Development of justifications in Finnish: Linguistic forms and meanings

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Abstract

This study explores how three Finnish-speaking children from 2;4 to 5;6 years of age developed in profiling justifications in the context of every-day interactions. In the study, the linguistic approach to children's justifications is foregrounded to complement the picture that has emerged from previous studies with a socio-cognitive emphasis. Using the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics, the study takes the semantics of the linguistic structures into account. Furthermore, in the analysis of linguistic meanings, contextual knowledge about the usage events appeared to hold a key role. The data shows that the proportion of simple declarative clauses in elaborating justifications decreased over time, while expressions containing deontic modality and justificatory conjunction-initial clauses increased. Early complex sentences with a justificatory part typically lacked a connector, but the use of connectors with causal meanings increased during development. The most significant evidence of development was discovered in the use of modal verbs and other lexical elements, and conventionalized constructions. From a semantic perspective, many of the instantiations of these linguistic categories are means of expressing generalizations and social rules. The analysis also indicated early competence of applying interactional strategies that relate to children's conceptual understanding of rules.

Keywords: children, cognitive grammar, justification, usage-based approach to language acquisition

1 Introduction

There is a considerable amount of research on the development of children's early justifications from the socio-cognitive perspective (e.g. Dunn & Munn 1987; Orsolini 1993; Veneziano & Sinclair 1995; Veneziano 2010; Goetz 2010). However, the linguistic means used in expressing justificatory meanings have not gained much attention. The purpose of this study is to

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fill this gap by presenting a case study on how Finnish-speaking children from 2 to 5 years of age develop in expressing justificatory meanings with linguistic forms. Children's utterances are examined within the context of their usage events, i.e. i) the physical environments of every-day life, and ii) the interaction between an adult and a child, or two children.

The study continues a theme of children "influencing" in the family context; the first study of this two-part research project concerned early directives in Finnish (Surakka 2017). Examining the directive speech function of a two-year-old child led to recognizing that it also establishes a context for children to practice logical thinking and reasoning, and thus linguistically formulating justificatory arguments for making the directives they expressed as convincing as possible. For example, when a mother of a child called Max switched off the television, Max criticized the action by saying *Max kattoa sitä* ('Max watch it'). Max's reaction seemed to contain the meaning structures of both a directive ('do not switch off the television') and a justification ('I am still watching television').

Orsolini (1993) formulates an apt distillation of the purpose of justification in social relationships:

> In disputes and other conflict talk, speakers adopt two conversational roles: rejecting the addressee's position and providing some ground for their own position. Arguments used as grounds commonly show that the speaker's position is based on underlying norms and rules that are supposed to be shared by the participants. Thus, providing justifications in disputes means producing arguments that can make the speaker's position less questionable by the recipient. (Orsolini 1993: 1)

Orsolini's description brings out the main aspects of justifications that foreground the analysis of the current study, where the linguistic structures examined are motivated by either rejecting the addressee's position or providing grounds for one's own. The study focuses on the linguistic forms and meanings of childrens' justificatory utterances. The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What kind of linguistic structures do Finnish-speaking children use in their justifications?

2. How do the linguistic forms and meanings of justifications develop from 2;4 to 5;6 years of age?

The answers to these questions are explored in the context of cognitive linguistics, and multi-disciplinary findings about argumentation and justifications are considered from both theoretical (Toulmin 1969) and empirical (Dunn & Munn 1987; Orsolini 1993; Veneziano & Sinclair 1995; Goetz 2010) perspectives. The aspects of language and language acquisition (henceforth LA) are interpreted in terms of cognitive grammar (Langacker 1999; 2008) and usage-based theory (e.g. Lieven & Tomasello 2008; Kauppinen 1998). When LA is approached by means of a usage-based framework, the physical and interactional contexts of the studied utterances need to be acknowledged. The analysis thus utilizes literature from the field of multimodal communication (Goodwin 2000). The remainder of this article is structured as follows: § 2 outlines the theoretical framework of the study. § 3 introduces the research data and method. The analysis in § 4 consists of two parts. § 4.1 presents the lexical and constructional means by which the justificatory meanings are construed into simple declarative clauses. In §§ 4.2–4.5, the development of justifications is examined. The developmental view is compiled by observing the order in which children start using the linguistic means that have been defined as analytical units for the study. § 5 summarizes and discusses the results.

2 Socio-cognitive approaches to justifications and language acquisition

The theoretical framework of this study consists of literature from three areas. § 2.1 presents the views of cognitive linguistics and of the usage-based approach to LA that are applied in the study. § 2.2 sets justifications into the framework of social interaction. § 2.3 reviews the previous studies on children's justifications. The linguistic structures of the Finnish language that are examined in the study are introduced in § 2.4.

2.1 Cognitive grammar and a usage-based approach to language acquisition

The linguistic means of expressing justificatory meanings are the analytical foci in the current study. However, according to the views of cognitive linguistics, there is no way of examining a linguistic structure without acknowledging its meaning (Langacker 1999: 9). Consequently, the

questions of "what do children aim to achieve with justifications" and "how are justifications constructed as meaning structures" are seen as relevant. Bowerman & Levinson (2001) have stated that it is useful to approach child language from the perspective of speech functions or semantic domains in order to form a cognitively comprehensive picture of children's development. This study outlines justifications as a function in children's language.

Langacker (2009) argues that the usage-based approach to LA is an important source of general guidance for cognitive linguistic theory. In the usage-based approach to LA, a child is considered as learning language from their actual usage events (henceforth UE), i.e. from particular utterances in particular contexts, and so building up an increasingly complex and abstract range of linguistic representations (Lieven & Tomasello 2008). A child may have no understanding of the internal structure of the established linguistic structures they use, even if they use them (somewhat) accurately regarding the UE. Patterns are built up of the relationships between constructions and their parts, in a process of increasing complexity and schematization. As children's grammar develops, they add concepts to their inventory that are increasingly abstract and complex. When the child uses constructions that have been schematized to fit words matching the function of the construction, the usage of these constructions is considered productive (Lieven & Tomasello 2008).

Lieven & Tomasello (2008: 170) consider *utterances* as the strings of speech to get things said and understood, while *constructions* are regarded as linguistic structures. The concept of constructions refers to conventionalized linguistic structures that consist of a specific form-meaning combination (e.g. Goldberg 2006: 3; Lieven & Tomasello 2008). Children learn language by means of *figures of speech*, i.e. constructions they have memorized from previous UEs, and apply them into new UEs according to the level of their pragmatic and grammatical abilities (Kauppinen 1998). This idea is useful as a theoretical starting point, even if this study mainly focuses on the spontaneous speech produced by children.

In cognitive linguistics, meaning is considered to be *conceptualization*-based (Langacker 2008: 30). Conceptualization is a meaning structure created in a dynamic process that encompasses any facet of mental experience (Langacker 2008: 30). The conceptualization process includes both the conceptual network and the highlighted perceptual input from the UE (Langacker 1999: 49). *Construing* (Langacker 2008: 43) in this study refers to the process of creating conceptualizations, and

profiling (Langacker 2008: 66) to their verbalization. The current study aims for an understanding of what factors of UEs motivate children to use their perceptual and conceptual knowledge as resources for profiling justifications (§§ 4.3–4.5). The analysis is ultimately bound to the idea of children developing their language skills as being motivated from interactive, UE-based aspirations.

The linguistic data that allows the researcher to examine the interactive meaning factors of the UE can be used as the basis for the usage-based analysis of language. The data of this study is therefore constructed to meet this description (see § 3).

