.

7 T.: That's good.

8 A.: This is spelled Ailish. ok. And you spell Tereza.

9 T.: Umm, to write it like that?

10 A.: Just write Tereza.

11 T.: Oh well.

12 A.: Only Tereza. (8s) Tereza.

In lines 1, 2 Ailish has assigned tasks, Tereza agrees with that. Line 4, Ailish describes what she is doing at the moment, starting to spell her name by Ailish. Tereza, aiming to join in and help prompts her to continue with “I”. Upon that Ailish shows her displeasure, for she knows how to spell her name and proves that by spelling the rest of the letters. She closes this issue in line 8, saying “This is spelled Ailish”. Since Ailish has been the initiator of this activity from the beginning, she keeps her governing role and demands Tereza's co-operation in order to fulfil her vision about their work. Line 8: “And you spell Tereza”, line 10: “Just write Tereza”. When Tereza wants to specify Ailish's idea about the writing (line 9), Ailish does not provide any closer specification, only replies “Just write Tereza. (line 10), Only Tereza (line 12). Therefore it is possible to assume either that her communicative skills are not yet fully developed, she is well

able to think of an activity and give out the jobs, she can maintain the role of the leader, but not yet verbally describe her inner conception of the issue or the other possibility is that, in this case, the outcome of Tereza's writing is not of a great matter and her aim is only to have the name written, not requiring a particular style.

### 3.2 Oran – analysis of talk

Oran is a playful, active boy who loves to engage with other children; he is curious and talkative. He is interested in football and farm life, he likes to go to the farm with his dad and enjoys colouring pictures.

Oran 1

List of participants:

O.: Oran (5)

T.: Tereza, researcher

M2.: Mother

E.: Ella (3)

Ois.: Oisín (2)

This transcript depicts the moment when the children were given presents brought to them by their former au-pair from the Czech Republic. These are colouring books, each features one season of the year with an activity connected to the time or a Czech tradition. That is playing marbles, in the conversation it is referred as “little glass balls” (line 25), Easter carol singing and making a snowman in winter. Tereza gives out the colouring books and explains to Oran the context of the activities. There is a variety of self-repairs and initiations for repairs between both Tereza and Oran.

O 1.1 - Presents

1 T.: Here's a present, I wanted to give it to you all together.

2 O.: Where, where.. where is mine?

3 T.: I don't know which one you like. I thought you might [ have]..() one of those

4 O.: [I want] this

5 T.: Because it's...

- 6 O.: What's this one?  
7 T.: Well it's.. bigger picture for smaller kids so I thought it could be Oisín's  
8 O.: Huh?  
9 T.: It could be Oisín's because it's easier to colour them.  
10 O.: How do you know it's easier?  
11 T.: What?  
12 O.: How do you know it's easier?

Line 1: Tereza announces she has brought presents. Oran' does not show much surprise or delight upon that at first, his interest is straight forward to which one is his own, presumably that he would be enjoying his own present afterwards. Since he is the oldest brother of four children, there is often an order in an ownership to avoid any disputes. However, Tereza keeps the options open so they can choose what pictures they like, so they enjoy what they get, line 3. The only intent is to give smaller, more detailed pictures to the two older siblings, meaning Oran and Ella, and keep the bigger pictures for younger Oisín, that is about to be said in line 5, “because it's...”, however, this information is not successfully communicated, for Oran reacts faster, making his choice and overlapping Tereza. Tereza's intent is therefore expressed later, in line 7, attempting to explain to Oran that the colouring book he chose would be more suitable for a small child. A frequent occurrence in Oran's communication is the use of an open-class repair initiators. “These are repair initiators that indicate that there is a problem with the prior turn but do not locate some particular item as a trouble source” (Sidnell 119). In line 8 Oran initiates repair by “huh”, either because he did not hear what was said or it does not make sense to him. Tereza therefore simplifies the explanation saying “It could be Oisín's because it's easier to colour them”. Oran now understands, but does not accept the message that he should leave this book for Oisín, asking “How do you know it's easier?” Oran derives from the first information that he can pick what he likes and now avoids the suggestion that he should change his choice by doubting what he is told, lines 10 and 12. Tereza is surprised by the first question, line 10, for the logical connection of “bigger picture means easier colouring” is clear to her but not to a five-year-old child. For Oran, a child gets a colouring book and colours what is there, he is not concerned with the recommended age for the particular book. Oran's mother steps into this



conversation, requiring good manners of her son. By the question “What do you say to Tereza?” (line 13), she is not asking about the content of his talk, but requires a standard first response when being given a present. Oran, familiar with that, understands clearly what he is supposed to do, saying “Thank you” (line 14). His mother aims to highlight the appreciation and with a great importance given to good upbringing extends his “thank you” to “Thank you very much!”.

#### O 1.2 - Marbles

24 O.: What's this?

25 T.: This is spring, you have these little glass balls and [you]

26 O.: [Huh?]

27 T.: You can play this, it's a game.

28 O.: You play the game?

29 T.: You play with these little [ balls]

30 O.: [Huh?]

31 T.: And you dig a hole

32 O.: Huh?

33 T.: In the ground, and you have these balls, you push them and you try to have  
34 them fall into the hole.

35 O.: But how do you do that? How do you get the ball out of the picture?

36 T.: What?

37 O.: How do you get the balls out of the picture?

38 T.: Out of the picture?

39 O.: Yeah

40 T.: No, you need your own.

41 O.: And what do you have to do on this?

42 T.: On Easter, little girls and boys in Czech go from house to house, sing a carol  
43 or something, and get an egg.

Line 24, Oran asks about the motive of a picture which features children playing marbles. Line 25, Tereza introduces the picture by saying “This is spring”, which is the theme of the page and starts to explain how the game is played. On the contrary to that,

Oran is still concerned with the picture itself and therefore gets confused when Tereza speaks about the actual game. The frequent appearance of next turn repair initiator, in this case “huh” (lines 26, 30, 32), shows Oran's desire to get a better explanation which would make sense in his way of thinking. Tereza interprets his repair initiation as the consequence of not knowing the game and asking for more information about the way it is played. This misunderstanding starts clarifying as late as in line 35, when Oran explicitly asks “How do you get the ball out of the picture?”, which indicates that he is still talking about the paper. This connection does not make any sense to Tereza who is surprised by such question and here she is the next turn repair initiator, asking “what?” (line 36) and “out of the picture?” (line 38) trying to understand what Oran is talking about. The exchange ends in line 40, the moment when Tereza realises Oran's point of view. “T.: No, you need your own” means that for the game it is necessary to have actual marbles, this satisfies Oran, who then turns to another picture in the book.

Oran is actively participating in that conversation. Being introduced to new things and games he is trying to understand what is being communicated. Since he is not familiar with the game of marbles and is only presented with a picture of the game in a colouring book, there arises misunderstanding between what Tereza says and what he perceives. As was showed in previous transcripts, i.e. “au-pair sheep”, children tend to be open to making associations of various types, even if the subjects cannot link together in real life. It is necessary to consider the case when a child hears or sees something for the first time. The child would then likely make links to things he or she knows from their own experience and that does not have to correspond to the real issue. The child's idea about the thing can be difficult to imagine for an adult who is aware of the functioning and context of the given issue. This kind of incomprehension can create a great gap in communication which is difficult to rectify. In the case of Oran and Tereza, Oran thinks of the game as an activity included in the colouring book, while Tereza explains the actual game on the basis of what is featured in a picture. However, Oran's active questioning leads to a clarification, the specific the questions, lines 35, 37, lead Tereza to realisation of Oran's way of understanding. It is important to realise that two people communicating do not have the same knowledge in all respects. Especially when explaining something to a child, it is effective to base the new information on things the child is familiar with. When it comes to the role of speakers, Oran lets Tereza

lead the conversation, he talks less but pays attention and thinks about the content. When necessary, he defends his interest in a calm manner, discussing and asking questions.

