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ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN MATERNAL REFLECTIVE FUNCTION, CHILDREN'S ATTACHMENT DISORGANIZATION AND COMPLEXITY OF OBJECT-REPRESENTATIONS

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Associations Between Maternal Reflective Function, Children's Attachment Disorganization and Complexity of Object-Representations

Annelerde Yansıtıcı İşleyiş Kapasitesi, Çocuklarda Karmaşık (Dezorganize) Bağlanma ve Nesne Temsilleri Arasındaki İlişki

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ABSTRACT

Mother's capacity to see the child as a mental agent is fundamentally related to children's capacity to form secure attachment representations and internally represent their world. However, the empirical associations between these constructs have not been studied. This study investigated the associations between a mother's Reflective Function and children's attachment disorganization and complexity of object representations in a clinical sample at an outpatient clinic. Participants were a clinical sample of 82 mother-child dyads. The children were aged between 6 to 10. Mothers' reflective functioning capacity was assessed with the Parent Development Interview (PDI). Children's attachment disorganization was assessed with Attachment Doll Story Completion Task (ASCT), and children's complexity of object representations were assessed by using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). A significant correlational relationship was found between mother's reflective function and complexity of child's object relations in three dimensions; the affective tone of relationships, emotional investment in relationships and understanding social causality. However, the complexity of representations was not found to be related to mother's RF capacity. Besides, contrary to expectations, there was no relationship between mother's RF and child's attachment disorganization. Findings indicate that parent's ability to reflect on the child's mind is related to the affective aspects of the child's object representations, helping the child to create more balanced representations with a more positive affective tone. Moreover, children are able to build epistemic trust in relationships and emotionally invest in interpersonal processes. They are able to make complex causal associations between internal states and behaviors. The insignificant findings could be due to the developmental levels of the children as well as other attachment strategies that were not assessed within the scope of this study.

ÖZET

Annenin çocuğu zihinsel bir özne olarak görme kapasitesi, temel olarak çocukların güvenli bağlanma temsilleri oluşturma ve kendi dünyasını içsel olarak temsil etme kapasitesiyle ilgilidir. Bununla birlikte, bu yapılar arasındaki ampirik bağlantılar incelenmemiştir. Bu çalışma, annenin zihinselleştirme kapasiteleri ile çocuklardaki dezorganize bağlanma temsilleri ve nesne temsillerinin karmaşıklığı arasındaki ilişkileri araştırmıştır. Araştırmaya kliniğe başvurmuş olan 82 anne- çocuk ikilisi katılmıştır. Anneler zihinselleştirme kapasitelerinin ölçüleceği bir görüşmeye katılırken, çocukların bağlanma temsilleri, Çocuklarda Güvenli Yer Senaryolarının Değerlendirilmesi (ASCT) ile ölçülmüş, çocukların nesne temsillerinin karmaşıklığı Tematik Algı Testi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Annenin zihinselleştirme kapasitesi ile çocuğun nesne ilişkilerinin karmaşıklığı arasında duygulanım tonu, ilişkilerde duygusal yatırım ve sosyal nedensellik anlayışı olarak üç boyutta olumlu bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bununla birlikte, temsillerin karmaşıklığının annenin zihinselleştirme kapasitesi ile ilişkili olduğu tespit edilmemiştir. Buna ek olarak, beklenilenin aksine, annenin zihinselleştirme kapasitesi ve çocuğun dağınık bağlanma temsilleri arasında belirgin bir ilişki bulunmamıştır. Bulgular, ebeveynin çocuğun zihnini anlama becerisinin, çocuğun nesne temsillerinin duygusal yönleriyle ilişkili olduğunu ve çocuğun daha olumlu duygulanım ile daha dengeli temsiller yaratmasına yardımcı olduğunu göstermektedir. Dahası, çocuklar ilişkilerde epistemik güven inşa edebilir ve kişilerarası süreçlere duygusal olarak yatırım yapabilir; içsel durumlar ve davranışlar arasında karmaşık nedensel ilişkiler kurabilirler. Belirgin olmayan bulguların, bu çalışma kapsamında değerlendirilmeyen diğer bağlanma stratejilerinin yanı sıra çocukların gelişim düzeylerine de bağlı olduğu düşünülmektedir.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

Introduction

Mother's capacity to understand children's mental states is highly predictive of children's capacity to form secure internal working models of self and others, in other words, secure attachment representations. Understanding the child's mental states, namely mentalization capacity of caregiver is a key factor on the transmission of secure attachment representations in child's mind.

Moreover, mother's ability to represent the child in her mind helps the child form complex representations of himself and others. The complexity of mental representations refers to the increasing level of differentiation, integration and valency of multiple affective attributions throughout a child's development (Leigh, Westen, Barends, Mendel, Byers, 1992). In other words, it is the capacity of seeing self and the other as different psychological beings in multidimensional dispositions; evaluating causes behind other's behaviors, thoughts and feelings. In some cases, the mother's capacity to reflect on the child may be inadequate, which has adverse consequences on the child's attachment organizations and self-other representations, as many studies revealed the relationship between mother's unresolved traumatic experiences, parental RF and disorganization of infants' attachment (Van IJzendoorn, 1995; Lyons- Ruth, Block, 1996; Fonagy, Steele, Moran, Steele, 1991; Fonagy, Target, 2005, Slade 2005).

However, many researches have examined these relations with mothers and infancy age children. This study will examine the relation between maternal reflective functioning capacity, child's attachment representations and complexity of object relations, with a sample of latency age children.

First, the formation of attachment representations and the concept of internal working models of attachment will be discussed from the perspective of attachment theory. Afterwards, the effect of maternal reflective function on children's attachment organization and object-relational world will be elucidated.

1.1 Attachment Representations

Attachment theory has arisen as a contribution to understand the child's tie to the mother and the need for a secure attachment to a caregiver. This theoretical concept was first developed by John Bowlby's interest on hospitalized children who are separated from their parents at a very early phase of their development; observations and studies provided a basis on findings of patterns of mother-child interaction, and these gave a new direction to developmental psychology. Through his observations on long term destructive effects of child's separation from the primary caregiver, the psychological bond and attachment as a primary motivational system had become the core question of his theory. Bowlby (1969) emphasized that attachment has a survival objective to enhance secure base through proximity to a caregiver, and the child behaves in a system in order to maintain that proximity and to assure a constant internal organization. When the attachment figure's availability and responsiveness provide the feeling of security, love and confidence, the behavioral system will be deactivated; the absence of sufficient attachment figure leads to the feeling of anxiety and fear which could cause the infant to show behaviors through the need for proximity and being protected, on the contrary (Bowlby,1973).

Impressed by Bowlby's study on attachment, Ainsworth presented new explanations on differences of mother-infant attachment features during the first 12 months, regarding different qualities of maternal sensitivity in her Ganda Project (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, Wall, 1978). Ainsworth (1963) reserved the theory with an exploratory system in which the primary attachment figure maintains a secure base for the child's exploring behaviors, by observing separation and reunion behaviors; and this work facilitated the understanding of core elements of attachment security or insecurity. The Strange Situation procedure was used to assess mother-child relationship and behaviors under predetermined conditions. Children showed different patterns of coping mechanisms with separation and reunion with the attachment figure and three

different patterns of attachment behavior were identified in The Strange Situation; secure, insecure avoidant and insecure ambivalent (Ainsworth et al, 1978). Additionally, key features determining security or insecurity of attachment of infants were mother's sensitivity, acceptance, cooperation and accessibility.