2.2 Justifications in social interaction

Toulmin characterizes *justificatory arguments* as "brought forward in support of assertions, in the *structures* they may be expected to have, the merits they can claim and the ways in which we set about grading, assessing and criticizing them" (Toulmin 1969: 12). Put simply, good justificatory arguments serve for making our ideas clear. In the study of Goetz (2010), the "idea" that is being justified is called a *source statement* and *justification* is defined as evidence or the reason for one's beliefs, feelings or actions. The method of this study follows these definitions of justifications, and utterances that contained meaning structures of both source statement and the evidence/reason given for it as a justification were included in the data.

In the current study, justifications as form–meaning alliances are of particular interest, and the source statements that are being justified are examined along with the contextual information of the data samples. Consequently, the types of instances the children justify are not positioned as analytical units.

Orsolini (1993) and Goetz (2010) use the concept of *discourse context* when referring to function-centered interactional events like disputes, requests, conflicts or commands. In the current data, the typical UEs of justifications conform with these listed types. This paper also applies the viewpoint of Orsolini (1993), according to which interactive and sequential conversation offers a context for the development of understanding the pragmatic meanings of justification.

The conceptualizations of the observed children are interpreted starting from phenomenologically (Gallagher 2013) grounded parameters: What does the child say and what else are those involved doing at the same time?

Who are the people present in the UE? When multimodal interaction is involved, a question arises of how to make interpretations of referentiality when meaning carriers are embodied. Therefore, investigating *contextuality* as it is understood in Conversation Analysis leads the analysis to take both linguistic and non-verbal meaning components into account. Goodwin (2000) criticizes the boundaries that isolate language from its environment, and which create a dichotomy between text and context. He proposes an approach to the analysis of action within human interaction that acknowledges the simultaneous use of the multiple semiotic resources used by interactants. By *semiotic resources*, Goodwin (2000: 1490) means different kinds of sign phenomena in the stream of speech and conveyed by the body. From this perspective, actions are assembled and understood through a process in which the sign phenomena instantiated in diverse media called *semiotic fields*, are juxtaposed in a way that enables them to elaborate each other (Goodwin 2000: 1494). The relevant array of semiotic fields that participants orient to is called a *contextual configuration* (Goodwin 2000: 1490). Goodwin's definition of contextual configuration maps with the way that the "usage event" is understood in this study. Also, the concept of *grounding* (i.e. constituting links between linguistic meanings and their semantic anchors or referents; Langacker 2008: Chapter 9) is used regarding the multiple semiotic resources introduced by Goodwin (2000).

2.3 Previous studies on children's justifications

This section presents a review of the previous studies on children's justifications and their development. The review constitutes a socio-cognitive framework for the linguistic analysis employed in this study.

According to Veneziano (2010), providing justifications is an integral competence of managing interpersonal relations. Giving justifications indicates the capability of understanding the partner's mental states and children's development regarding the theory of mind (Veneziano 2010). Thus, as Goetz (2010) points out, the development of justifications is a matter of knowledge of two kinds: social and linguistic. In addition, the development of justifications has been considered one of the semantic domains that indicate a child's growing capability to coordinate displaced semantic components (instead of the early talk linked to "here and now"). Thus, by justifications people clarify the links between events, actions and utterances construed in the mind that are not directly accessible to another person (Veneziano 2010).

The studies on early justifications (e.g. Veneziano & Sinclair 1995) have shown that children between 1;6 and 1;9 years of age start to provide multimodally expressed justifications for their requests and refusals before they have acquired specific linguistic means for expressing such meanings. But as previously mentioned, the question of what these "specific linguistic means" exactly are has not gained much attention. The one linguistic unit that is typically mentioned is the causal connective *because* (Orsolini 1993; Goetz 2010; Veneziano 2010), but this leaves us with a rather narrow view on the linguistic repertoire used in profiling justificatory meanings.

In their longitudinal study, Dunn & Munn (1987) examined the family disputes as social and emotional contexts of children's justifications. The children observed with their mothers and siblings were from 1;6, to 3;0 years of age. The study showed that the justifications of children were mostly given in terms of their own wants, needs or feelings, while also justifying in terms of the feelings of others and the material consequences of the action that occurred. By the age of 3;0, children also referred to social rules, especially in their disputes with siblings (Dunn & Munn 1987).

The study of Orsolini (1993) also concerns children's justifications in disputes. Compared to the study of Dunn & Munn (1987), the children were older (4- and 5-year-olds) and the disputes observed took place in the nursery school setting. The study (Orsolini 1993) presents the categorization of communicative acts that implement justification strategies. The communicative acts that are acknowledged in the current study as strategies are listed as *correction* (the addressee's claim is denied; substitutive information provided), *rule* (some covert rule such as possession is invoked), *authority* (an authoritative source is quoted), *backgrounding* (previous information is elaborated with related information providing a background for it), *motive* (needs and intentions underlying the challenged actions are phrased), *consequences* (a claim or action is challenged by mentioning a negative/illogical consequence that may ensue from it), *cause* (the causes of an event are specified to prove the truth of the speaker's claim), and *generalizations* (norms and rules are overtly phrased to warrant the speaker's position). In addition, the current data contain justifications that feature children's *own wants and feelings* as pleas (as introduced by Dunn & Munn 1987). According to Orsolini (1993: 286, 294), children's strategies of backgrounding often rely on some implicit norm, and nursery school children more often used the strategy of backgrounding with reference to implicit norms, rather than references to actual motives, norms, and rules. Children

also provide "ad hoc reasons" that mask the insistence of the original claim. Overall, Orsolini (1993: 292) points out that during development, children learn to understand that justifications are expected after certain conversational moves, and that if they are not given, they will be asked from them.

2.4 Justifications as linguistic forms

Justifications are typically seen as affirmative or negative declarative clauses. As a clause type, the declarative clause does not carry any specific interactional functions like the imperative clause or question (Hakulinen 2016: 132). In the study data, the utterances that contain a justification may be formed as i) a declarative clause (***Se on mun*** 'it is mine'), ii) a conjunction-initial clause that takes place in a sequence of conversation (*niin* ***koska sit se suuttuu jos sen ottaa kiinni*** 'yes because it [a butterfly] will be angry if it gets caught'), or iii) a combination of these two forming a complex sentence (*Kohta mä* ***saan*** *puhua vessajuttuja* ***kun mä oon vessassa*** 'soon I will be allowed to potty talk when/because I am in the toilet'). A small number of early declaratives in the data are constituted with passive verb inflection (Shore 1988; Helasvuo & Laitinen 2006: 174) or contain no verb element at all (see § 3).

Complex sentences are constructions that consist of two or more clauses (e.g. Diessel 2013). In the data of the current study, justifications often constitute an (implicitly) complex sentence with its target statement. The acquisition of complex sentences in the Finnish language proceeds gradually from the profiles of two sentences combined with no connector (referred to as *implicitly complex sentences*), to sentences including a connector (Lieko 1992: 42–43).

In addition to analyzing clause-level constructions, this study focuses on the lexical and inflectional choices that construct justificatory meanings in children's utterances (for more about words and constructions, see Diessel 2013). The conception of rule as the conceptual basis of justifications is central regarding the current data. When justifications in terms of "rules" are examined, focus is placed on the linguistic strategies of *generalization* (Orsolini 1993). In § 4.4, the phenomenon of generalization is examined from two perspectives: i) making generalizing lexical and inflectional choices, and ii) applying conventionalized constructions that carry justificatory meanings. However, not all of the lexical choices examined in § 4 concern generalization: § 4.1 introduces verbs, adverbs/adpositions and utterance particles that construe a justificatory function by their lexical or contextually interpreted meanings.