Oran 2

List of participants:

O.: Oran

T.: Tereza, researcher

Oran is watching rugby on TV when Tereza joins and starts a conversation.

O 2.1 - Rugby

- 1 T.: So, Oran, do you like rugby?
- 2 O.: What?
- 3 T.: Rugby. Do you like it?
- 4 O.: What is rugby?
- 5 T.: This game.
- 6 O.: No, it's called "roobi".

This excerpt presents an interesting example of a child rejecting pronunciation of a word. When Tereza asks about rugby, Oran initiates a repair, line 2. "With a questioning repeat of part or all of previous turn, a participant may attempt to repair a partial or uncertain hearing of the repeated portion of the talk" (Gardner, Forrester 108). Oran appears to believe that he misheard what Tereza said. The word rugby is then repeated, line 3. At this point, Oran assumes that Tereza is talking about something he does not know and therefore asks "what is rugby?", using Tereza's pronunciation, line 4. When Tereza clarifies what she is talking about, Oran rejects Tereza's pronunciation of the word rugby, claiming "it's called roobi", line 6. It is not clear where Oran learned this pronunciation but he is clearly certain that he knows the right pronunciation and therefore he feels the urge to correct Tereza.

## O 2.2 – New Zealand

This excerpt covers a short dialogue between Oran and Tereza about the teams that are playing rugby, which Oran has been watching for a while.

18 O.: That's New Zealand!

19 T.: New Zealand? It's Scotland, isn't it?

20 O.: Yeah, Scotland.

The three lines above depict another feature of the mind of a child. Oran has been watching the rugby match for a while and apparently enjoying the game, however, did not know what teams are actually playing. The important thing for him is that Ireland is playing, also it is clear that he knows which colour they have, lines 15, 16. Supposedly, he speaks about New Zealand because it is the most famous and world's best ranked team in rugby. However, when Tereza joins him and starts watching as well, she can read the names of the teams, therefore knows it is not New Zealand but Scotland. In a contrast to the previous excerpt in which Oran sovereignly rejects Tereza's pronunciation of the word rugby, here he immediately agrees to Tereza correction that not New Zealand, but Scotland is playing the match. This follows Oran's realisation that Tereza can provide him with more information, he asks about the points. When told that Ireland is winning with 34 points against zero, he starts shouting enthusiastically in support, informing all family members who are nearby about the score. Oran is familiar with the act of watching and supporting the Irish national team, since Irish rugby is a very popular sport in the family. Therefore it is easy for him to find interest in a match, even though he is neither familiar with the opposing team, nor with the score. When he sees the opportunity to find out this information, he uses it, asks questions and finally passes the information onto his parents. As the children grow, they continually deepen and widen the scale of their knowledge. It applies on language acquisition as well as on other fields of their social and cultural hinterland. In this excerpt Oran follows certain scheme he is familiar with. New Zealand is a rugby team known world-wide, therefore the first thing Oran assumes is, that the other team playing against Ireland is thus New Zealand. This is again an example of linking things that the child is familiar with, just like Ailish's "Au-pair sheep".

Oran 3

List of participants:

O.: Oran (5)

M2.: mother

T.: Tereza, researcher

In a following excerpt Oran talks about his cousin Rory, Oran is very fond of him, admiring his various skills. Rory is a boy about one year older than Oran who lives in the same area.

O 3.1 - Rory

1 O.: Rory is.. Rory is the best hurling and football cause [he] gets, he always gets

2 the football off the one

3 T.: [is he?], oh that's good

4 O.: And when someone throws up he just goes there and catches that

5 T.: Wow. [that's very good]

6 O.: [And when they ] throw it out then he goes out [and]

7 M2.: [who] told you that Oran?

8 O.: Huh?

9 M2.: Who told you that?

10 O.: Um, Rory is really good at football, isn't he mum?

11 M2.: Oh he's good [alright yeah]

12 O.: [Cause he], cause, cause he's allowed to do all that things, going up with

13 Dan, or he goes alone, or they both, they both go to their own pitch

14 M2.: [what?]

15 O.: [Or] they throw it up and they thing it will go up but it don't. It goes down.

16 M2.: [Yeah]

17 O.: [It] go lower

18 M2.: You can (???) on what a schta.. with a short kick-out, yeah

19 O.: Huh?

20 M2.: You can trick them with a short kick-out, is that what you mean?

21 O.: How could you do a trick out?

22 M2.: Trick them with a short kick-out, instead of a big high one when you go

- 23 O.: Could ya?  
24 (3s)  
25 O.: How could you trick them? How? Then they'll be really good.

The main speakers of this transcript are Oran and his mother, there appear several interesting features. At the beginning. Oran starts his talk about Rory and expresses his admiration for Rory's football skills. Up to line 6 it is only Oran talking about Rory, with Tereza providing back channels, indicating her interest in what Oran is saying. In line 7 Oran's mother steps in, asking "Who told you that, Oran?". This type of interruption signalises that something is wrong, either she doubts that the information Oran just said is correct, or she knows that it is not possible for Oran to notice this from Oran's own experience and is interested about the source of the information that gave it to him, for instance it could have been Rory himself, telling Oran about his own success in sport. Oran's response to mother's question is a next turn repair initiator "Huh?", indicating that he either did not hear her or he did not understand why is she asking that question. The mother, interpreting the repair initiator as the first option, that Oran did not hear her, repeats her question unchanged, line 9. In this moment there is no doubt about Oran's hearing and is possible to presuppose that even in the first case he heard the question correctly, but did not want to answer it, rather he chose the option to gain more time for his reply. In line 10 Oran does not give an answer to his mother's question, in order to eliminate her doubt or disagreement with what he is telling, he simplifies what he said before to the most basic message "Um, Rory is really good at football, isn't he mum?". This going is very clever in order to get his mother's agreement. Since the whole family knows that Rory is good at football, it is not possible for the mother to deny this Oran's utterance. Even though the single sentence that "Rory is really good at football" does not cover all the information Oran gave before, this way he did not leave much space for the mother to develop her uncertainty about the rest of the information, neither did he answer the question "Who told you that?". Therefore he made the doubtful listener to agree and avoided answering the unwanted question, line 11.

Having the positive response from his mother, Oran continues his talk in the same manner with sort of doubtful information. The end of line 13 "they go to their own

pitch” rises again mother's interest, who reacts with “What?” (line 14), she either does not understand what Oran is talking about or did not hear him well. Oran is that time so engrossed into his narration that he pays no attention to his mother's query and finishes what he was about to say without repairs.