Infants in *secure attachment* classification have a pattern of initial distress caused by the separation and being with a stranger first, they may sustain comfort or attend to the stranger; and then at the reunion phase infant become confident aboutr the mother's comforting presence, receives it if needed and sets out exhibit exploring behaviors after mother's return. Insecure infants of *anxious/avoidant* category, with no assurance of mother's availability, do not show an overt response or change in their behavior during separation and more significantly they ignore the reunion and avoid the interaction with mother. In the other insecure category, *anxious/ambivalent*, infants show high levels of distress by separation, stand preoccupied and become unable to show exploring behaviors; show exaggerated effects and become unable to regulate them. On the reunion, transitions between seeking contact, clinging or anger and resistant behaviors. They cannot receive comfort and are easily regulated in the presence of the mother.

Main and Solomon (1990), identified a new category which is called *disorganized/disoriented*, in which the child's behaviors are interrupted, undirected and incomplete; and linked to child's ambiguity and confusion between approaching comfort but experiencing fear instead of comfort regarding mother's frightening behaviors (Main, 1995).

Bowlby's term availability, which means the accessibility and responsiveness of the caregiver became a maintaining part of the attachment system as a representational system. As Bowlby (1973) suggested, the security of attachment is indicated with the child's "internal working models" (IWMs) of the caregiver. The child comes to expect certain responses based on repeated

experiences and quality of interactions with the caregiver and shape his/her attachment system by adapting behaviors and the way of expression. In these manners, secure children in the context of distress at separation and reunion have confidence of caregiver's availability to comfort (Ainsworth et al, 1978), show open, warm and positive attitudes toward reunion (Cassidy and Marvin, 1992), and develop internal working models of responsive, reliable caregiver and valued and reliable self (Holmes, 1993). Thus, the presence of a secure base encourages the child to explore and build social interactions. On the contrast, insecure internal working models of attachment, and incompetent and unworthy self-representations are formed through the agency of caregiver's misinterpretation of child's signals, responses with confusing messages or rejecting (Bretherton,1993).

Main and colleagues (1985) contributed to the attachment theory with Adult Attachment Interview which is a semi-structured interview to evaluate internal working models of adults on the subject of attachment by assessing early experiences with their caregivers, their opinions on their personalities being affected by these experiences, their interpretations on their parents' behaviors, and the changes of relationship with their parents over time. The attachment security was rated, and three types of classifications arise through the evaluation of subject's narratives in terms of coherence, emotional capability and willingness to receive past experiences; secure/autonomous, insecure/dismissing, and insecure/ preoccupied. Later, unresolved classification was identified (Main, Goldwyn, 1991). Main et al. (1985) found that the majority of adults with secure attachment had securely attached infants, and other classifications were shaped in the same direction as well. Through the empirical findings on the relationship between infants' and their mothers' attachment organizations in Strange Situation and AAI, the discussion on the transmission of attachment security across generations has become recent evidence; however, the mechanism of intergenerational transmission is not fully explained.

1.2 Mother's Reflective Function and Children's Development of Attachment Patterns

The concept of maternal sensitivity and responsiveness regarding the link between maternal attachment quality, maternal caregiving behaviors and child's attachment type is widely accepted as a primary mechanism on the transmission of attachment but is not empirically strong enough to explain the "transmission gap" (Van IJzendoorn, 1995). To understand a conveyed mechanism between the two, it must contain a consideration of interpersonal mechanism along with more psychological and cognitive evaluation. Therefore, researches on the attachment had shifted to the discovery of mental representations of the child in adult's state of mind, which are fundamentals of the attachment style.

Fonagy and his colleagues (2002) conducted their research to reframe the concept of attachment security by concentrating on interpersonal and intersubjective appraisals under the term "mentalization" or "reflective functioning" as the operationalized definition. Mentalization is identified as the recognition of mental states of oneself and others, comprehension of the effects of these mental states on interpersonal relationships and behaviors and awareness of cognitive and emotional elements of mental representations of relationships (Fonagy et al., 2002; Slade, 2005). For the assessment of RF capacity, firstly the adults' narratives of childhood memories were assessed regarding their recognition and reflections on mental states; and their understanding mental states of underlying behaviors. Individuals with high reflective capacities were able to reflect upon their own mental states and activate the self-regulatory system. In the context of the mother-infant relationship, this capacity emerges through mirroring affective states, which has a higher order effect on the development of infant's intersubjectivity.

Maternal reflective functioning, namely the "holding" capacity of the mother which allows mothers to understand the child's behaviors toward feelings and intentions leads the infant to experience the first discoveries of his own

internal states (Slade, Grienenberger, Bernbach, Levy, Locker, 2005). It also corresponds with accessing their own attachment-based memories in a more flexible and coherent manner; then, explaining the meaning of the child's experience by linking internal states and behavior accurately and express this experience in the sense of safety and security for the child (Fonagy et al,1995).

According to RF scale (Fonagy, Target, Stelee, Steele, 1998), adults' capacity to mentalize became an apparent construct in the context of attachment, the results showed that the parents with higher reflective functioning capacity on AAI had autonomous attachment classification and had children with secure attachment; and insecurity was also likely to have the same direction on both adult and child attachment accompanied by parents' low RF capacity (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, 1991). Reflective functioning measured on AAI narratives also showed great differences between parents' perceptions of their own parents' behavioral and effective presence in their relationship. While adults with higher reflective functioning capacity could interpret underlying feelings and intentions of their parents' behaviors, adults with low reflective capacity could perceive parent's behaviors regardless of their internal states (Fonagy et al., 1991). Even though the reflective function measured by AAI gives a fundamental outcome about RF capacity, it is not appropriate enough because it was investigated through an old-established parent-child relationship. Slade (2005) suggested that parent's capacity to reflect upon their child's mental states would be assessed better by looking parents' narratives about their relationship with their child rather than narratives on their relations with their own parents as is assessed on AAI. Different from AAI, assessing a current and forming relationship with the child would be a stronger predictor to explain intergenerational transmission of attachment by understanding parents' representations of their child and mentalizing capacity. The Parent Development Interview (PDI: Aber, Slade, Berger Bresgi & Kaplan, 1985), being semi-structured clinical interview was developed to examine parents' representations of the child, their relationship and

themselves as a parent in a developing relationship between parent-child. This interview included 45 demand and permit questions, in which parents were asked to describe their child, their relationship with the child, differences and similarities with their own parents regarding their parenting experiences, the joyful and challenging sides of the relationship with the child and their perceptions about themselves as a parent. The scores were based on parent's affective experience, the child's affective experience and parental state of mind in the relationship (Slade, Belsky, Aber, Phelps, 1999). Several studies on PDI investigated that parent representation of the child on PDI were related to the attachment representations and caregiving behaviors of the parent. Slade et al. (2005) conducted longitudinal research by measuring parents' attachment related to the state of mind during pregnancy via AAI narratives, maternal representations on their infants on PDI responses and infants' attachment type by observing Strange Situation Procedure. They found that mothers with secure attachment have higher levels of RF and high levels of coherence in their narratives; mothers with dismissing and preoccupied attachment were in between, and unresolved mothers have lower levels of RF. Zeanah and colleagues (1994) used another measure to assess parental perceptions called The Working Model of the Child Interview (WMCI, Zeanah, Benoit, 1995). Parents' narratives were evaluated under "Richness of Perceptions, Openness to Change, Intensity of Involvement Coherence, Caregiving Sensitivity, Acceptance" rates and coded as "balanced, disengaged and distorted" narratives. The findings suggested that the secure attachment representations in the child were predicted by the richness of perceptions, openness to change, sensitivity and coherence of mother's narrative; besides balanced narratives were also related with secure attachment while disengaged linked to avoidant and distorted linked to disorganized attachment in infants (Zeanah et al., 1994).