One way of expressing generic meanings in the Finnish language concerns an open or non-specific person reference that is manifested e.g. in the zero person construction (Laitinen 2006; [*E*]*i voi niitä syyvä* 'one cannot eat them' in the current data) and a passive (verb) form (Helasvuo 2006; A2;5 *Ei aavita* 'not needed'). In the Finnish language, the zero person construction contains no nominal phrase as a grammatical subject (Laitinen 2006: 209). Thus, it manifests an open reference regarding the person system. The finite verb in the construction is inflected in the 3rd person singular (Laitinen 2006: 209). The zero person construction is applicable in contexts where the generic 2nd person is applied in the English language (Laitinen 2006: 209). Thus, the person implied in the construction is typically human (Laitinen 2006: 210). The content the construction presents concerns whoever the subject person is, but also (or even especially) the speaker or hearer (VISK 2008 § 1347; Laitinen 2006: 212). Making interpretations about the implicated person expressed by the zero person construction usually requires contextualization (Laitinen 2006: 212).

In the study data, one subcategory of the zero person construction consists of utterances that express *deontic modality* – that something is necessary or someone's responsibility (VISK 2008 § 1554; ***Ei*** *paperiin* ***saa piirtää*** 'one is not allowed to draw on the paper'). In outline, the data contain two types of expressions representing deontic modality: those profiled with the verbs *saada* ('to be allowed to') or *voida* ('to be able to'), and those of an established form of the necessive construction. The necessive construction contains one of the modal verbs (VISK 2008 §§ 1355, 1580) *pitää* 'have to / should', *täytyy* 'must', *on pakko* 'must', *on syytä* 'should', used in the 3rd person singular form with their (potential) subject always in a genitive form (Helasvuo & Laitinen 2006: 188; ***[S]en pitäis mennä*** *lääkäriin* 'it should go to the doctor'). In the data, one type of elaboration of the necessive construction contains no subject, but follows the form of the zero person necessive construction (***Pitää lukea*** *minulle savun* 'a fairy tale should be read to me').

3 Data, method, and course of analysis

The study data consist of justificatory utterances of three monolingual Finnish-speaking children with no indications of language disorders. The data were collected mainly as audio recordings. In addition, a small number of data samples of the 2- and 3-year-old children have been collected as diary

Table 1. The age categories

Samples of	age category
children 2;4–2;11	2
children 3;0–3;11	3
children 4;0–4;11	4
children 5;0–5;6	5

Table 2. The number of data samples and the age range of the children observed

Child	Number of samples	Age range of observation
A	67	from 2;4 to 3;2 years of age
B	88	from 3;2 to 5;0 years of age
C	238	from 2;5 to 5;6 years of age
Total	393	

notes. The data collection took place at the child's home or in other every-day environments during daily routines.

The first part of the data was collected during the years 2009 and 2010 (child A, $n = 67$). Child A was observed from 2;4 to 3;2 years of age. The second part of the data ($n = 326$) was collected from the year 2015 until 2019 (child B, $n = 88$ and child C, $n = 238$). At the time of observation, child B was aged from 3;2 to 5;0 and child C from 2;5 to 5;6 years of age. The alphabetical allocations reflect the order of the children's years of birth (child A is the eldest) and their only function is to identify the current speaker. The data samples have been organized into four age categories as shown in Table 1.

The age categories start from the number 2 for the purposes of easy reading with category 2 consisting of the data samples of 2-year-olds (and so on). The data contain a total of 393 justifications (see Table 2).

The utterances were transcribed selectively by their function from 25 audio files, with a total duration of 14 hours 21 minutes. The amount of diary samples in the data is 54. The sources of the data samples are presented in Table 3. The audio files were mainly recorded by the researcher, who is the mother

Table 3. The sources of the study data

Age category	Total duration of audio recordings	Number of diary remarks
2	2 hours 2 minutes	20
3	5 hours 3 minutes	34
4	4 hours 25 minutes	–
5	2 hours 51 minutes	–
Total	14 hours 21 minutes	54

for two and an aunt of one of the children. Two audio files were recorded by the mother of one of the children. As the researcher was typically present in the data collection events, it was beneficial regarding the context information remarks that the audio files were transcribed shortly after each recording session. The main criteria for choosing context remarks for inclusion was that their complementary inclusion helped to reduce the ambiguity of the justificatory meanings of the transcribed utterances. The whole contextual configuration including conversations as context is acknowledged from the relevant parts. The recordings collected during the years 2009 and 2010 had been transcribed at that time for the purposes of other studies. Those recordings were listened to again, and the justificatory utterances were extracted from them to be included in the new data pertaining to the justificatory function.

The following criteria were used in selecting utterances for inclusion within the data:

- The child expressed that they wanted (or did not want) something to happen, and actively worked to take the co-operation in a certain direction or to achieve a certain outcome.
- The strings of speech interpreted from the contextual basis contained two meaning structures: a source statement and evidence/reason given for it as a justification.

The parts of the justifications in children's utterances were classified by their linguistic qualities. Within the initial analysis, the following three instances of syntactic structures of relevance were identified:

1. *Simple declarative clauses* (example 1): *simple* in the category name refers to the absence of the markers of deontic modality (which forms a relevant distinction regarding the analysis). In age category 2, there are 5 occurrences of justifications with passive verb inflection (A2;5 *Ei aavita* '[sleeping] is not needed') and 6 occurrences of justifications lacking a verb (A2;8 *Se ikainen* 'it dirty'). These occasions have been included in the category of simple declarative clauses.

2. *Declarative clauses with markers of deontic modality*: in the data, the justifications apply the linguistic means of deontic modality construed mostly with the verbs *voida* 'be able to', *saada* 'be allowed to' (2), or with the necessive construction expressing that 'something needs to / must be done' or 'someone needs to / must do something' (3).

3. *Conjunction-initial clauses*:[1] the category consist of justifications that begin with conjunctions *mutta* 'but', *kun* 'when'/'because', *että* 'that', *tai* 'or', *vaan* 'but', *koska* 'because', or *jos* 'if' (examples 4–5).

(1) A2;5

Unos.	*Unos.*	***Sata-a***	***un-ta***.
out	out	rain-3SG	snow-PAR

'Out. Out. It is snowing.'

(2) C3;5

Ei	*tois-i-a*	***saa***	*kiusata.*
NEG.3SG	other-PL-PAR	be.allowed.3SG	tease

'It is not allowed to tease the others.'

[1] The term *conjunction-initial clause* (e. g. Vilkuna 2014: 180) was chosen as the category name because in this study, there is no need to make a distinction between the usages of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Instead, the conjunctions' "important role in combining parts of discourse and in guiding the interpretation of their semantic and metapragmatic relations" (Vilkuna 2014: 177) is considered to be essential.

(3) B4;0

Tei-dän ***pitä-ä*** *ny jäädä mei-lle yä-ks.*
you.PL-GEN have.to-3SG now stay we-ALL night-TRA

'You have to stay overnight with us.'

(4) C5;6

[*E*]*i* *hiihde-tä* ***kun*** ***mä*** ***kaadu-n*** […].
NEG.3SG ski-PAS because I fall.down-1SG

'Let's not ski because I will fall down.'

(5) C4;11

Niin ***koska*** ***sit*** ***se*** ***suuttu-u*** […].
yes because then it get.angry-3SG

'Yes, because it gets angry then.'

These linguistic categories with frequencies and relative proportions are presented in Table 7 in § 4.2. The initial developmental trends drawn based on these figures are complemented by the qualitative analysis of the linguistic forms and their UE specific meanings in §§ 4.3–4.5.

The notation of the data samples presented within the analysis takes the following structure: Letters from A to C identify the speakers – the numbers following the letters give the speaker's age (year;month). The part of the justification that is being observed is marked in bold. The announcements in square brackets describe the UE. The examples are glossed and translated into English.