This time it appears that Oran's mother just identified what Oran is talking about and the conversation transfers into a topic of football tricks. The excerpt from line 15 through to line 25 develops in an interesting way. Oran's utterance “[or] they throw it up and they think it will go up but it don't. It goes down.” suggests that the football player, Rory, tricks the others by playing the ball in a different direction than expected. However, when Oran's mother reacts to that by describing the way the trick is done, Oran gets confused and does not understand what a “short kick-out” is. This is not as important for the current dialogue, but here again we can presuppose that Oran has not seen Rory playing many times, if ever, but only was told this information. Since Oran does not have much experience with the rules and strategy of football and hurling yet, this explanation of a trick surprises him, line 25 “How could you trick them? How? Then they'll be really good.” It is not certain that Oran meant the same thing as Annette, but when analysing what was said it appears that they do talk about the same kind of a trick. It is possible that Oran has not seen the trick himself and his description of Rory's playing is only repeated information Oran heard before and therefore he is not able to connect the “kick-out” trick with what he just said. Nevertheless, after her explanation the conversation turns to a different direction, aimed at the method of the trick and leaving the talk of Rory's skills.

In the excerpt Oran 3 were presented Oran's strategies at talk. When the whole amount of information he gave cause certain doubts about the origin of such information, Oran narrowed the content of his talk to the very basic which he knew was correct, in order to make the listener agree and that way not being threatened by the possibility of proving his words incorrect.

Oran 4

List of participants:

O.: Oran (5)

E.: Ella (3)

T.: Tereza

Oran, Ella and Tereza are playing with blocks, Oran aiming to build a farm shed.

O 4.1 – Blocks

1 O.: A block, and a block, and [another block] and then the other block.

2 E.: [A block]

3 O.: Now you have to po...no, you have to put them all in the shed.

4 (4s)

5 O.: Moo::, moo::.. We'll have another one.

6 E.: I don't know.

7 O.: Jea:nie! Now we leave them all out. They have one cow out

8 T.: Can I come in?

9 O.: Please don't go in, that's the shed

The excerpt starts with Oran listing the blocks he puts together to create the shed, line 1. Children usually build such things silently, not commenting on their every move. Here, Oran probably feels some importance to comment what he is doing, for he has observers ready to join for the game with him. Ella joins in, when saying “a block”, line 2, she takes a block and moves it, however, Oran is not happy with that, stopping her from doing that, line 3. He indicates that he need all of the blocks for building his shed. During short pause (line 4) the play continues, Oran switches blocks for plastic cows. Line 5, he makes the cow noises while moving the plastic figure. “We'll have another one” refers to another plastic cow. The game develops further in line 7. “Jea:nie. Now we leave them all out. They have one cow out.” It seems that one cow is outside the shed and Oran, pretending to be a farmer dealing with such problems, just decided to let all the cows out. The situations that Oran encounters on the farm display in his games with toys. It is clearly linked to the expressions he uses in lines 3 and 7. The occurrence of the Irish expression “jeanie”, as in “Jeanie Mac”, represents child language acquisition. An important part of a child's acquisition of language is performed by repeating what they hear.



Oran 5

List of participants:

M2.: mother

Ois.: Oisín (2)

E.: Ella (3)

O.: Oran (5)

The mother, Oran, Ella, Oisín and Tereza are in the kitchen. Oisín is whining, looking for his mother's attention. In order to please him, Annette informs Oisín that his and Ella's birthday is coming and he will get a cake. Hearing that, Oran gets excited about it, starts disorganizedly naming everyone from the family, line 4.

#### O 5.1 - Birthday

1 M2.: Oisín, we're gonna make a birthday cake for you and Ella.

2 Ois.: [(wining)]

3 E.: You're gonna make a cake for me and Oisín

4 O.: And you! And Ayda! And daddy, and mommy and Oisín and Ella and me!

5 (Ayda babbling)

6 O.: So::, how many is going to eat it. One, two, three, four, five..

7 (Ayda mumbling)

8 O.: Umm:, nine! It'll be nine...

9 E.: No, me first Oran!

10 O.: Huh?

11 E.: Me first, because I'm three.

When Oran is finished with naming people, he starts counting them. The counting is rather disorganized as well and he ends with the result of number nine, even though there is six people in his family. Line 4 starts with Oran saying “And you!”, it is possible that he is addressing Ella, who preceded him with naming herself and Oisín. It can be noticed that as opposed to Ella putting herself in the first place, Oran named all the other family members before putting him in the order. This can be seen as a certain development. Further on, a discussion about age develops between Oran and Ella.

O 5.2 - Age

- 9 E.: No, me first Oran!
- 10 O.: Huh?
- 11 E.: Me first, because I'm three.
- 12 (4s)
- 13 E.: Mum, I'm three. Am I three mum?
- 14 M2.: Yes, you are.
- 15 O.: [You're three and I'm five.]
- 16 E.: [I'm three.]
- 17 O.: I'll be five before Ella, won't I?
- 18 (2s)
- 19 O.: Won't I be five before Ella? Won't I?
- 20 M2.: Yes.
- 21 O.: He he.
- 22 M2.: No Oran, it doesn't matter. It's better off to be...you're better off to be
- 23 younger. [I'd love to be younger]
- 24 O.: [Noo:]

Ella, who is expecting her birthday soon wants to be the centre of attention, upon Oran's counting she responds: “No, me first Oran!” (line 9). There could have been some misunderstanding from Ella's side, maybe she did not hear Oran well. Oran initiates a next turn repair by “huh?”, line 10, apparently does not understand Ella's negative response, it seems that each of them is talking about a different thing. She develops her previous turn with explanation “Me first, because I'm three”. This turn is not responded by anyone, only a 4 seconds long pause follows. Ella then continues, with a changed strategy, looking for her mother's reassurance: “Mum, I'm three. Am I three mum?” (line 13). Ella's logic is, that she is older because her birthday is earlier, in January, while Oran's is in April. The mother confirms that, line 14. Oran though is more familiar with the float of time and age, and reacts to that with “You're three and I'm five”, line 15. Ella still does not realise the meaning that Oran is aiming to explain her and repeats her statement “I'm three”. This gets Oran in a dead point, he is not able to persuade her and therefore he looks for help at his mother. Lines 17 and 19: “I'll be five before Ella, won't

I? “, “Won't I be five before Ella? Won't I?” Even without any address it is clear in the situation that he is talking to his mother who is the main supervisor and judge in their disputes. The two-seconds pause in line 18 is rather significant. It is clear that Oran is looking for support of his mother, however, she does not want to be a participant in her children's dispute, therefore at first she does not give an answer. As the conversation progresses, she restrains Oran's satisfaction from the fact that he is older than Ella, line 22. In the child's point of view being older provides various advantages, more rights and allowances. The mother, knowing this, gives Oran another view. After this point, the discussions develops further from line 26. Lines 22 through 24 are included in order to maintain a link-up.

### O 5.3 – Old younger

22 M2.: No Oran, it doesn't matter. It's better off to be...you're better off to be  
23 younger. [I'd love to be younger]  
24 O.: [Noo:]  
25 E.: [I'll be three before you!]  
26 O.: (to A.) You're not younger.  
27 M2.: I know. I'm only getting old.  
28 O.: Huh?  
29 M2.: I'm getting old.  
30 O.: You're getting old younger, mum,  
31 M2.: I'm getting old, not younger, Oran.  
32 O.: You're gonna get younger and younger.  
33 E.: (laughs)  
34 O.: Will you get younger like a... like a granny.  
35 M2.: I'll be like your granny?  
36 O.: Yeah  
37 M2.: With white hair.  
38 O.: No. (Brown) hair.  
39 M2.: No hair?  
40 O.: Brown hair.