Alvarez Monjaras and colleagues (2017) conducted research with 142 mothers who are from a community-based substance use treatment program.

They investigated the mediator role of reflective functioning on mental representations of caregiving and maternal sensitivity by using PDI, WMCI and The Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training (NCAST) Teaching scale (Barnard & Eyres, 1979). They found a significant positive correlation between maternal reflective functioning and maternal representations of caregiving. They also found a positive significant relationship between maternal RF and maternal sensitivity in higher levels than caregiving representations. Thus, supported the idea of the impact of mother's reflective capacities on their awareness and attunement to the child's affective and mental states. (Bost, Shin, McBride, Brown, Coppola& Korth, 2006). The link between maternal sensitivity, mothers' mind-mindedness and attachment representations of the child were assessed among mother-infant dyads with low SES at 8th month and 15th month by observing maternal mind-related comments, free play and Strange Situation Procedure (Meins et al., 2002). As there was a significant relation between maternal mind-mindedness and attachment security, appropriateness of these mind-related comments that fit in a certain situation appeared as the most significant predictor attachment styles. It was found that mothers with high sensitivity were able to comment on child's state of mind in an appropriate way and lead to form a secure attachment with the child. However, children of mothers who responded with unattuned and improper comments on the child's mental states had disorganized attachment strategies. Another term "maternal insightfulness" was also used to explain mother's ability to interpret underlying motivation of behaviors, ability to perceive the child as a psychological being and capacity to be open to changes in the child; and measured with Insightfulness Assessment (IA; Oppenheim, Koren-Karie & Sagi, 2001). Mothers who were in positively insightful category shows more appropriate perceptions on behaviors and able to use attuned affection; and have securely attached children (Oppenheim et al., 2001); mothers with one-sided type more likely to have children with ambivalent attachment and mixed type. In addition, it was observed that mothers in a mixed type of perceiving child, although they don't have very

low levels of sensitivity, could lead to confusion and disorganization by giving mixed signals which disturb child's attachment strategies (Koren-Karie et al., 2002). Rostad and Whitaker (2016) investigated the link between parental RF and quality of parent-child relationship based on multiple characteristics. Reflective functioning was measured by using the Parental Reflective Functioning Questionnaire (PRFQ; Luyten, Mayes, Sadler, Fonagy, Nicholls, Crowley et al., 2009). As in the definition of reflective functioning, understanding the child's behaviors and their meanings was highly related with higher involvement in communication with the child and also parenting satisfaction, which directly influences the attachment quality.

Symbolic forms of attachment representations are achieved by the preschool years. Children's representations of attachment were assessed with different procedures including family drawings, picture-based protocols and doll story tasks. For example, a procedure that consists of six photographs with the content of attachment-related situations at different levels (Kaplan, 1987). Children were asked about what the child in the picture feels and what he will do. Kaplan's classification system based on six years old children's responses were compared with infants' attachment classifications and found significantly related. Child's representations about the attachment relationship in the latency period were assessed through their stories. The Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT; Bretherton, Ridgeway, & Cassidy, 1990) was one of the prior approaches, then several doll story completion tools have been developed to assess attachment representations. The Attachment Doll Play Assessment (ADPA; George& Solomon, 2000) was another assessment tool to measure for early latency aged children's attachment representations through a defensive process within separation and loss. Children aged between 5-7 and their mothers were observed during dyadic interaction in separation task and it was found that problematic interaction was significantly correlated with the disorganized attachment of the child. Representational reunion stories were the most predictive story to provide attachment classification.

Splaun, Reiner, Steele and Murphy (2010) investigated the relationship between mother's self-representation, perception about the child and child's IWMs of attachment relationship. Children who represented soothing, accepting and supportive mother in child's story completions were found to be able to regulate himself in a distressing situation and have secure attachment type; their mothers also had positive, joyful and less aggressive expressions in their PDI narratives. In a study done with 80 low SES maltreated and 27 non-maltreated preschool children, the children story completions in MacArthur Story Stem Battery (MSSB; Bretherton, Oppenheim, Buchsbaum, Emde, 1990) were examined. (Macfie, Toth, Rogosch, Robinson, Emde, Cicchetti, 1999). Children representations on the caregiver, relationship with his/her parents and representations of role reversal were assessed and it was found that maltreated children showed narratives with less relieving distress, and both abused and neglected children represented caregivers with less relieving distress comparing with non-maltreated children. It was also found that physically abused children showed more role reversal in which the child acts as a parent to his parent which is also supporting the findings that role reversals in latency age children is associated with attachment disorganization emerged in infancy age (Main, Kaplan, Cassidy, 1985).

1.3 Attachment Disorganization

The development of reflective functioning capacity takes place in early ages depending upon the early experiences with parents, and it is carried on to parenthood, which will most likely affect maternal reflective functioning in the same way. As researches show, it is consistent that a higher reflective functioning admits mother to be more harmonized with the child's needs, to respond more sensitively, to establish beneficial interactions, to give predictability and to strengthen attachment security (Slade, 2005). However, mothers may have low reflective abilities due to different underlying reasons (e.g., traumatic childhood experiences, depression, PTSD symptoms). In these cases, lower reflective

functioning capacities may cause deleterious effects on the child's attachment representations. Considering early relational traumatic experiences such as abuse, neglect and maltreatment, especially experienced by their own parents, many researchers have found high risks of adverse psychological, emotional, behavioral outcomes in future life. It was found that individuals who experience physical, sexual abuse and neglect in their childhood are more likely to have a personality disorder in their adulthood (Johnson, Cohen, Brown, Smailes, Bernstein, 1999). Also, depressive and posttraumatic symptoms in adulthood are linked to childhood maltreatment (Widom, 1999; Widom et al.,2007). The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) research was used to explain the relation between early traumatic experiences and the possible risks for large quantity of complications in adulthood (Felitti et al., 1998), with the cumulative effects, overall health and neurobiological structure of the brain are also affected. In addition to the individual outcomes, their effects on parenting experience are undeniable. Attachment theories have proposed the direct effects of the early relationship on attachment organization, which also determine later relationships (Slade et al., 2005). As Colman and Widom (2004) suggested, maltreated children are likely to have impairments in their attachment quality in adulthood. As a parent, having emotionally secure bonds with her children and maternal functioning becomes more difficult with the effect of their own traumatic relationship (Main, Solomon, 1990). Several studies support the concept that mentalization deficiencies occur due to traumatic experience history in the attachment system. A mother's own relational experience significantly determines how she will behave to her child (Schechter et al., 2004). Being a parent is a transition to the reorganization of self, which triggers childhood memories. Exposure to an early childhood traumatic experience undermines the parent's attention to the child at distressing points in time and inhibits capacity to respond in an appropriate way (Lieberman et al., 2015). While reflective function is highly associated with integrated maternal representations of child, as a consequence of parent's traumatic childhood experience different mentalization