4 Profiling justifications: linguistic means and their development in children's language

This section examines the linguistic aspects of justifications and their development. The analysis starts with introducing the lexical and constructional means that construe justificatory meanings into the simple declarative clauses (§ 4.1). § 4.2 presents the frequencies and proportions of the main analytical units. The purpose of the quantification is to initialize the analysis section with the developmental focus. In §§ 4.3–4.5, children's ways of construing justificatory meanings in the interaction are explored. To draw

conclusions about the development of the justifications, the analysis in all of the sections proceeds from the early stage to later stages of development.

4.1 The linguistic means of construing justificatory meanings in simple declarative clauses

This section presents the main linguistic means that construe justificatory meanings in simple declarative clauses that account for 62% of the occurrences in the data. The examination covers the strategies of making lexical choices (including verbs, adverbs/adpositions, and utterance particles) and elaborating conventionalized constructions. The observations also shed light on the grounds for interpreting the declarative clauses (which have many functions in language) as justifications in the current data.

The data contains verb choices that carry justificatory meanings from the lexical basis. The verbs are the following: *haluta* 'to want' (6), *jaksaa* 'to be bothered' (7), *tarvita* 'to need' / 'to have to' (8), *tykätä* 'to like' (9), *kelvata* 'to be good enough' (10), *kannattaa* 'to be worth' (11).

(6) C2;5 [Mom is doing the child's hair; the child is standing on the chair.]

En ***halua*** *seistä.*
NEG.1SG want stand

'I do not want to stand.'

(7) A2;9 [As mom asks the child to go to the toilet]

Mutta ***en*** ***jaksa****.*
but NEG.1SG can.not.be.bothered

'But I can not be bothered.'

(8) C3;2 [The other child present in the UE is asked to take a shower.]

[*M*]*u-n* ***ei*** ***tarvii*** *käydä* *suihku-ssa.*
me-GEN NEG.3SG need go shower-INE

'I do not need to take a shower.'

(9) C3;3 [As mom says the child should sleep in their own bed]

Noku ***en*** ***tykkää*** *olla.*
well NEG.1SG like be

'Well because I do not like to be [in my own bed].'

(10) B4;0 [Talking to herself when choosing clothes]

Joo tää ***kelpa-a****.*
yes this be.good.enough-3SG

'Yes, this is good enough.'

(11) C4;11 [Talking about a bug with mom]

[*N*]*ii si-tä* ***ei*** ***kannata*** *tapata.*
yes that-PAR NEG.3SG be.worth kill

'So it will not be worth killing it.'

The use of the verbs *haluta* 'to want' (6) and *tykätä* 'to like' (9) express a personal stand on things. The verb choice of *tarvita* 'to need' (8), for its part, construes a reference to an implicit routine-based logic about the frequencies of taking a shower: presumably, the child assumes that they have taken a shower recently enough to make the claim. The verb *jaksaa* 'to be bothered' (7) is frequent in the data. In addition to the verb *jaksaa*, the verbs *kelvata* 'to be good enough' (10) and *kannattaa* 'to be worth' (11) convey justificatory meanings that are inherent in their lexical semantics.

From the perspective of LA, the variation of verbs construing justificatory meanings grows linearly through all of the age categories in the data. Adverbs and adpositions conveying justificatory meanings in the data, on their behalf, seem to belong to a justificatory repertoire that starts developing in age category 3. The following examples of adverbs *siksi* 'because' (12), *mieluummin* 'rather'(15) and *mieluiten* 'preferably' (16) and adpositions X_{PAR} + *varten* (13) 'for the purposes of sth' and X_{GEN} + *takia* 'because of sth' (14) illustrate this development.

(12) C3;5 [Answers to mom's why-question]

No ***siks****.*
well because

'Well because.'

(13) C3;5 [Talks to mom and suggests buying new crayons]

Tarvitse-n punaise-n kynä-n ***nenä-ä*** ***varten****.*
need-1SG red-GEN crayon-GEN nose-PAR for

'I need a red crayon for the nose.'

(14) B4;0 [Explains the plans for the next day and thus persuades the auntie to stay over]

Se-n takia *mei-dä- tei-dän pitää jäädä tänne.*
it-GEN for we-GEN you.PL-GEN need.to stay here

'That is why you need to stay here.'

(15) C5;3 [Is writing a letter for her friend and explains mom what she wants to be written on the letter instead of what mom has suggested]

[N]o mieluummin *kirjota-n että ää o- tämä on Anni-lle.*
well rather write-1SG that err- this be.3SG Anni-ALL

'Well I would rather write that this is for Anni.'

(16) C5;3 [Crafting with mom; mom asks where the paper heart would be positioned the best.]

No mieluiten *tässä.*
well preferably here

'Well preferably here.'

In example (12), the adverb *siksi* 'because' functions as an answer to the why-question. As an answer, however, *siksi* would require a complement part that conveyed the justificatory meaning. Consequently, in (12), only the conceptual frame of the justification is presented while the actual question is not answered. According to my intuition, *siksi* as an answer to why-question is also used in spoken adult language, as an indication of having no intention to answer the question. The adposition phrases in (13) and (14) express causal meanings. The adverbs *mieluummin* 'rather' (15) and *mieluiten* (16) 'preferably' are means of justifying the presented solutions.

In addition to verbs and adverbs/adpositions, there are three utterance particles to be mentioned as lexical choices in the data: *noku(n)* (C2;8 ***Noku*** *mä haluan* 'Well but I want to'), *mutku(n)* (C3;2 ***Mutkun*** *minun pitäis kattoo autotietä* 'but I should take a look at the roadway') and *eiku(n)* (C3;8 ***Eiku*** *nää on mun legot* 'no, these are my Legos'). *Kun* as a particle in spoken language typically constitutes an explanatory or justificatory function (VISK 2008 § 806). In the current data, *kun* as a justificatory particle co-occurs with a negation (*ei* 'no'), a discourse particle (*no* 'well'), and a conjunction (*mutta* 'but'), thus constituting (somewhat) established utterance particles *ei + ku(n)* 'no but', *no + ku(n)* 'well because' and *mut + ku(n)* 'but'.

Table 4. APPEALING TO AN AUTHORITY construction

Construction	APPEALING TO AN AUTHORITY
Form	$NP_{AUTHORITY} + V_{COGNITIVE/PERFORMATIVE}$
Function	Justifying by appealing to an authority

Table 5. APPEALING TO POSSESSION construction

Construction	APPEALING TO POSSESSION
Form	[NP +] COP + NP_{POSS}
Function	Justifying by appealing to possession

Table 6. APPEALING TO THE QUALITY OF THE REFERENT construction

Construction	APPEALING TO THE QUALITY OF THE REFERENT
Form	[NP +] COP + AP / NP_Q
Function	Justifying by appealing to the quality of the referent

These utterance particles function as openings to the justificatory statements, and they express the stance of the speaker regarding the addressee's position (Orsolini 1993). The justifications following the utterance particles meet the qualities of the communicative acts of correction by which the addressee's claim is denied and substitutive information is provided (Orsolini 1993). They also underline the speaker's subordinate position in a conversation (Herlin 1998: 176–180). As the previous examples show, the utterance particles *noku(n)*, *mutku(n)* and *eiku(n)* belong to the children's early justificatory repertoire in the data.

Tables 4–6 present the constructions that are recognizable as models of children's justifications in the data. They are considered as tools for children to construe convincing arguments in interaction (Kauppinen 1998). Table 4 illustrates the construction elaborated when appealing to an authority (*quoting an authoritative source*; Orsolini 1993) in the data. The construction APPEALING TO AN AUTHORITY consists of a reference to an authority ($NP_{AUTHORITY}$) and a verb expressing cognitive or performative

meaning ($V_{COGNITIVE/PERFORMATIVE}$).