Upon hearing that it is better to be younger Oran disagrees, line 24. Ella joins in again with her statement “I'll be three before you”. Oran is older than Ella, but her meaning of what she said seems to be that her birthday is sooner than Oran's. Nevertheless, the main weight of the conversation is among Oran and his mother, therefore Ella does not receive any response. Oran keeps talking with the mother, his reply to “I'd love to be younger”(line 22, 23) is “You're not younger” (line 26). It appears here that again he understands what she says differently, he is focused on the comparison of the individuals and who is older or younger than who. In that way “you're not younger” makes sense, Oran apparently does not aim to be strictly realistic, pointing out his mother's age. His mother replies factually “I know. I'm only getting old” (line 27). This time Oran again does not understand, requiring a repair, line 28. The mother then replies in short “I'm getting old” (line 29).

The way the conversation has developed up to this point makes Oran modify his responses. At this moment he is no longer fixated to the age comparisons, he feels that he should endorse his mother, probably even noticing that he has said an unpleasant thing to his mother. He fixes that with “You're getting old younger, mum”. It is not clear what he means by that, since getting “old” and “younger” at the same time is impossible, but beside the meaning of the words, there is an obvious motivation for Oran, he aims to please his mother. He connects the general truth his mother said before, that she is “getting old” and connects it with the desire of being young. It is a unique example of the play with language, the child is able to connect the words in order to fulfil his goal and he is not limited by anything. The illogical sentence is corrected by the mother, line 31.

The desire to please his mother develops further, so Oran fixes the error of the previous utterance and increases the positive influence, lines 32. The idea of his mum getting older probably reminds him of his grandmother, who in the age of 80 is incredibly fit, therefore he uses the comparison to her, again connecting it with the idea of getting young. Getting young like a granny does not make much sense in general, in this case it appears to be again the connection of two positive things mixed up in a child's mind without worrying about the rationality.

The talk and interaction of Oran is incredibly rich, he connects opposing words in order to achieve a certain goal in communication, creating interesting ideas. In his

talk, there is a certain conflict between the motivation for the content of what he is saying and the actual use of language, irregularity. Nevertheless, it is a unique example of the children's use of language they are still learning, the motivation seems stronger than the limitation by regulations of the language. The child is not as concerned with the form of their talk as they are driven by the aim they are trying to achieve. In the sense of using the language as a means for communicating, influence on the listener and work with the participants Oran is very developed with a good communicating skill.

### 3.3 Joe – analysis of talk

Joe is an active, playful boy, he is the oldest child of the family. He has one three years younger sister Annie. Joe adores his mum and his little sister and is very keen on the farm his father owns and works at. His favourite activities are football, and play-doh. He spends a lot of time with his sister too.

Joe 1

List of participants:

J.: Joe (5)

T.: Tereza, researcher

A.: Annie (2)

The excerpt starts with Joe pretending to be on a train, running around the room and making sounds of a train. When he is finished, he informs Tereza that Annie should go to sleep.

#### J 1.1 – Annie's bedtime

1 J: Chucka chucka chucka choo choo, Bye bye!

2 T: Bye bye.

3 J: Choo choo

4 T: Choo choo

5 J: Chucka chucka chucka chucka choo choo. Annie will be going to bed  
6 now.

7 T: Is she?

8 J: She goes to bed at this time.

9 T: I don't know. But I think mum will come, because she knows when Annie  
10 goes to sleep.  
11 J: She knows that she goes to sleep now.  
12 T: Your mum knows. Annie, are you tired? Do you want to go to sleep? Do you  
13 want to go to sleep?  
14 J: Yeah she.. will I show you where she goes to bed?  
15 T: No, I will wait another minute, because I think your mum will come to put  
16 her to bed.  
17 J: She goes to bed now when she's a bit tired. She does go to bed now. (3s) Will  
18 I show you these things?

Line 5, Joe is in the middle of pretending to be driving on a train when he suddenly stops and states that Annie goes to bed. Tereza responds uncertainly, “Is she?” line 6, for she was not instructed whether or not to put Annie to bed. In this case, the question does not mean the initiator for assurance about the information, but rather to show one's uncertainty. Joe responds re-assuring his statement by “She goes to bed at this time” (line 7). Tereza was not given any instructions by the parents about Annie's day regime, therefore she leaves the responsibility for Joe's mother, line 8. Joe wants to persuade Tereza about his claim, referring to his mother, saying that “She knows that she goes to sleep now”. However, the mother is not there to support his claim and it is not sure whether Joe orientates well at the time and Annie's regime, or he wants Tereza to be able to pay attention only to Joe when Annie would be gone to sleep. Tereza repeats that the mother knows when to put Annie to bed. In order not to exclude the possibility that Joe is right, she starts talking to Annie, asking her whether she is tired. It is clear that it is not meant to find out the truth about Annie's sleeping habit, but to continue with the conversation and not to refuse Joe's suggestion strictly. In line 12 Joe answers on behalf of Annie, saying “yeah she...” but does not finish the sentence. Instead he suggests showing Tereza the bed where Annie sleeps. Upon this explicit question Tereza responds her final decision, “No, I will wait another minute, because I think your mum will come to put her to bed”. Joe tries to persuade Tereza two more times to put Annie to bed, and when the attempt is still not successful, he changes the topic. There is a three seconds pause, however, it feels like Joe continues his talk, only with a different topic to keep the conversation going. “Will I show you these things?”,

line 14, 15. Upon saying “these things” Joe starts doing special moves. The speakers have moved to the television and Joe reacts to a short spot about Ninja Turtles programme.

#### J 1.2 – Ninja turtles

- 16 T: Is it the ninja moves?  
17 J: Uaaah (doing the moves)  
18 T: woow, that's really like... ninja moves. Who is your favourite ninja turtle?  
19 J: All of them. And even the mouse.  
20 T: The girl?  
21 J: No, the mouse.  
22 T: um.. who is the mouse?  
23 J: The mou[se]  
24 T: Ooh, is it the chef of them? The main ninja? The older?  
25 J: Yeah, the mouse.  
26 T: He knows everything. The one, the wisest, the oldest?  
27 J: Yeah, he does frighten the others, he has a tail.  
28 T: Alright.  
29 J: Do you know that?  
30 T: I saw a part of it with Oran. And his favourite ninja is Michelangelo.  
31 J: Me too, that's my favourite.  
32 T: Look, do you know where this is?  
33 J: The little railway station.  
34 T: That's in Clonakilty!  
35 J: Yeah.  
36 T: The little village.

Line 16, Tereza asks: “Is it the ninja moves?”. She refers to the animated television programme. Joe is performing moves of ninja turtles, adding the sounds of the battling, line 17. Tereza aims to develop the conversation further. After praising Joe for his moves (line 18: “wow, that's really like...ninja moves”) she asks about Joe's idol, line 18. By saying “All of them. And even the mouse” (line 19) Joe expresses that he likes

the whole programme and does not pick a favourite. The highlighted information he passes is that he likes the whole. Upon the mention of the mouse Tereza requires a repair, for she is not as familiar with the characters of the programme as Joe, line 20. Tereza is guessing who the mouse on the programme is. Joe does not provide a repair in the meaning of content, only repeats again what he said before: “No, the mouse”. In case Tereza misheard him before it would have been the right response, however, it is not the case. Tereza therefore demonstrates the issue of not understanding that requires to be fixed: “Um.. who is the mouse?”, explicitly asking about the character she does not know, to be able to classify the information. Here appears another fail at the initiated repair, when Joe again repeats only the same words that were already said: “the mouse” (line 23). Tereza still trying to recollect the show with all the characters now remembers who the mouse was. Line 24: “Ooh, is it the chef of them? The main ninja? The older?” The “ooh” is the very point when she recollected the character. Upon her questions from line 24, by which she aims to verify her assumption about the mouse Joe responds: “yeah, the mouse” (line 25). Once again, the same response is repeated, now only with the addition of a confirmation “yeah”. From line 19 through to line 25 the response appeared in almost identical form. Joe's statement works for him as several means. The first time, it was contained in the answer to who his favourite ninja is. The second time it is used, it functions as a repair in case Tereza misheard it the first time. The third time mention is in general rather useless, for Tereza wants to know who the mouse is, and is given an answer that it is “the mouse”. In wider understanding can be seen as a means for giving Tereza time to remember herself and saving Joe further explanation of the character. In case Tereza would not be familiar with the show at all this would have not helped, however, in this situation it did work and she came herself to a correct conclusion of what she was asking about. In the fourth mention it is supplemented by “yes”, which serves as a confirmation to Tereza's guess.