deficiencies such as; difficulty in recognition of emotional expression, lack of identification of internal states, inadequate affect regulation (Ringel, 2011); and, PTSD symptoms, dissociation and other psychopathologies can take place (Schecter et al. 2005). A traumatic experience related to the attachment can be defined as physical, emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse (Bernstein et.al, 2003). Fonagy and colleagues (1994) suggest that mothers who had abuse and neglect experiences in childhood have lower levels of mentalization in adulthood by inhibition of mentalizing abilities. Studies with mothers with a history of abuse or maltreatment show that mother's ability to understand the infant's emotional signs is decreased and empathic responsiveness is also lowered (Milner et al., 1995). In particular, emotional abuse in childhood causes disruptions on the sense of self, attachment representations and reflective functioning abilities (Bottos and Nilsen, 2014).

Because that trauma preserves changes in self-perception and inconvenience on expression of emotions, the development of self- agency is strongly affected by feelings of shame, guilt, distrust and low self-esteem (Roth, Newman, Pelcovitz, van der Kolk, & Mandel, 1997); and trauma impacts next generation if it had happened within the family context (Van IJzendoorn, 1995). As happened in self-representation, misperceptions of child's signs lead mothers to see the child as a stressor, not being able to regulate their child, moreover, to block out child's distress to maintain her own regulation (Schecter, Kaminer, Grienenberger, Amat, 2003). In the case of physical negligence, Cristobal et al. (2017) found that it has a significantly negative effect in their RF and insecurity of attachment worsens their mentalization capacity. Another aspect that inhibits reflecting capacity is the infant's affects that triggers fear, anger or other painful feelings for the parent. Frightening memories and emotions awakening from an unresolved trauma emerges as different parental expressions when interacting with the child and triggers a fragment of these memories. Then, responses are displayed as "frightened, dissociative, threatening or disrupted and extremely

insensitive" behaviors. Symptoms such as depersonalization, dissociation, restricted responsiveness, avoidance due to early trauma may shatter caregiving assumptions. Kaufman and Zigler (1987) found a significant relationship with parents owning maltreatment experiences and their maladaptive and abusive parenting strategies with their children. Additionally, it is suggested that parents who have an experience of childhood abuse are at the risk of abusing their children as a consequence of cognitive and affective effects of trauma which also support the literature on intergenerational transmission of attachment relationship and transmission of abusive experience (Youngblade, Belsky, 1988; Van IJzendoorn, 1995). Schechter and colleagues (2008) indicated different levels of maternal representations on WMCI and its relationship with PTSD symptoms. It was found that higher PTSD symptoms due to trauma exposure are significantly related to distorted representations in WMCI narratives. In another respect, reflective functioning capacity was defined as a protective factor on mother's representations by observing more balanced narratives on WCMI, regardless of PTSD level. It was added that the child who triggers the mother's trauma has a decreasing effect on the mother's ability to reflect the child's mental states (Schechter et al., 2005). Ensink and his colleagues (2014) also suggested that childhood trauma doesn't need to effect the parent's reflecting capacity to child's needs; in fact, parent's ability to mentalize and evaluate their own traumatic childhood experience has a significant contribution on reflective parenting and satisfying the child's needs.

As the current study will examine, previous researches support the hypothesis that children insecure attachment representations are linked to low levels of reflective capacities of the caregiver (Fonagy et al., 1991). Fonagy and Target (1997) explained disorganization of the infant by caregivers' noncontingent responses and biased reflections on infant's mental states; caregivers' own mental state that arouses frightening, fear-evoking behaviors through the infant; and the child's effort to understand mother's behavior by

using irregular sources in reflecting own mental states. Caregiving behaviors triggered by an incident of traumatic experience occur as withdrawal, neglect, extreme insensitive interaction, aggression or unaccompanied, disruptive affective responses (Schemings, David, Yvonne, 2011). Trauma or unresolved loss is associated with mental disorientation and dissociated state, which also affects parenting behaviors and interactions with the baby in a way that the baby is frightened. Main and Hesse (1990) describe this effect with "traumatized adult's continuing state of fear together with its interactional concomitants (frightened and/or frightening behavior) is the mechanism linking unresolved trauma to the infant's display of disorganized. Beebe and colleagues' (2010) recent study highlighted the prominence of unexpected and inaccurate responding at four months as a leading predictor of attachment disorganization. Alongside with the inaccurate response, mother's patterns of expression of emotions were a predictor. To examine the association between maternal atypical caregiving and child's attachment representations, Green, Stanley and Peters (2007) assessed sixty-one children aged 4-9 with externalizing symptoms by using Manchester Child Attachment Story Task (MCAST) and their mother's atypical expression of emotions (EE). Attachment disorganization in child and very high level of EE of the mother are found significantly associated (Green, Stanley, Peters, 2007). A paradoxical situation between perceiving parents as a safe haven and a source of fear leads disorganization, and these infants are less able to cope with distressing experiences than other attachment classifications. Lyons- Ruth and Block (1996) investigate the relationship between severity of mother's traumatic childhood experiences, post-traumatic symptoms, maternal caregiving behavior and the infant's attachment. Findings from the study done with 45 mothers who experienced childhood trauma showed that mothers represent withdrawing behaviors which are related with more restricted affective stance or hostile caregiving behaviors leading to a high probability of disorganized attachment with the infant (Lyons-Ruth, Block, 1996). Because the attachment-related experience with the child triggers distressing and unintegrated

memories, the mother is defensive against reexperiencing them by displaying low affective connection, unresponsive withdrawal or hostility, numbing or identification with the aggressor (Lyons-Ruth, Block, 1996). Although frightening behaviors of the mother predict the attachment disorganization in infant, mother's attachment security serves a deterministic role in this formation (Schuengel, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Van IJzendoorn,1999).

Additionally, it is found that these kinds of disruptive maternal behaviors are associated with less joint attention and unsuccessful attempts in free play (Schechter, 2010). Berthelot and colleagues conducted another research with mothers who experienced neglect and abuse in their childhood and their 20 months infants. Mother's incapacity to reflect on the traumatic experience rather than having it, have a significant role on the disorganized attachment of her child which is linked to mother's inability to the presence in a dyadic relationship and parenting (Berthelot et al., 2015; Ensink et al., 2014).