The following three examples construe a reference to a person or a personified figure that children appeal to in justifications:

(17) A3;1 [Mom has taken the high chair to pieces.]

Ei=kä! ***Optettaja*** ***sano-i*** *ei* *saa* *tä-tä* *iitoa.*
NEG.3SG=CLI teacher say-PST.3SG NEG.3SG be.allowed this-PAR take.off

'No! A teacher said that this may not be taken off.'

(18) C3;5 [The child wants her big brother to play with her and makes up a command from dad to get support from mom.]

Äiti, ***isi*** ***käsk-i*** *mu-n* *leikkiä* *Maxi-n* *kanssa.*
mom dad tell-PST.3SG me-GEN play Max-GEN with

'Mom, dad told me to play with Max.'

(19) C5;6 [Mom says not to potty talk, which triggers the justification.]

Tontu-t *kyllä* ***kuule-e****.*
elf-PL yes hear-3SG

'The elves will hear us for sure.'

The "person" referred to has authority over the speakers – for example in (17), "a teacher" is acknowledged as an authoritative figure even by a three-year-old child who has no in-person experience of teachers. In (18), a parent is referred to as an authority. The elves (according to Finnish traditions) take messages to Santa Claus about children who are good or bad, and this idea is applied in (19). Both the teacher and the dad examples represent applying the kind of information that is not true in the UE in question, but which constitutes an "ad hoc reason" (Orsolini 1993): when asked, the dad said he had not given any instructions about playing.

The constructions presented in Tables 5 (APPEALING TO POSSESSION) and 6 (APPEALING TO THE QUALITY OF THE REFERENT) follow the structure of the copular clause in the Finnish language. However, both variants are easily recognizable as justifications in the data.

The structure of the APPEALING TO POSSESSION construction is [NP +] COP + NP_{POSS}. It contains both fixed and variable parts: COP + NP_{POSS} is elaborated in all instantiations in the data, while the slot for the other (pro)noun phrase [NP] is open. NP_{POSS} is elaborated by a noun phrase that contains a modifier in a genitive form (see VISK 2008 § 958).

Examples (20) and (21) elaborate the whole construction, while (22) elaborates the variant COP + NP_{POSS}:

(20) A2;7 [Baby brother disturbs the speaking child's toy play.]

Lopeta tuo! ***Tämä on mu-n.***
stop.IMP.2SG that this be.3SG me-GEN

'Stop that! This is mine.'

(21) C3;2 [The child wants the necklace from the other child's hands; the necklace belongs to the mom of the speaking child.]

Tää on mun äiti-n kaulakoru.
this be.3SG me.GEN mom-GEN necklace

'This is my mom's necklace.'

(22) C3;2 [Mom is doing another child's hair and the speaking child is told to wait some more for their turn.]

Ei vaan nyt ***o- on minu-n vuoro-ni.***
NEG.3SG but now be.3SG me-GEN turn-PX.1SG

'No, it is my turn now.'

The examples presented show that the APPEALING TO POSSESSION construction is already in use in age category 2.

The construction APPEALING TO THE QUALITY OF THE REFERENT is presented in Table 6. In the construction, the syntactic slot expressing quality is elaborated by an adjective phrase (AP) or a noun phrase that contains an adjective modifier (NP_Q).

Example (23) represents the kind of use of the construction (NP + COP + 'big'/'small') that is typical in the data and relates to children's abilities or possibilities at a certain age. It occurs especially when children negotiate with peers (see § 4.4). Example (24) elaborates the variant NP + COP + AP and (25) the variant COP + NP_Q of the construction.

(23) C3;5 [Cooking with mom]

Mä en voi laittaa. ***Mä oo-n liian pieni.***
I NEG.1SG be.able put I be-1SG too small

'I can not put [food to the frying pan]. I am too small.'

(24) B5;0 [Comments on a picture in a memory game card]

Norsu pitä-ä sarevarho-o- varjo-o käde-ssä ett=ei kastu.
elephant hold-3SG umbrella-PAR hand-INE that=NEG.3SG get.wet
Se=hän on *vaan* ***hyödyllis-tä****.*
it=CLI be.3SG only useful-PAR

'An elephant holds un umbrella in order not to get wet. It is only useful.'

(25) C5;3 [Mom says that it is not the friend's birthday quite yet.]

Joo mutta ***nyt on hyvä aika*** *tehdä.*
yes but now be.3SG good time make

'Yes, but it is now a good time to make [a birthday card for a friend].'

Tables 5–6 reflect that possession is an earlier ground for children's justifications than the quality of the referent.

4.2 Developmental trends by numbers

The linguistic categories outlined in § 3 are presented with frequencies and relative proportions in Table 7. The proportions that reflect changes from one age category to another are highlighted. The given information about the turning points leads the analysis to focus on the relevant phenomena from the perspectives of LA.

In each age category, more than a half of the justifications are profiled by a simple declarative clause (237 occurrences). However, as already indicated in § 4.1, simple declarative clauses as justifications differ between age categories from the perspectives of their forms and meanings. The relative proportion of simple declarative clauses is at its highest in age category 2 (79%). What changes from age category 2 to 3 is the relative proportion of the justifications that contain a modal verb (14% → 26%). The proportion (as highlighted in Table 7) remains the same in age category 4 (30%). Another significant change that takes place between age categories 3 and 5 concerns the relative proportion of conjunction-initial clauses (7% → 27%).

As mentioned in § 2.4, clauses that carry justificatory meanings in the data are often parts of (implicitly) complex sentences. Table 8 reflects the significant growing tendency of the usage of the complex sentences in the data.[2]

[2] The category of complex sentences covers all two-clause combinations in the data that are connected with any conjunction. In addition, the category includes six clause combinations that

Table 7. Syntactic structures of justifications by their frequencies (*f*) and relative proportions (%) organized by age categories

Age category	Justifications as							
	simple declarative clauses		declarative clauses with modal verb		conjunction-initial clauses		Total	
	f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
2	57	79	10	14	5	7	72	100
3	77	59	34	26	20	15	131	100
4	48	55	26	30	13	15	87	100
5	55	53	20	20	28	27	103	100
Total	237		90		66		393	

Table 8. Implicitly complex sentences and complex sentences in the data: relative proportions from all occurrences in each age category

Justifications in	Age category			
	2	3	4	5
implicitly complex sentences	35%	26%	21%	14%
complex sentences	4%	12%	16%	27%

The decreasing tendency of implicitly complex sentences shown in Table 8 is in line with the findings of Lieko (1992). However, implicitly complex sentences do not fully vanish from language with the development, and according to my experience, implicitly complex sentences are typical in spoken Finnish in general. In the following sections (§§ 4.3–4.5), the developmental details behind the figures presented are observed using qualitative analysis.

are connected with the particle *niin* 'so' (C3;4 *Otetaan tätä* ***niin*** *ei kärpäset pistele* 'let's take this [sun lotion] so that the flies will not sting us').

4.3 Early justificatory utterances: directivity, contextuality and first "rules"

In age category 2, simple declarative clauses as a form of justificatory utterances cover 79% of all occurrences, which makes them of an interest in this section. Example (26) represents the elaborations of the APPEALING TO POSSESSION construction introduced in § 4.1.

(26) C2;7 [The child tries to snatch mom's cushion.]

Tämä on minu-n.
this be.3SG me-GEN

'This is mine.'