In her next turn she asks once more about details about the mouse to be sure it is correct and to prove she has remembered even more, line 26. Joe gives a positive response and provides a new information about the mouse “he does frighten the others, he has a tail”, line 27. Tereza gives only a brief response “alright” (line 28), upon which Joe asks “Do you know that?” (line 29). It seems that when Tereza showed and proved she knows something about the Ninja Turtles programme (i.e. lines 24, 26), Joe feels



like he should show his better knowledge of the programme. Tereza replies with “I saw a part of it with Oran. And his favourite ninja is Michelangelo”, line 30. When giving the fact that Oran has a favourite ninja turtle, Joe immediately states: “Me too, that's my favourite” (line 31). The reason for Joe stating his favourite ninja turtle now can be caused by the feeling that if he does not pick one, he would be somehow behind Oran, and also it is important to say that Oran is Joe's favourite cousin and therefore it is likely that Oran has certain impact on Joe as well. Beside that, there is still the option that Michelangelo is a popular character among children in general and therefore it is easy for Joe to agree with Oran on that choice.

Here emerges an impact from the television, there appears a slot from Clonakilty, a nearby town which is famous for a miniature village with a model railway. Tereza draws Joe's attention to it, line 32. Joe recognises the town and points out the important feature of Clonakilty, line 33. Even though Joe did not answer the question “do you know where it is?” with the name of the place, his response shows he recognises the place and knows the main characteristic, by which he proves it.

Joe 2

List of participants:

J.: Joe (5)

T.: Tereza, researcher

A.: Annie (2)

Joe, Tereza and Annie are at the table, playing play-doh with a set of plastic rollers, cutters and extruders to make various shapes and designs.

J 2.1 - Play-doh

1 J: Can I have the maker thing?

2 T: Yeah, I'll pass it to you.

3 J: That thing.

4 T: This one?

5 J: Yea. A:::nd..

6 T: This is cool. It's like.. In Czech Republic for Christmas we bake small sweets  
7 and this one looks like one of them. We call it banánky, like little bananas.

- 8 Cause it's kind of the shape of a banana and it's sweet and nice.  
9 J: How..what?

The conversation starts with Joe asking for a tool he wants to use. Instead of using an exact name of the thing, he calls it “the maker thing”, derived from the fact that he makes something with it. In fact he means a play-doh extruder, however, the substitution of the official name with a simplified description is a common occurrence. Tereza agrees to give it to Joe, the extruder is obviously close to her and out of the reach from Joe, line 2. Nevertheless, in this case Tereza is not sure what particular thing Joe means, therefore when he sees what she is reaching for, he specifies the thing by pointing at it, and notifies the act commenting “That thing”, line 3. Tereza requires assurance and points at what she thinks Joe wants, “This one?”, line 4. Finally it is agreed by Joe's turn in line 5. However, it seems that he is going to continue, for he starts a new sentence with “A:::nd...”, but he never finishes. “And” signals that he is going to add another thing he would like Tereza to give him, however he stops the utterance and thinks. At that moment Tereza spots one extruder attachment which looks like the one used for baking in the Czech Republic, she explains that to Joe in lines 6, 7 and 8. Joe appears very confused by that, asking “how...what?” indicates that he does not know what to ask first. How to make the sweets, or what it actually is. For a child who has never seen Czech Christmas sweets it is probably difficult to put all the given information together and imagine what the speaker has in mind.

Instead of explaining again in detail about Czech tradition, Tereza asks Joe about their Christmas celebrating in Ireland. The conversation develops further.

#### J 2.2 - Christmas

- 10 T: What do you make for Christmas? Do you have anything special?  
11 J: Yeah, we have uh...dessert a:nd..what dessert we like..  
12 T: Did you see Oran this Christmas?  
13 J: Yeah, he was down here with us.  
14 T: Yeah, wasn't it great? He told me that. That he was here.  
15 J: We had some (???) and soup, but Ella didn't eat hers .. and Oran so...but I did.

In order to keep the conversation going Tereza asks about Christmas in Joe's family, line 10. Joe responds in the theme of sweets which Tereza started before, mentioning a dessert, line 11. He starts speaking about a dessert, which corresponds to previous Tereza's talk about Czech sweets, even though the last question asked was general, "what do you make for Christmas?". It shows that the topic given earlier is still in the mind of the child and the general question is answered in that theme.

Tereza then changes the subject of the conversation slightly, asking about Joe's cousin Oran, line 12. Joe confirms the question about Oran's visit, line 13, upon which Tereza responds with "Yeah, wasn't it great? He told me that. That he was here". Tereza aims to develop the conversation successfully, therefore she chooses the topic she knows is close to Joe and that he would be able to develop somehow. Therefore she asks about Oran visiting, even though she already knows from Oran that he visited Joe during Christmas. This technique proves as successful, since Joe starts talking about the visit, aimed at food. 15 "We had some (???) and soup, but Ella didn't eat hers .. and Oran so... but I did."(15), "It was really nice." (16). The whole conversation carries the theme of food, therefore upon the question about Oran's visit Joe does not start telling for instance what games they played or what they did together, instead he tells Tereza what food they had and who ate their portions. Unfortunately, out of the recording it is not audible what was the first thing Joe said they had, from the context it is most likely some type of food.

Another interesting part of the conversation brings up the issue of a child drawing attention of the companion, it is frequently the case when a child is creating something. The next excerpt is a later part of the same transcript, Joe 2, lines 23 through 31.

### J 2.3 – Play-doh tools

23 J.: Look at this.

24 T.: Oh, What is it for?

25 J.: It's for lifting up. Look.

26 T.: What is it for? It's not for play-doh, is it?

27 J.: Heh, no::: That I::s, it's a bridge! Look what I made.

28 T.: Look. (Talking to Annie)

- 29 J.: Look what I made.  
30 T.: Good girl.  
31 J.: Look what I made.