1.4 Maternal Reflective Function and Child's Complexity of Object Relations

A newborn infant is almost an undifferentiated organism who cannot distinguish persons and things in the environment; all happens as a part within himself. After the ego functions begin to emerge, the infant becomes being able to differentiate "self" and "non-self", a transformation from objectless state to the investigation of the external world begins. The infant gives cues that indicate his needs and the mother responds these cues in a selected manner by mutual mirroring regarding her own needs and fantasies; thus, patterns of behaviors that foster regulation capacity, ego qualities and object relations emerge (Mahler, Furer 1963; Mahler et al.,1975; Jacobson, 1964). Then, the internal representation of the object is maintained.

Mother's actions and the way of responding becomes the mental representations of the behavior patterns. In rapprochement period which the child

becomes more aware of his representational states becomes a very crucial part for the development of autonomy and ego functions with the help of reasonably good identification with the mother. During this psychic construction process, quality of maternal representations determines the child's "object constancy"; as Mahler (1968) stated "By object constancy we mean that the maternal image has become intrapsychically available to the child in the same way that the actual mother had been libidinally available-for sustenance, comfort, and love". As an outcome, the child develops a sense of self which can exist separately and be lovable; and sense of others which is good and trustworthy (Kernberg, 1980).

The child initially differentiates his internal world from the external through mother's marked and contingent mirroring. Afterwards, he understands that his internal states are not absolute realities but is related to his own feelings. As the mother mirrors different feeling states, the child's vocabulary for different feelings widens, which are also associated with different self and other representations.

As explained by Gergely and Watson (1996), a contingency detection mechanism (which involves caregiver's attuned responses to the infant's emotional acts) leads infant to develop an awareness of own internal states. As the caregiver reflects these emotions through facial and vocal mirroring, the infant observes and learn that there is self, and others' internal states and he has control over the caregiver's reflections. Afterwards, at the age 3-4, the *representational* self emerges, in which the child represents various states of mind and develops concepts consistent with the actual internal experiences (Scheemets, 2008). In this case, the actual experience becomes the *primary representation*. Parental reflections of affective states have a crucial role in the infant's perceptions of experience. With the help of accurate mirroring and marked expressions, the child's primary representations of affective states are perceived and reflected by the caregiver, and then the *secondary representations* take form. For the development of the understanding of affect in self and self-

organization, the child uses the caregiver's representations that organize the child's primary experience and transform into second-order representations.

The basis of this formation can be directly explained by the development of mentalization in childhood. As mentioned before, mentalization is described as a human capacity to perceive and interpret his own and others' behaviors in terms of intentions, feelings, beliefs, needs, desires (Fonagy et al., 2001). The ability to mentalize in the child is also linked to three aspects of the development of thought; the actual mode meaning that reality and fantasy are equal in the child's perception. In a primitive level, where the states of mind are experienced as actual reality rather than representations is called "psychic equivalence"; the pretending mode in which the child becomes able to separate mental representations from actual reality; and integration mode in which the child discovers the relationship between the pretending mode and reality. (Fonagy, Target, 1996a). In a normal development, these two levels of mental functioning are progressively integrated and turn into a reflective mode of reality at the age of 4-5 (Leslie, 1987; Gopnik, 1993). When this integration is reached, this is the display of mentalization.

This ability was initially described as the Theory of Mind (ToM) (Premack, Woodruff, 1978). ToM in children is measured with false belief tasks, in which children are expected to predict characters' actions in particular scenarios. Children become being able to understand people's thoughts and emotions and the link with their behaviors at the age of 3 and 4. When the child reaches the theory of mind, the perception of reality in his own mind and others differentiate. At the school age, more complex ability to thinking about others' thoughts, more detailed understanding of behaviors and capacity think about their own thoughts are beginning to be displayed. (Wellman, 1990).

Developmentally, mentalization capacity serves pieces of organization of the self which has the capacity to regulate affects, self-monitoring and self-agency. In theory of mind researches, most of the data focused on understanding

mental states of others but not self- understanding. Therefore, rather than cognitive explanations of ToM and false belief task evaluation, mentalization theory was considered as a more comprehensive framework which contains regulatory and representational processes.

The emergence of mentalizing capacity cannot be explained without the perception of another person's mind; so mother's attunement, marking of affective states, reflective capacities are the first and foremost determinants of mentalizing capacity for the child. Alongside assessment of ToM in children, mentalizing capacity is assessed through relationship specific mechanisms. Within the concept of attachment, mentalization capacity evolves as an outcome of secure attachment with the primary caregiver because it has sufficient sensitivity to own and child affective states, leading the transformation of representations from simple to higher-order. (Fonagy, Target, 1998). The future development of the theory of mind abilities of children is determined by the complexity of their parents' capacity to mentalize about their relationship.

Object relations theory emerged as an approach based on the forming processes between the individual and others (Greenberg, Mitchell, 1983). Internalized representations of past experiences offer the process including meaning attribution of motivations, attitudes in an interpersonal relationship with parents; and these representations construct a capacity for developing, fulfilling and adjusted mutual relationship patterns with others (Blatt, Auerbach, Levy, 1997). In the assessment of representations, open-ended narration techniques were used to address the characteristics of mental representations not only with conscious, real reflections of significant others but also with unconscious thoughts with possible defensive misinterpretations (Bretherton, Munholland, 1999). For example, Object Relations Inventory (ORI; Blatt, Chevron, Quinlan, Schaffer, Wein, 1992) which was first used with adults and adolescents, and then adapted to children was a narrative technique to assess dimensions of individuals' mindset and attributions about their caregivers, which also assessed complexity

of their cognition while representing these significant others. These dimensions include children's experiences of caretaking, perceptions about affective tone of the relationship, parents' level of caring and supportiveness or criticism and punitiveness (Westen et al, 1991). As well as the content of narratives, structural dimensions such as the level of integration and coherence in descriptions of caregivers were significant aspects of the complexity level of representations (Bretherton, 1990; Westen et al. 1991). As both attachment and social cognitive theories emphasized, internal representations of a caregiver fundamentally affect self-representations of the child. Mainly, children with internal representations of caring and attuned mother progress positive self-representations while children with a representation of rejecting and unstable mother develop negative self-representations (Main et al., 1985; Blatt et al., 1997). During the middle childhood, self-representations and affective content of relationship are the main aspects of both differentiation and relatedness with others. In terms of developing mentalization skills, acknowledging different valence of emotions, and a better understanding of self and others' point of views begin to improve at this period (Higgins, 1991).

Measurement of mentalization is directly relevant to the affective understanding and reflective functioning concepts. As the child's theory of mind development and affective understanding capacity has been predicted by the attachment security and attachment security is related to the reflective functioning capacity of parents, two concepts intimately linked together. Beginning from infancy, caregiver's attributions to the infant as a mentalizing other and the way of marking affects in a way that the infant can differentiate caregiver's and own affective states contribute to the development of RF capacity of the child (Fonagy et al., 2002). Also, in latency age, attachment security and children's RF capacity was found to be related in studies that measured by using Child Attachment Interview and RF Scale (Rosso, Airaldi, 2016).