Bates (1976: 280) has concluded that small children do not seem to produce indirect directives.[3] However, Huls & van Wijk (2012) discovered that the meaning structures corresponding to indirect directives may be grounded to the UE by means of various multimodal resources. In (26), the child wants to take mom's cushion. The demand itself (wanting to take the cushion) is grounded by action (snatching) and supported by a justificatory utterance *Tämä on minun* ('this is mine'). Based on (26), it can be concluded that a justification may also function as an indirect directive ('give me the cushion'). The cushion in question belongs on the couch in the family's living room, and thus there is no ground for a child to claim that the cushion belongs specifically to her. What the UE ultimately reflects is that the child does not want her mom to take a nap.

UE (27) is one of the many in the data where an event triggers a memory of previous similar events with a linguistic pattern in them.

(27) A2;5 [The child is standing next to the candy shelf in a store.]

Kotona kaakki-a.
at.home candy-PAR

'There are candies at home.'

The child is in a grocery store with his mom. He presumably would like to have some candies but at the same time knows that it is not time for eating candy. To make the anticipated 'no' easier to take, he elaborates why the

[3] *Indirect directive* refers to an expression of "imperative intention" where neither the goal nor means of reaching it is explicated but only implied (Bates 1976: 280).

candies will not be bought. The words he uses can be traced to those mom had used (also Kauppinen 1998: 199) to answer his request to buy candies at a previous time – he skips asking for the candies and goes straight to justifying why the candies will not be bought. Even if these completely implicit motives of justification only appear in age category 2, the data in all age groups contain a lot of non-verbal co-actions carrying relevant meaning structures that appear alongside the verbal elaborations (see Hitchcock 2005 for non-verbal stimuli as the bases of reasoning). From the linguistic perspective, (27) represents the small category of justifications lacking a verb in the data. In addition to justifications lacking a copula as in (27), the category contains utterances consisting of the single NP (A2;5 *Keskiä* 'cookie' as a correction) or adverb phrase (C3;5 *Sen takia* 'because' as an answer to a question) and exclamations (A2;7 *Yääk!* 'yuck' when the child did not want to taste the food).

Passive inflection is an early phenomenon in child language in Finnish (Toivainen 1980). Passive verb forms carry many kinds of pragma-semantic functions, like suggestions and directivity (Surakka 2017). In the data of the current study, the role of passive inflection is barely recognizable, and there are only 5 occurrences of passive forms in the data, all in age category 2. Example (28) is one of these and shows that even if the passive forms are low in frequency, the justificatory function is easily recognizable.

(28) A2;4 [Mom turns out the kitchen light.]

A- amppu ***aavi-taa****.*
lamp need-PAS

'The light is needed.'

In (28), by justifying that the light is still needed the child indirectly prohibits his mom from turning out the light. Therefore, in addition to (26), (28) also constitutes a context-triggered indirect directive.

Table 8 showed that approximately one third of all justifications in age categories 2 and 3 are parts of implicitly complex sentences.

(29) C2;7 [The child asks to get onto mom's lap; she is aware that mom's back is sore.]

Ota mu-a. ***Mu-a pelotta-a maa-ssa****.*
take.2SG.IMP me-PAR I-PAR be.scared-3SG ground-INE

'Take me up. I am scared on the ground.'

In (29), the first part of the implicitly complex sentence contains a verb in an imperative form. For a justification, the child formulates a claim of being scared of something while walking by herself. The implicit "rule" identified behind the claim is that it is for a parent to make a child not to be scared. Thus, the claim given as a justification seems to already be consciously strategic.

The developmental change that the justifications analyzed so far reflect concerns the range of actuality and generics in children's justifications. In examples (27) and (28), the early-age justifications are highly bound to the UE. A couple of months later, in examples (26) and (29), children manifest an initial ability to apply more generic rule-based information in their justifications, even if their linguistic choices are still ego-centered ('this is mine'; 'I am scared').

Justifications in age category 2 are mostly expressed with short, simple declarative clauses. 35% of the justifications are parts of implicitly complex sentences (A2;4 *Ei ole.* ***Syälää.*** 'It is not [going to the sauna time]. We are eating.'). The information the children give in their justifications is closely related to the UE and the ongoing actions. In the previously presented example, the child is having dinner with his family. Mom suggests going to the sauna (after dinner) but the child says no because they are currently having dinner. Small children's conceptions of themselves in time are very attached to the present moment (e.g. Veneziano 2010). The example shows that the place and time where the interaction takes place is pretty much the only source of them building conceptualizations. However, some routine-based (or *habitual*; Vilkuna 1992: 143) rules can be recognized in justifications already in age category 2. The example *Sit ei Tom syö* 'then Tom will not eat' (A2;7) has been preceded by granny asking the child to put the toys on the table instead of leaving them on the floor. The child knows by experience that the reason for this was his baby brother crawling on the floor. In UE's like these, children develop towards understanding the nature of social rules.

Some early claims interpreted as justifications seem not to be true regarding the UE. For example *Ei uaka aavista* 'food not ready' (A2;5) occurred when mom asked the child to have lunch by saying that lunch is ready – and the child did not want to eat. § 4.4 examines how children develop further in profiling justifications in terms of social rules.

4.4 Expressing rules: linguistic tokens of generalization

The data samples analyzed in this section demonstrate the ways that social rules and generalizations (Dunn & Munn 1987; Orsolini 1993) are reflected in the language of 3- and 4-year-old children.

The proportion of the declarative clauses with modal verb grows from 14% in age category 2 to 26% and 30% in age categories 3 and 4 (see Table 7). Example (30) represents the category of declarative clauses with modal verbs.

(30) B4;2 [Cleaning after crafting]

Sä	***voi-t***	*kerätä*	*nä-i-tä*	*rosk-i-a.*
you	can-2SG	pick.up	this-PL-PAR	trash-PL-PAR

'You can clean up this trash.'

Compared with the simple declarative clauses, the modal verb structure constitutes a fused structure of a directive and a justification, forming an indirect directive. Instead of giving the adult crafting mate a direct command about cleaning, the child constructs a scenario according to which the process of crafting has come to the phase where the cleaning up is possible.

Clauses with a modal verb in the data typically lack the grammatical subject. Example (31) offers an instantiation of such a zero person construction.

(31) C3;5 [The big siblings are not taking orders from the child.]

Ei	*tois-i-a*	***saa***	***kiusata***.	*Se*	*on*	*kiusaamis-ta.*
NEG.3SG	other-PL-PAR	be.allowed.3SG	tease	it	be.3SG	teasing-PAR

'Teasing others is not allowed. It is teasing.'

In (31), the justification is not construed explicitly from the ego-centered perspective but the ultimate aspiration is hidden behind a rule on a more generic level. The lexical element *toisia* 'others' in the instruction alienates the reference point from the speaking subject towards a wider group of people (that also, however, represents the speaking subject). Additionally, the zero person construction (*ei toisia saa kiusata*) constitutes an implication of a social rule. To confirm this rule, it is followed by the justification *Se on kiusaamista* which constitutes a circular argument. The whole complex sentence seems to follow the construction X IS NOT ALLOWED [BECAUSE] IT IS Y. The ultimate function that the implicitly complex sentence implicates is that the child

is persuading the bigger siblings to take orders from her. Example (31) also underlines the usage-based view about linguistic constructions carrying pragmatic meanings, and thus helping children in their interactional goals at the phase of LA where the complex conceptual content is still difficult to coordinate by language (Kauppinen 1998).

In (32), the child elaborates the necessive construction to constitute a statement with a generic foundation for her interactional goal.

(32) B4;0 [The child wants the window curtain fully open, but the adult only to halfway.]

Lehmä-t=kin pitä-ä näkyä.
cow-PL=CLI need-3SG be.seen

'The cows need to be seen [through the window].'