The circumstances of the conversation have slightly changed. The theme of the talk is not given only by the float of a discussion, but it is more concentrated at the act of creativity of Joe. He has made something out of the play-doh and now wants Tereza to rate it, drawing her attention with “Look at this”, line 23. Tereza reacts with a question on a purpose of that thing, line 24. She can be either asking about Joe's products he made of play-doh, or, as the context suggests, she is asking about a tool he uses. Joe explains that “it's for lifting up”, however, the whole meaning of the thing is still not clear. Again he says “Look”, to make Tereza watch what he uses his product for, line 25. Since Tereza is not certain about a thing he is playing with, she asks again the same question, this time extended with “It's not for play-doh, is it?”, line 26. As was mentioned earlier, Joe has a set of plastic tools made for play-doh, but this time he uses some thing Tereza assumes does not belong to this set. Her question “what is it for?” is rather ambiguous, therefore the required repair does not arrive, providing fulfilling answer. Instead, Joe chooses the question as aimed at his making and therefore answers with what he made. Only the later addition of “It's not for play-doh” suggests that Tereza is actually asking about the tool Joe uses. At this moment, Joe is fully concentrated on his work and wants to engage Tereza in his creative process, line 27. Joe's turn is following: “Heh, no::: That i::s, it's a bridge! Look what I made.” With the first part of the reply he responds the question about the tool, but rather vaguely. The rest of his message is explaining what he has made, he talks about a bridge made out of play-doh using a plastic tool. Beside that, in this turn he again calls for Tereza's interest with “Look what I made”. However, being in the company of two children, Tereza here starts talking with Annie, not reacting to Joe's turn. Lines 28, 30. It is taking turns with Joe repeating “Look what I made”. This excerpt showed several attempts of Joe to gain attention of the adult companion. It is obvious that he is looking for the response of the adult, probably an assessment, for he is not interested in his baby sister's opinion about the bridge. It has been the adult the whole time he tried to attract with his makings.

When it comes to Joe's communication, he appears to be very focused on given topics, not changing subjects. He is also very aimed at the other participants, he likes to have the attention and when he produces something, he wants it to be seen by others. It displays in his communication, the frequency of the word “look” is high in times when he feels he does not have the full attention.

Joe 3

List of participants:

J.: Joe (5)

T.: Researcher

This extract contains a discussion between Joe and Tereza about play-doh. Joe likes to play with a new, fresh packets of play-doh, while Tereza prefers to use the one that is already open before it dries out.

J 3.1 – White play-doh

1 J.: This is a cool play-doh.

2 T.: Wooow.

3 J.: Can we have the white play-doh here now?

4 T.: Yeah

5 J.: Will you sit next to me? Please.

6 T.: And you want all this?

7 J.: Where's white? White?

8 T.: Here's white, look.

9 J.: It's only...no...It's not white

10 T.: It's white. Wait, we don't need to open a new one. We have the good one, this  
11 one.

12 J.: No, you have this one, it's open already.

13 T.: But the other one is open.

Joe's goal is to get Tereza's permission on opening a new packet of play-doh. He starts the dialogue with “This is a cool play-doh”. By making Tereza interested in

playing with it too it would be likely to get the permission. It is a common practice in the family that the child uses the same play-doh as long as it is soft and malleable before they are allowed to open a new one. Joe is familiar with that and accepts that he has to be allowed by the adult to open the new packet, however he has a strategy to persuade the adult, in this case Tereza. When he raises Tereza's interest in that play-doh, line 2, he asks directly "Can we have the white play-doh here now?", line 3. There are several packets of play-doh, even white ones, and Tereza understands Joe's request as meant at the open ones. Upon her positive response "yeah", line 4, he is satisfied and continues with another request, "Will you sit next to me? Please.", line 5.

As it was displayed in the previous extracts, Joe likes to have a company and somebody participating at plays with him. The last request is not answered, Tereza skips that and assures about the previous one, that is, the amount of play-doh Joe wants to use. "And you want all this?", line 6, shows that Tereza is not sure that Joe wants to use all of the play-doh. To make it easier for the reader to imagine the situation, Joe and Tereza are sitting at a table with several packets of open and used play-doh of various colours, and there are some new, still sealed packets. Tereza's question is aimed at the whole lot of open play-doh, pointing at them. Until now, the trouble source of the conversation has not displayed yet, it is only in line 7 that Joe points out there is some misunderstanding between them: "Where's white? White? ". The repetition of "white" is used in order to be understood correctly, to prevent another error in the conversation. Here Tereza continues in the dialogue in an unchanged manner, apparently not yet realizing the error in the dialogue, pointing at an open packet of white play-doh, line 8. After this turn comes Joe's discontented response, line 9, which finally manifests the first requests. Joe's utterance "It's not white" here means that in his point of view, the play-doh that has been used before and slightly mixed with other colours has lost the quality of the colour, and by "the white play-doh", line 3, he meant the clear new white play-doh. Tereza rationally classified the used one as white, even though it is somewhat coloured by the other ones, for it is still visible that the original colour was white. Here finally comes the correction of her point of view in the conversation, line 10. The word "wait" marks the exact moment when Tereza realised the different points of view.

Joe 4

List of participants:

J.: Joe (5)

T.: Tereza, researcher

A.: Annie (2)

Joe, Tereza and Annie are in the sitting room, Joe suggests to play a pretended picnic. The situation starts slowly, Joe inquiring an interest about the picnic. When Tereza agrees, Joe takes the role of the initiator and controller, who assigns tasks to the rest of the participants.

#### J 4.1 – Picnic I

- 1 J.: Is anybody ready for picnic?
- 2 T.: Yeah
- 3 J.: Sit on the mat so
- 4 T.: I'll sit by the map. I'm too big for the mat anyway.
- 5 J.: No, you must sit on it!
- 6 T.: I'm alright here
- 7 J.: Move on a (???), sit on a tiger mat.
- 8 T.: I've got a cake.
- 9 J.: One cake for everyone.

The excerpt features a discussion between Joe and Tereza. It is obvious that the game of picnic is in Joe's charge and he aims resolutely to give out roles and orders for the participants, and those to be followed in order to fulfil his idea about the scene. Line 1 contains an invitation to the game, by asking "Is anybody ready for picnic?" Joe gets attention of Tereza and announces the game. By Tereza's agreement in line 2 the game is ready to start. However, only willingness of the participants to play is not sufficient for Joe. He requires Tereza's participation to be confirmed by co-operation, this should be demonstrated by taking the right position and sitting on the mat. Since Tereza is not willing to do that, giving reasons in lines 4 and 6, Joe does not make concessions and gives strict orders, lines 5 and 7. According to Joe's strategies it is clear that he is

determined to maintain control and a leading position. In order to avoid further disputes, Tereza changes topic to food, line 8. By saying “I've got a cake” she signals that the game has started and probably that the position of participants is not so important for playing picnic. The game therefore moves forward by this line. However, Joe still does not compromise about his role and reacts to Tereza's line with another strict order, line 9. Joe appears to stand his ground firmly, initiating an activity and keeping his governance. When persuading Tereza to follow his commands, he does not give reasons why he requires her to sit in a particular place. He does not explain it, but stands his ground the whole time. Even though his requests are not obediently followed and the situation starts to develop in a different direction, Joe stays calm and does not get angry, which suggests a rather stable personality. To the unwanted development of the situation he only reacts verbally, re-stating his requests. In this first excerpt Joe acts more strictly than in the following ones. It seems that he tries various attitudes in order to maintain control in the game.

The game changes moments later its theme to food and Joe's attitude takes on a different course as well.

#### J 4.2 – Picnic II

- 15 J.: Who would have tea?  
16 T.: Me, please!  
17 J.: Or lasagne?  
18 T.: Lasagne?  
19 J.: Yeah, [I've]  
20 T.: [Are the]re lasagne for picnic? Yay:::, they're my favourite!  
21 J.: Or spaghetti bolognese.  
22 T.: O::h, I love them too.  
23 J.: Ok, spaghetti bolognese, [(???)]  
24 A.: [Dinner]  
25 T.: Dinner?  
26 A.: Yea:::  
27 J.: Alright, bolognese are coming right into a bowl!