Fonagy and colleagues (2000) designed The Affect Task (AT) to assess affective understanding of school-aged (between 6-11) children in different situations with different range of emotions. In AT task, children are showed line drawings in which everyday situations in interpersonal context with different emotional expressions are figured out and asked to describe what each character in the stories might have emotional reactions. From the children' narratives, ability to understand affects, causality between feelings and contexts, recognition of changes in feelings, understanding of emotional dissimilarities and reflexive use of affective understanding capacity was assessed (Ensink, 2003).

Then in the pre-school period, Fonagy and Target (1996) suggested the importance of pretend play with the parent as a tool for the child to comprehend all mental states are not same as the external reality, not unchangeable. Development of reflective functioning is closely related to these interpretative abilities coming from early infant-parent interactions, which also serve the organization of the self.

The Child Reflective Function Scale (CRFS) was designed to use with Child Attachment Interview to assess the reflective functioning capacity of children between ages 8 to 11, in the light of the effects of attachment system (CRFS: Target et al., 2001; CAI: Target et al., 2000). The context was speaking about self, interpersonal relations and affective states in specific incidents in which narratives indicates the child's use of mental states constructs. The CRFS has two components, self-RF and other-RF, and both scores showed significant relations with attachment security. Findings support the idea that parental factors which determine the attachment security, raise the development of mentalization abilities in children, supported with the hypothesis that children with secure attachment have higher levels of mentalizing abilities with the advantage of having pretend play and mental state talks with parents as tools for inquiring others' state of mind (Fonagy,1997).

In understanding cognitive and affective processes in interpersonal functioning, while the theory of object relations based on psychoanalytic perspective revolves around the unconscious representations, defensive and affective processes; social cognition theories focus on rational processes by using cognitive and developmental outcomes which can also be accessible consciously. Westen (1991) suggested that both approaches could contribute to exploring internal mental representations and interpersonal function when they become integrated. In order to examine cognitive and affective dimensions of representations, Westen (1991) developed the Social Cognition and Object Relations System (SCORS) to interpret TAT stories and other projective test narratives which has four dimensions; Complexity of Representations of People (CR), Affect Tone of Relationship Paradigm (AT), Capacity for Emotional Investment in Relationships (CEI) and Understanding Social Causality (USC). First, Westen et al. (1991) investigated the pathological representations of borderline adults and adolescences to compare their object relation and social cognition with nonclinical sample and found lower scores of affect tone, capacity for emotional investment in relationships and morals among borderline patients. Then, the developmental process and differences in object relations and social cognition in children and adolescents were investigated by using TAT narratives. It was found that the development of representations begins to develop at preoedipal stage and except the affect tone, all other dimensions on SCORS have carried on improving (Westen, Klepser, Silverman, Ruffins, Lifton, Boekamp, 1991). A study done with 98 children from an Italian elementary school who ranged between age 7 to 13 years showed that the older group had a higher rating in Complexity of Representation and Emotional Investment in Relationship dimension, while age was not a determinant in Affective Quality. It also examined the pull effect that participants' attributions to different cards showed differences from participant to participant in all dimensions of SCORS-G. For example, for Card 1, both personal dispositions and being the first story in administration influenced the narratives, responses focused on internal

representations of self and other and reasons of behaviors which lead higher ratings on CR and SC dimensions. (Auletta, Cupellaro, Abbate, Aiello, Norcia, Sogos, 2018).

1.5 Negative Self and Other Representation of the Child

In a disturbed relationship with the caregiver, which is affected by an early childhood trauma of the mother, object relations functioning becomes associated with various forms of disturbances on the development of mental representations. Internalization of the inconsistent caregiver of a child can be the predecessor of inability to differentiate self and other, to separate and individuate, mature ego functioning and regulation in separation anxiety. Development of a coherent sense of self and feeling of security becomes possible with the impact of reflective thinking; therefore, deficits in reflective thinking are related with low self-esteem, low self-worth and labile self-organization (Seligman, 2014). Negative representations of the relationship between the child and the caregiver are generalized to new object relations and cannot be able to refine information through the new situation (Toth, Cicchetti, 1996).

A mother's traumatic childhood experience may alter the ability to respond sensitively to the infant's needs, thus affects the development of representation and attachment outcomes. Referring to the view that trauma is intergenerationally transmitted, the internalized traumatic events and object relations in childhood mediate one's functioning in adulthood, also as a mother, besides child may experience similar relational traumatic events. Researches on object relations assessment of children who is sexually or physically abused reflect malevolent, egocentric representational world with a low-level self and other differentiation capacities in their TAT protocols (Ornduff, Kelsey, 1996). Physically abused children showed angry and opposing self-representations, fewer expectations on being close to someone and positive interactions (Waldinger, Toth, Gerber, 2001). Surprisingly, sexually abused children's self and mother representations were more positive than children in control group;

however, it is explained with the possibility of Winnicott's "false self" concept which represents a false positive self- image as a victim (Toth, Cicchetti, Macfie, Emde, 1997). A study designed to analyze the relationship between developmental risk factors such as abuse, neglect and disruptive parental behaviors and pathological development of object relations among psychiatric inpatient adolescents (Westen et al., 1990). Regarding the timing of risk factors, contrary to expected, no significant correlations were found between the latency age risk factors and object relations; however, there was a correlation with risk factors in preoedipal stage.

In case of abuse and neglect, the child uses these maltreatment experiences in constructing future relationships and his coping mechanisms in a distorted way (Crittenden, 1992a). Children use internal experiences of maltreatment and construct schemas of relationships with defensive and incorporate methods; and reverse of normal development, they become incapable of evaluating the new experience and revising new behaviors (Crittenden, 1985; Main, Hesse 1990; Lyons-Ruth et al.,1999). Many recent researches focused on the child's relationship schemas under disrupted caregiving circumstances (Crittenden, 1990; Cicchetti, Barnett, 1991; Lynch, Cicchetti, 1991). Maltreatment in household conveys a lack of reflective function. A child perceives this as negligence of his internal experiences and due to lacking of this capacity, confusion between what the child internally experiences and how his caregiver responses. It becomes more difficult to distinguish his own mental state and others'. A study found significant differences between maltreated and non-maltreated five years-old children's representations of self, others and interpersonal relationships. For example, neglected children frequently show oppositional and angry self- representations; sad, hurt or anxious other (Waldinger, Toth, Gerber, 2001). Oppenheim and his colleagues (1997) found that there is a significant correlation between preschoolers' more negative and fewer positive representations of their mothers in storytelling narratives and

mothers' self-reports on their psychological distress due to an early traumatic experience. Researches done with maltreated and non-maltreated preschoolers focused on self and other representations by using storytelling techniques and found that maltreated children have more negative representations of the mother and more grandiose representations of self (Toth, Cicchetti, Macfie, Emde, 1997). In Palmer's study (2011) which examine the relationship between depression of mothers and the object relations of their children by using SCORS on play narratives, it was found that rather than the effect of mother's depression, there is a positive relation between the complexity of social relations, affective understanding and age, and also the cognitive development of the child as a contribution to coping mechanism. Even if negative representations occur due to negative experiences, in their social cognitive development, the ability to integrate positive and negative parts of self and other develops, again, with the effect of mother's reflective capacity; this effect can also be reflected in children's discourses on maternal representations with higher levels of integration. (Oppenheim, 1997).