The generics in (32) are mainly linguistic: there is no acknowledged sociocultural need for the cows to be seen from the window. The child manifests the ability of profiling a strategic statement by applying the linguistic means of justificatory speech (necessive construction). From the perspective of conceptual content, when examined in context, example (32) reflects that claiming the cows need to be seen from the window is only an excuse for reaching the ultimate goal – to make the room light enough to make everybody wake up in the morning. The justification is thus a combination of generalizing linguistic forms and strategic interactional competence based on an abstraction of rule in the child's conceptualization.

In addition to the means examined so far, children manifest a capability of making lexical and inflectional choices that reach for generic or "virtual" (Langacker 2008: 4) references in their justifications.

(33) A3;2 [The child and his family are out for a walk with strollers; mom is running.]

Ihmise-t *pelkä-ä.* ***Ei voi juosta!***
human-PL be.scared-3SG NEG.3SG be.able run

'People are scared. One cannot run.'

(34) C3;5 [The child wants another juice box.]

Kyllä ***tois-ta pitä-ä antaa laps-i-lle!***
yes another-PAR must-3SG give child-PL-ALL

'Children must be given another juice box.'

In (33), the child does not want mom to run with strollers. In the first part of the implicitly complex sentence, the child constructs a "rule" that people are scared of somebody running with strollers. The child projects the want from himself to the "people" in general. The "rule" is reinforced in the latter sentence of the implicitly complex sentence with the generalizing zero person construction. Consequently, example (33) is an implicitly complex sentence that constitutes a multipart justification (which also holds in example 31).

Example (34) represents the socio-cognitive category of justifications that are built up in terms of children's own feelings, needs or intentions (Dunn & Munn 1987). From the linguistic perspective, (34) is a combination of multiple strategies of profiling generalizations: there is a zero person necessive construction (*toista pitää antaa*) constituting a social rule. Additionally, the child uses the plural ('children') instead of referring only to herself. As can be seen from both (33) and (34), the generalization caused by lexical choices is constituted by a reference to some general conception of human (here 'people' and 'children'; in the data also C2;6 *vauvalle* 'to a baby' – a singular form, B4;0 *isot* 'the big ones', C3;5 *pieniä* 'the small ones' and C3;5 *toisillekin* 'for others [speaker inclusive]'). In these examples, the plural form also functions as a means of generic reference (see Vilkuna 1992: 151–152). Example (34) manifests the kind of nuances that are possible to construe by the case system in the Finnish language: a singular partitive case in the grammatical object *toista* ('another') constitutes an unbounded opposition for a semantically bounded total object *toinen*. In other words, the aspectual unboundedness causes an implication of generic reference instead of an actual reference.

The current section has presented the developmental steps in children's justifications between age categories 2 to 3 and 4. According to the study data, when children are three years old, they master grammatical means of "rule speech": modal verb structures (typically as a part of the zero person construction), and lexical and inflectional choices reflecting the ability of construing generalizations. Along with teaching the conventions of language use, the linguistic constructions also inherently convey guidance about desirable behavior (see example 31). The analysis also raised the perspective of the sources of knowledge that children used in construing their assertions: the pieces of information that justifications carry are often ego-centered or barely have truth value or relevance regarding the UE. However, the element of strategic competence in building up justifications is clearly recognizable in age category 3.

4.5 Increasing conceptual resources: conjunction-initial clauses in and out of complex sentences

The developmental step from age category 4 to 5 concerns an increasing proportion of *conjunction-initial clauses*. The proportion of them is 15% in age category 4 (like in age category 3) and 27% in age category 5. The ability of elaborating complex sentences seems to bring along justifications that consist of many parts. Examples (35) and (36) illustrate all the developmental aspects listed; in addition, (35) shows that even if the proportion of conjunction-initial clauses is still relatively low in age category 4, the structures they take place in are already becoming complex by their forms and meanings.

(35) B4;0 [Two children are playing, and both want to play Elsa from the *Frozen* movie.]

Nää on elsakengä-t ***koska nää on valkose-t.*** ***Su-lla***
this.PL be.3SG elsa.shoe-PL because this.PL be.3SG white-PL you-ADE
ei oo valkos-ta.
NEG be.3SG white-PAR

'These are my Elsa shoes because they are white. You have no white in your shoes.'

(36) C5;6 [The child does not want to sleep in her own bed.]

No mä ***en haluu*** *siihen* ***ku se mene-e piene-ks.***
well I NEG.1SG want there because it go-3SG small-TRANSL

'Well I don't want to sleep there [in one's own bed] because it will get small.'

In example (35), the justification constitutes a multipart structure (complex sentence + simple declarative clause). The justifications presented are based on an implicit claim that Elsa shoes are white, that serves the speaking child as an "ad hoc rule" (Orsolini 1993). There are two children playing together. They both want to play the same character. The elder child first finds a grounding for the claim stemming from the color of the shoes: her own shoes are white while those of the other child are not. With that claim, the elder child aims to dominate the smaller one in the play. There are also many other examples in the data that reflect children being aware of the dynamics between bigger and smaller children. In them, "rules" as the basis of justifications are specific for the children's world. In the example B4;0 *Se* ***joka on iso*** *niin saa isot* 'the one who is big will get the big ones [stickers]', a four-year-old and a three-year-old child are playing together with stickers. The elder one creates

a strategic "rule" when dividing the stickers. According to the rule, as the big child she can take the big stickers, and the smaller ones are left for the smaller one (see construction NP + COP + 'big'/'small' in § 4.1). The fact that the elder child originally owned the stickers makes the position of the younger child even weaker. The finding about rule-based negotiation among peers is in line with the conclusions presented in the study of Dunn & Munn (1987), and rule-based negations among peers have also been studied from the data of Finnish speaking school children (Niemi 2016).

In (36), the first part of the complex sentence represents the child's own want (*en haluu* 'I do not want'), and the latter part gives a reason for the previous statement. The child would like to sleep with her mom during the night. She applies the idea of things getting too small when a child grows up to convince the mom about the idea. Compared to example (35), here the claim is less grounded to the UE, but rather construed based on the child's conceptual knowledge. What is characteristic for five-year-old children in the data is that the rules are applied with a deep insight about the pragmatic nature of the rule regarding the current activities (e.g. B5;0 *Nyt keskityt* ***tai muuten et pelaa*** 'now concentrate [on the game] or otherwise you will not play' – the child is playing a memory game with her mom who from time to time stops and glances at the television, and practices rule-based linguistic strategies of having control over others by referring to immaterial consequences; cf. *material consequences* as discussed by Dunn & Munn 1987; Orsolini 1993). In general, the topics of conversation in age categories 4 and 5 are multiple. The children already have and utilize their conceptual knowledge for constituting hypothetical scenarios beyond the UE (e.g. C4;11 ***Oravat suuttuu*** *jos niitä käpyjä a- tallailee* 'the squirrels will be angry if their cones are stamped on').

In age category 5, children manifest a lot of "speaking while thinking" kind of communication, which is reflected in the growing number of multipart justifications, of which (37) is an example.

(37) C5;3 [The child is drawing birds and explaining the facts she knows about their life.]

Äiti kun se- kun si-llä ***ei yleensä voi olla***
mom because it because it-ADE NEG.3SG usually can.3SG have
käs-i-ä koska se kanta-a si-tä ö- tavara-a suu-lla *niin*
hand-PL-PAR because it carry-3SG that-PAR err- thing-PAR mouth-ADE so
kuin- kato äiti ne yleensä leiju-u tälleen.
that look.IMP.2SG mom they usually soar-3SG like.this

'Mom because it- because it cannot usually have hands because it carries the err- things in mouth like- mom look they usually soar like that.'