At first Joe offers tea, which can be understood as a result of adopting a cultural custom. It is an usual commencement in Irish social events to offer tea. He continues with an invitation to a meal which is lasagne and spaghetti bolognese. It is most likely no coincidence that Joe has offered these particular meals, for he knows that they are Tereza's favourites since she was an au-pair in his family. Therefore it appears to be Joe's intention to bring on a nice atmosphere and please Tereza. This excerpt differs immensely from the initial one, here Joe took on a different strategy of performing the activity. Instead of giving strict orders as in Picnic I, here he engages participants by raising their interest through his knowledge of their preferences, in this case in the matter of food. Overall, this excerpt seems to depict more content situation and happily engaged participants which is caused by Joe's different, more positive strategies. Joe follows Irish cultural stereotype in order to open the game, upon positive reaction to it he unrolls the game by offers which he supposes would be positively received as well. His initiative is unchanged and he maintains the role of the person in charge over the activity.

The play continues by serving the meal, Joe includes in the play his favourite toy-figurine Bernie.

#### J 4.3 – Spaghetti

List of participants:

J.: Joe (5)

T.: Researcher

A.: Annie (2)

34 J.: Here is your fork and spaghetti bolognese.

35 T.: Thank you very much!

36 J.: Don't get any to Bernie.

37 T.: Ok

37 A.: Ugh ugh

38 J.: I'll make more spaghetti bolognese. We'll fry it up.

39 T.: Do you want to taste?

40 (noise of pretending eating)

- 41 T.: Nice, Annie? Hmm, did you make it yourself? All by yourself?  
42 J.: I made it a::ll by myself.

At the beginning, line 34, Joe gives Tereza a fork and the food so she can eat. Immediately after her “thank you” he forbids her to feed Bernie with the pretended spaghetti, line 36. It appears that Joe uses his experience from the family and applies it on the game. Since he is an older brother, he has been observing his mother's behaviour around the baby daughter Annie and obviously has learned those. It could therefore explain his command about not feeding Bernie with spaghetti. It is an example of child adopting certain behaviour from the family or society. Thing that he was frequently told when in a subordinate mother-child relationship he can now use himself, when in a superior position of the game-initiator and Bernie's owner, or so to say, carer.

In line 38 Joe suggests making more pasta and says “we'll fry it up”. Joe probably learned this phrase in the context of cooking and now when he is in such situation, uses it for his activity. However, the phrase commonly refers to “prepare something by frying”, which is not exactly fitting to the activity of preparing spaghetti. In his age, Joe has learned many words and expressions, however when they are expressing an activity which he is not quite familiar with, there can appear a discrepancy. Even though the expression does not exactly describe the activity he has in mind, he uses actively the phrase he learned and is clear with the message he communicates.

Line 41 contains Tereza's attempt to engage both the children in a talk. At first she asks: “Nice, Annie?”, derived from the address it is clearly aimed at Annie. However, Tereza then continues, by saying: “Hmm, did you make it yourself? All by yourself?”. This question comes immediately after addressing Annie, but from the context it is logical that now she talks to Joe and refers to the meals. Joe understands it and responds, line 42. The prolonged vowel “a” stresses the fact that he did it alone and signals that he is proud of it. The exchange displays Joe's correct orientation in the talk, his ability to pay attention and his active involvement in the conversation.

This excerpt proves that Joe is able to use the language for various means. As was demonstrated also in the previous excerpts, Joe likes to be in charge in the activity, which is demonstrated by him giving orders and initiating what is happening. On the

other hand, just shortly afterwards he can change the attitude and become a good warm-hearted host who cares about the interest and enjoyment of his companions. Another thing that was found here is that Joe is still acquiring overall knowledge, he increases vocabulary and phrases and learns to use them actively. Sometimes it does not work out but that is the way the child learns it, by observations and practice.

Joe 5

List of participants:

J.: Joe (5)

T.: Tereza, researcher

A.: Annie (2)

In this excerpt, Joe, Annie and Tereza are in the living room where most of the games and plays are performed. The participants are playing football with a toy figurine Bernie. Holding Bernie in his hand, Joe turns him into a football player on the table and kicks a ball with Bernie, trying to score a goal around Tereza who is the goalkeeper.

J 5.1 - Bernie

1 J.: Kick, Bernie!

2 A.: Kick, Bernie!..oooh

3 J.: Yes::! He scored a goal!

4 A.: [Yes] Scored!

5 J.: You have to get it over to Tereza's side Annie. [Goa::!]

6 T.: [Yes] They're both... oh dear. And it [will]...

7 J.: [A point!] The point for me.

The excerpt 5.1 features a game of football performed by Joe and Annie, who take turns to hold a toy-figurine Bernie. The extract starts with Joe commanding Bernie, the football player, to kick. Even though Joe is holding Bernie in his hand, he is driven by imagination, and pretends that Bernie is an independent player.

On one hand, this game is performed as if Joe was uninvolved, only watching the match in which Bernie is an independent player. On the other hand, there is also a

regular distribution of turns in a play of two siblings, here Joe and Annie, each of them having a go with the toy-figurine. Joe's turn is in lines 1 through to 4, and Annie's starts in line 5. This shows two different levels, interestingly penetrating. Firstly, the general rules of two siblings playing together, when they share the toys and take turns are so naturally adopted that they become omnipresent. Secondly, a game itself is performed in a great involvement with a strong presence of imagination, so it seems that a toy-figurine is accounted as a fellow-player.

Another issue occurring here is how the children adopt the behaviour they observe at adults. Such case was analysed in O 4.1., a transcript featuring Oran pretending to be a farmer, using his father's expressions. In this case, Joe performs a common behaviour of sport-fans, cheering a player for a kick.

Looking back at the utterances in the transcript, the turns of talk are highly even as well. Joe, being the older brother, naturally commands a degree of respect from his younger sibling. Lines 1 and 3 contain Joe's command and a comment on the game of football, while lines 2 and 4 are Annie's repetitions of what Joe said. Line 5 contains Joe's order for Annie. In the extract, Joe's words are repeated and he manifests his leadership by telling Annie what to do.

### 3.4 Summary of observations and insights

The research demonstrated the ability of each of the children to verbalise their goals during the play. Typical occurrences of Ailish were her comments on her activity and her attempts to make others participate. She expresses her aims and requests to the other participants in an understandable way. In her talk and ideas, she usually proceeds from things of her own experience. It can be demonstrated on her use of phrases commonly used in her family, or the drawing of a family of sheep, which resembles her own.

Ailish is increasing her vocabulary and at this stage she is able to express various ideas and thoughts. Even though there appear errors in her talk, she is able to correct herself when she is aware of the mistake. She communicates actively and successfully. In order to engage others in her activity, she offers tasks and smoothly suggests participation, which is usually complied.

Ailish has a positive stance in the interactions, she behaves calmly and cooperates with others. Ailish is competent to conduct the activities and to take on the role of a leader, on the other hand she happily follows suggestions and instructions from others, switching the roles with ease. Ailish's emotional perceptiveness shows in the analysis in her offer to help her friend with a drawing.

The analysis of Oran displayed his active attitude in the conversations. He asks questions and is a capable participant of a conversation. Oran formulates his interests or goals. In his talk appear phrases adopted from his family, for instance with the topic of farming. His use of language is mainly correct, with minimum of occurrences of errors. Similar as in the case of Ailish, Oran also makes occasionally irrational links, such as in the discussion about age with his mother. The main motive for it appears to be empathy, and an intention to please his mother. The care for others is displayed through his talk as in the case of Ailish.