1.6 Present Study

The literature revealed that maternal reflective capacities were linked to the child's organization of internal working models of self, other and attachment representations. The formation of internal and external representation in the child with a higher level of differentiation and integration, namely more complex representations, and secure attachment is possible when the mother's reflective functioning capacity with higher levels. However, in some cases, e.g. mother's adverse childhood experiences, mostly relational traumatic experiences, there may occur inhibiting effects on reflective abilities; thus, it raises damaging effects on the development of child's self-representations and security of attachment. Many of these researches assessed the relation between the mother's RF capacity and child's attachment representations and child's complexity of representation with infancy age children and their mother, yet there are limited

studies done with latency age children. In this study, the relation between maternal RF and child's representations will be assessed with a sample of children between age 6-10 and representations of children will be assessed in reference to both attachment and object representations.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant negative correlation between mother's reflective functioning capacity and child's attachment disorganization.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant positive correlation between mother's reflective functioning capacity and children's complexity of mental representations.

Chapter 2: Method

2.1. Participants

In the current study, participants were a clinical sample of mother and child dyads who were applied for psychotherapy service in İstanbul Bilgi University Psychological Counseling Center. Participants were applied to the center for the child's behavioral problems (41.5 %), anxiety-related problems (23,2 %), school and learning problems (22 %), separation anxiety (4.9 %) and other problems (relationship, loss, somatization and adjustment). Participants were 82 mothers, and their children consisted of 34 female (41.5%) and 48 male (58.5%). Children aged between 6-10 (M=7.88; SD=1.426). 30.5% of children had a trauma history. Mothers aged between 27-53 (M=36.58; SD=4.898). 20.7% of mothers' socioeconomic status was low, 24.4% were low-middle, 40.2% were middle, 11% were middle-high, 3.7% were high. Education level of the mothers: 22% were elementary, 12.2% were middle school, 28% were high school, 7.3% were university (2yrs), 26.8% were university (4yrs), 2.4% were master/doctorate graduated and 1.2% education level of mothers' data were missing.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Parental Assessment Tools

2.2.1.1 Parent Development Interview (PDI)

Parent Development Interview (PDI; Aber et al., 1985), a semi-structured interview consisting 45 items of demand and permit questions, was used to measure maternal reflective functioning capacity through the mother's narratives on representations of the self as a parent, of their children and their relationship. The interview with the mother takes nearly 1 to 1,5 hours.

In the first section of the interview, the mother was asked to describe her child with three adjectives and reminiscent of these adjectives with specific events. The second section was consisting of questions about parent-child

relationship expected to be described with three adjectives and related situations about them. They were asked to give examples of the moments that they could and could not get along in the last 1-2 weeks. On the following part, the mother was asked to describe herself as a parent, with given examples of most enjoyable and most compelling experiences, and other affective experiences such as feeling angry, guilty or needy and their impacts on both mother and the child. In the next section, the mother was asked to describe her own family history and relationship with their parents, their effects on her own parenting, and whether she has similarities and differences from his parents as a parent. Lastly, the mother was asked about the child's dependency/independency to the parents, separation and loss, what she would or would not like to change in her parenting experience.

All the interview was recorded, and verbatim transcription was made, then the transcripts were coded based on the manual, which was developed by Fonagy et al. (1998) for the assessment of reflective functioning capacity on PDI narratives. RF scores were coded on an 11-point continuous scale, lowest -1 to highest 9. The average reflective functioning capacity rating was described by 5 points, scores between -1 to 3 includes rejection, hostile, bizarre, inappropriate answers or lack of awareness of mental states; scores between 5 to 9 includes answers with higher awareness of mental states and comprehension of underlying reasons of behaviors. (Fonagy et al., 1998). From low scores to high scores on reflective functioning, the level of awareness of the nature of mental states, level of recognition of mental states that have an impact on behaviors, the level of recognition of developmental changes that affect mental states and affect regulation is expected to be higher.

Based on reliable raters' agreement on the scoring of demand questions, interrater reliability for overall RF score and RF on single questions was found between .78 to .95. (Slade et al., 2005). In the current study, translation-back translation method was used to maintain the equivalence of interview questions and PDI narratives were rated by reliable coders and inter-rater reliability was found .81.

2.2.2 Child Assessment Tools

2.2.2.1 *Attachment Doll Story Completion Task (ASCT)*

Attachment Doll Story Completion Task (Granot & Mayseless, 2001) was found to evaluate the quality of the internal attachment representations to the caregiver and was used for understanding the child's attachment prototype in this study. Story stems were used in different studies to gather information about children's internal representations of themselves and their world from their story completion narratives. (Warren, Oppenheim, Emde, 1996). Bretherton, Ridgeway & Cassidy (1990) were the first developers of Attachment Doll Story Completion Task to have a clear conception about the perception of attachment representations of a 3-year-old which then is adapted up to 12-year-old child by Granot & Mayseless (2001).

Attachment Doll Story Completion Task starts by the administrator's introduction of the stories – one neutral and five attachment related stories – and aims to code the security and attachment prototype of the child as he/she tells what happens next in the stories. The child generally completes the stories by using family figure (mother, father, grandmother and child), table, bed and car dolls which are introduced to the child at the beginning of the procedure. First, the child gives a name to the child figure and expected to complete the neutral warm-up story, which is about the birthday celebration and does not take part in the overall coding. Then the five attachment related stories are introduced to the child and the coding procedure starts by coding each of these stories as either secure or insecure and continues by coding the last two stories (departure and reunion) in three additional scales to assign an overall attachment classification. Each attachment prototype is scored, and final attachment prototype is assigned based on the narratives of each story.

In the first story, *spilled juice* story, the child accidentally spills juice on the floor in a family dinner setting. The story is coded as secure if the parent

figure(s) are not acting harsh to that situation, they clean the floor and may offer a new juice to the child and turn back to their dinner routine.

In the second story, *hurt knee* story, the child falls from a high rock and hurts his/her knee. The story is coded as secure if the parent figure(s) react to the child's hurt by giving emotional and instrumental help which has a calming effect on the child.

In the third story, *monster in the bedroom* story, the child is in bed to sleep and cries out to his/her parent figure(s) about a monster under his/her bed. The story is coded as secure if the parent figure(s) deal with the child's fear without rejecting his/her feeling but to comfort and soothe him to sleep alone in his/her bed.

In the fourth story, *departure* story, the child stays with his/her grandmother while his/her mother and father are leaving for a week-long vacation. The story is coded as secure if the child performs his/her daily routines and has a positive relationship with the grandmother as he/she copes with the absence of the parent figure(s).

In the fifth story, *reunion* story, the mother and father return from their week-long vacation. The story is coded as secure if the parent figure(s) and the child come near in a positive manner and carry on their relationships from the point that they left.

The *departure* and *reunion* stories are also coded in three additional scales; the first scale is coded for the *departure* story and looking for the quality of the child's functioning and coping with the absence of his/her parent figure(s) on a 5-point Likert scale which is ranked from insecure coping to extremely secure coping.

The second scale, which is also coded for the *departure* story, is looking for the proper corporation, fulfillment and uniqueness of the child's relationship

with the alternative family figure, the grandmother, on a 5-point Likert scale which is ranked from disturbed relationship to well-distinguished relationship.