At that phase, one utterance may have meaning anchors both in the current actions and in the abstract conceptual entities or imagination, and these grounds may be fluently construed at the same time.

Despite the growing number of complex sentences, not all the conjunction-initial clauses used as justifications are part of them. In spoken language, it is typical that developing the topic proceeds as a co-operation between the conversation partners. Therefore, there are justifications in the form of short comments like *Kun ei o nähty* 'because we have not met [in a while]' (B4;0). This comment is a response to auntie's promise of spending time together also tomorrow.

The number of conjunctions used in justifications in the data grows between age categories 2 to 5. Conjunctions used in age category 2 are *mutta* 'but' and *kun* 'because' (2;7) and *ettei* 'lest' (2;8). From this point, further conjunctions occur in justifications in the following order: *vaan* 'but' and *ja* 'and' (3;1), *tai* 'or' and *koska* 'because' (3;6) and *jos* 'if' (4;11). With conjunctions, children typically manifest a capability of coordinating causal relations, which makes their argumentation more precise and convincing, and their figures of thought transparent.

5 Results and discussion

This study has examined children's justifications and their development. Whereas the emphasis of previous studies has been on the socio-cognitive aspects of children's justifications, this study has examined justifications as linguistic form–meaning alliances. The approach of analyzing linguistic forms and meanings from an interactional basis provided new knowledge

about justifications as linguistic structures in Finnish child language, and linked the new knowledge to the central conclusions reached in previous studies. The analysis method with the data classification principles (§ 3) makes the study repeatable for other languages. However, when LA is approached from the perspective of speech function, there are typically various types of linguistic structures that need to be acknowledged and evaluated from the perspective of each target language. Whatever the linguistic forms of observation are, this study shows the high importance of contextual information in analyzing their pragmatic meanings.

The research question used in this study asked "What kind of linguistic structures do Finnish-speaking children use in their justifications?". The data showed that children use simple declarative clauses, declarative clauses containing deontic modality, and clauses that begin with a causal connector. The purpose of § 4.1 was to identify the different kinds of linguistic means that were used in expressing justificatory meanings in simple declarative clauses. The following linguistic means were identified: verbs, adverbs/adpositions and utterance particles as lexical choices, and conventionalized constructions APPEALING TO AN AUTHORITY, APPEALING TO POSSESSION and APPEALING TO THE QUALITY OF THE REFERENT.

Analyzing children's justifications from their contextual bases in §§ 4.3–4.5 showed that justifications may function as indirect directives. Comparing studies of directives (Surakka 2017) and justifications (the current study), it is obvious that the role of passive inflection is more significant in a directive function. NPs as justificatory lexical choices in the data typically constitute a generic reference to the conception of human, as has been previously stated about the zero person construction (Laitinen 2006: 212).

The answers to research question 2 ("How do the linguistic forms and meanings of justifications develop from 2;4 to 5;6 years of age?") are summarized in Figure 1. As evident from Figure 1, understanding and expressing rules has been recognized as an essential phenomenon in the development of justifications in the current study, and also in previous literature. In addition, the usage-based linguistic analysis revealed the qualities of the conception of rule in different age categories in the data as summarized in Figure 2.

The analysis of this study showed in a concrete way what Goetz's (2010) statement about language and social skills developing together may mean. Specifically, profiling rules by language made an illustrative example of how the conventionalized ways of expressing justificatory meanings in interaction

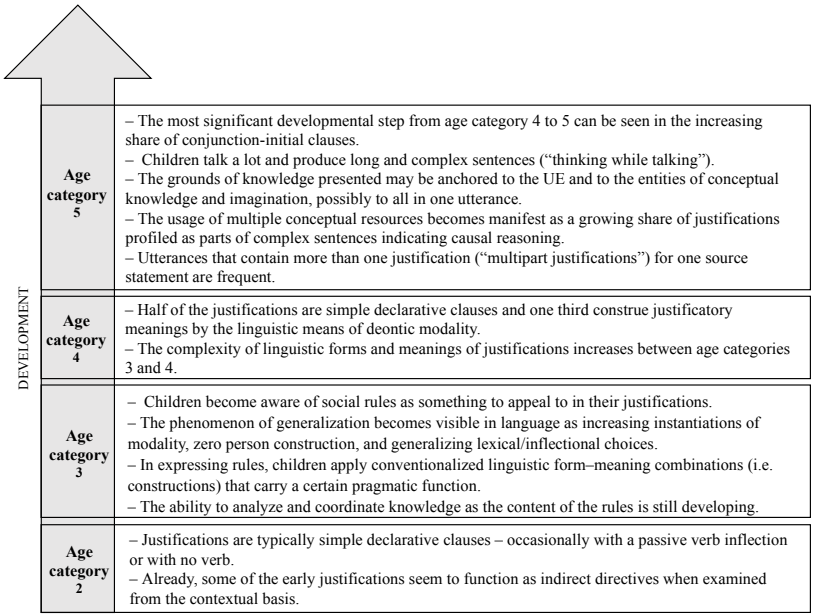

Figure 1. Development of justifications in the data: a summary

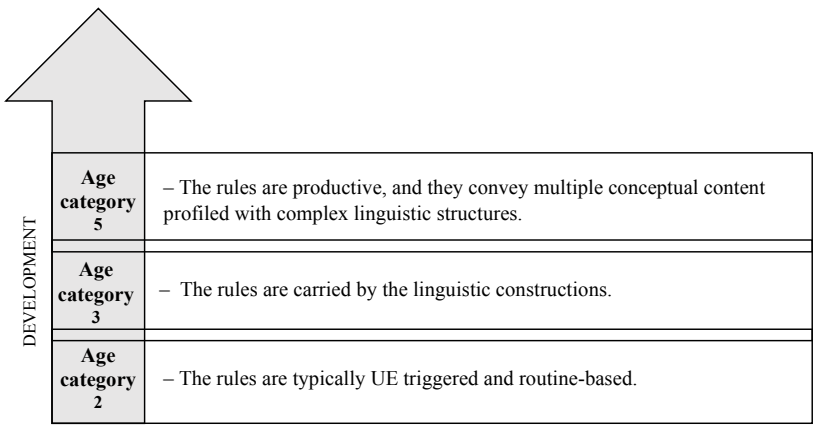

Figure 2. Development of the conception of rule in the data: a summary

are carried by linguistic elements at the time when the meanings expressed by them are not yet fully analyzed or coordinated by children (see examples 31–33). This perception is in line with many previous studies in the field of the usage-based approach to LA: conventionalized form–meaning combinations that carry pragmatic functions are recognized by children and applied as interactional tools already at an early stage of LA (e.g. Kauppinen 1998). In this study, the usage-based linguistic analysis also made children's developing strategic competences salient (see § 4.4).

The justificatory function examined in this paper concentrated on children's language. However, as Lieko (1993) has stated, children master the basic structures of their first language by the age of 4 to 5 years. Additionally, according to the usage-based approach to LA, children learn language by memorizing the construction-level expressions they have heard in adults' speech and applying them in speech of their own (Kauppinen 1998). Consequently, the evidence derived from the data of 4- and 5-year-old children already gives a good insight into the linguistic forms of justifications in the spoken Finnish language in general. The findings of this study thus offer a basis for future studies on justifications, which can be expressed by people at any age.

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Abbreviations

ADE	adessive
ALL	allative
CLI	clitic
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative mood
INE	inessive
NEG	negative
PAS	passive
PAR	partitive
PL	plural
PX	possessive suffix
TRA	translative
1SG	1st person singular
2SG	2nd person singular
3SG	3rd person singular

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