Oran is rather evenly in the role of a leader and of a participant. He is competent to maintain either of the positions, in each case letting space for others to integrate. His interaction is held in a good, calm manner.

Joe manifested an active attitude in the interactions and activities. With two opposite strategies, he aimed to maintain leadership and governance of the activities. As was discussed in the first transcript, initially he took a strict stance in order for his orders to be followed. All his requests were expressed verbally, stating the particular expectations. In the following excerpts, Joe changed the strategy into motivating the participants and raising their attention. This method is based on his empathy and understanding the interest of others.

#### 4 Conclusion

In order to communicate effectively with children and to understand them, it is important to be familiar with their way of thinking as well as the main factors that impact their interaction. The topic of this thesis is communication of children at play. It connects two significant parts of the life of a child. The first one is communication, which is the core activity of any social life through age. The second one is a play – an

activity, in which learning blends with creativity, and the child's mind is boosted. This theme created an interesting opportunity to observe how children's thinking works and to focus on the use of language when a child is engrossed in an activity which stimulates imagination and creativity. The children use their vivid imagination in the plays as well as in the learning process and gathering information. It was demonstrated that the children link the new information and concepts with their present, possibly incomplete knowledge. That leads to a use of phrases correct in a given context but unfitting in the particular case. Similar example is narrowing the meaning of a word which is in fact more complex than the child understands and realises.

In the analysis was presented interaction and communication of Ailish, Oran, and Joe. They are well-developing children; active, creative and friendly. Each of them is still acquiring their native language and improving their communicative skills by using their current knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. The balanced family environment certainly has a great impact on their calm, friendly interaction and their own development. The main outcomes of the analysis can be classified as the following: the use of language – whether the child is able to verbalise a certain goal, success in that matter, adopting phrases, correctness of the language, the ability to communicate an idea, strategy of communication in order to fulfil an intention, the manner of interaction, and the role of the speaker.

The communication of each of the three children is conducted with a great significance of their interest in an activity, their wish for co-operation with others and empathy. Even though their level of language is still developing, they are able to express their intentions and requests successfully, they communicate their ideas and effectively use their vocabulary and phrases. In the process of learning, the presence of an adult is important and the approach is significant. In the analysis of Ailish was demonstrated a positive manner of repairing an error. The parent alerts the mistake in an amusing way, which draws the child's attention and does not cause anguish. The child is then motivated to fix the error and remains in a good mood. There are various methods for

Since the right development of children is immensely important for the whole life, any insight into children's way of thinking and communicating can be beneficial. This thesis examined communication of three five-year-old children – Ailish, Oran, and Joe. There appear various occurrences which might be found in the communication of

children generally. The issues of explaining a new idea to a child, errors and repairs, strategy in talk, questions and requests, and many more occurrences were found and discussed in the analysis of this thesis. Therefore, this work could bring adults a new perspective about the issue and give them an insight into the communication of children.

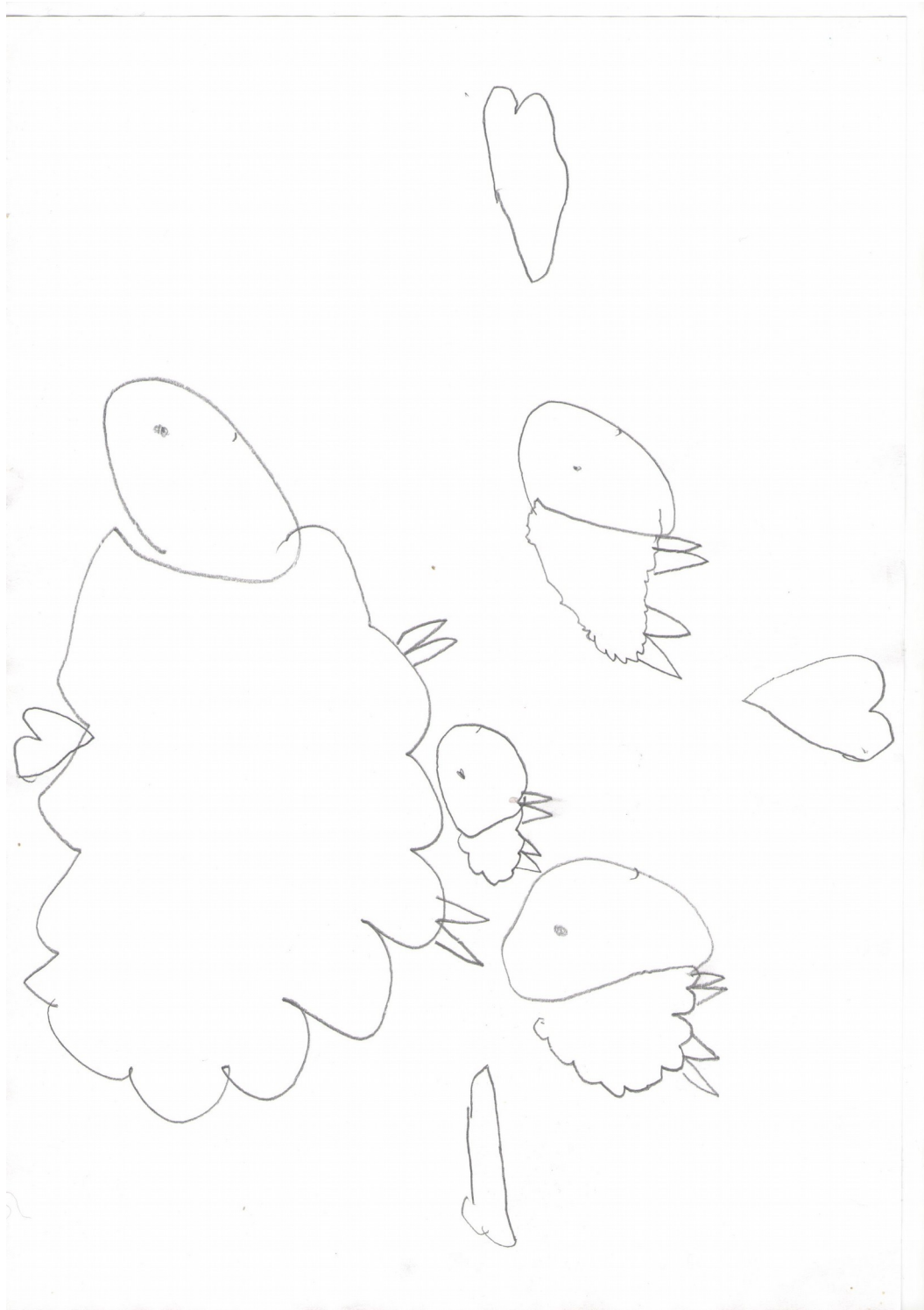
## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Glossary of transcription symbols

[ ]	Square brackets indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk
(guess)	The word in brackets indicate transcriber's best guess of an unclear utterance, or transcriber's comment on a parallel activity
(???)	The question marks in brackets indicate an unclear fragment of the recording
(2)	The number in brackets indicates the length of a pause in seconds
::	Multiple colons indicate a stretch of a sound or a letter
...	Multiple dots indicate a short pause in talk



Appendix 2: Drawing featured in the transcripts of Ailish, A 1.1



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