The third scale is coded for the *reunion* story and looking for the reunion of the child and the parent figure(s) and the positive attitudes displayed by the child during the reunion on a 5-point Likert scale which is ranked from extremely insecure coping to extremely secure coping.

The quantity of the secure and insecure stories assigns the overall security; five stories with secure coding means the child is secure; two stories out of five with insecure coding means the child is fairly- secure; three stories out of five with insecure coding means the child is insecure. The attachment security is assessed by four aspects; *the use of the emotional expression*, *the protagonist's relationship with the parents*, *description of events giving rise to attachment behavior* and *the story's narrative structure*, while coding the resemblance of the four attachment prototypes.

If, at least once, all four aspects of a prototype are seen in all stories, it is coded as *5 – very high resemblance to the prototype* or *4 – resemblance to the prototype*. If all four aspects of a prototype are seen only in some stories, it is coded as *3 – little resemblance to the prototype*. If, at least once or twice, one or two aspects of a prototype are seen in the stories, it is coded as *2 – elements of resemblance to the prototype*, If none of the aspects of a prototype is seen in the stories, it is coded as *1 – no resemblance to the prototype*. The overall attachment prototype is decided by looking at the highest coded prototype.

The prototype of the *secure* attachment strategy is observed by looking at the expressions of the feelings, both negative and positive, the access to the attachment figure(s), the sensitive approach of the figure(s) and how the figure(s) react to the situations that evoke anxiety. Level of logic and coherence in their narratives are also considered. The prototype of *avoidant* attachment strategy is defined by a dull or absent emotional expression, insignificant interpersonal

relationship with the attachment figure with one dimensional, minimal content of the narrative. The prototype of ambivalent attachment strategy is characterized by inappropriate and highly externalizing expressions of emotions in the situations that evoke anxiety, heightened behaviors to get proximity with the attachment figure and forced to adjust his needs; by using logical content in parts but with irrelevant details in the narrative. Prototype of disorganized attachment strategy is characterized on the basis of chaotic symbolic representations of attachment relationship in which the expression of positive and negative emotions is inconsistent, weak and incompetent caregiver who is controlled by the child or abusive and exploitative mother is displayed where the child is hurt in a dangerous and unpredictable situation reflected in illogical and bizarre narrative in stories. Inter-rater reliability in Attachment Doll Story Completion Task is reported .78 - .85 for each story and .91 for the overall attachment classifications. (Granot, Mayseless, 2001). Uluç (2005) has conducted research for Turkish adaptation of ASCT; inter-rater reliability of .81 for each story and inter-rater reliability of .83 for overall classifications was reported. In the current study, ASCT transcripts were coded by two trained clinical psychology master students. The entire sample was rated by one coder, and the 74 % of the sample was rated by the second coder; the interrater reliability was found .87.

2.2.2.2 Social Cognition and Object Relations Scales-G (SCORS-G)

The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Murray, 1943) was designed to reveal the reflections of the internal world involving drives, emotions and conflicts of the personality. In TAT procedure, children were expected to make up stories to TAT cards, in which they are asked to mention what happened before, what is happening now, what will happen next, and what the characters in the story are feeling and thinking (Kelly, 2007).

In this study, the six TAT cards (1, 2, 3BM, 13MF and 12 M) were used to understand the child's self and other representations and his interpersonal relationships from their narratives. All narratives were recorded to be coded.

Social Cognition and Object Relations Scale–Global Rating Method (SCORS–G; Stein, Hilsenroth, Slavin-Mulford, & Pinsker, 2011; Westen, 1995) was constituted to measure internal representations in TAT narratives. The content of story narratives was coded using SCORS-G which has five categories; the complexity of representations, affective quality of representations, emotional investment in relationships, emotional investment in moral values and understanding of social causality (Hilsenroth et al., 2007). Scores on this scale were on a 7-point Likert scale, with low scores indicating more primitive responses and high scores indicating more mature and healthy responses.

The first category, Complexity of Representations of People (CR) assesses the level of differentiation between mental representations of self and other. At a higher level of responses, there is a complex narration on the context of subjective experience and distinction between feelings of self and other; and, integration of both positive and negative aspects of personality. There is an example of a score 4.5 answer from the sample;

"This child might be going to a music lesson. But bored very much because he/she cannot learn. That is why this child left the instrument and sits with boredom. Beforehand, he/she tries and tries to play, however gave up because of his/her failure. But the teacher helped, and he/she was succeeded in playing... Firstly, the child was feeling bad, but became happy afterwards. The child was thinking; "I wish I tried more, I could be more successful if I do so"."

On the other hand, at lower responses, there is a failure in differentiating self and other representations, difficulty in defining different characters and their thoughts and feelings (Kelly, 2007; Stein et al., 2011), as it is shown in an example of 1.80 score on TAT.

"He/she is thinking of something. Then he/she needed to pee and lied down. After then, a monster came out of his/her body and cut off his/her head. Later, it comes back...he/she feels bad, very bad. Because he/she is dead."

The second variable, Affective Tone (AT), assesses the emotional tone and affective variability in stories. The range of affective tone of the relationship varies from malevolent, aggressive, violent expressions to negative, positive and more hopeful descriptions. (Stein et al., 2011; Westen, 1995). A higher-level answer on this dimension may include mixed negative and positive affective attributions and positive and affirmative expectations of relationships. As in the example got 5 points;

"There was a three-people family living in a village, a nuclear family in fact. They are expecting a new baby and the mother is pregnant. His/her father was a farmer. They have a daughter, going to high school. Her father tries hard to earn money to send her to school and, in the end, she did go to school. She was sad beforehand but become happy as she can go to school and can do whatever job she wants. She was thinking of helping her father and to make him earn money much faster. Both her mother and her father were happy. And her mother was wondering whether her daughter would love the baby brother or not."

And an example of 1.27 points on AT dimension which includes negative, malevolent, caustic affective expressions;

"It looks like real. She is doing something and going to somewhere. There was no light, no hand lamp. Then she got in the place and saw that everyone in there was frozen. Afterwards, she took the sword and put it into the body, and then he/she is died... I am telling terrible things...I am bored."

The third variable, Capacity for Emotional Investment in Relationships (EIR) assesses the capacity of emotional sharing and signs of intimacy in relationships. While low levels of narratives include characters primarily focus on their own needs in the relationship, boisterous or shallow relationships as in the example;

"I guess his/her mother was dead. And then it came to this place and put a knife into its body. Then he/she exploded their house, the woman burned. The story was finished now."

Higher levels have more caring, love, empathy; and committed, intimate, mutually and emotionally connected relationships occur as the scores get higher.

"I guess she lays down evenly on the bed. Someone might have done something bad when he is at home, and then he was feeling sad suddenly, go to bed and started crying. Then his mother came and asks, "Son, why are you crying?", his son replies; "my friend yells at me all the time and teases". Mother: "never mind, you should do the same." Child replies: "yes mom, you are right, but I don't want to be around them for some time and want to lay down in my bed. And then the child's friends came to apologize and let him play with them... The child got very angry with his friends, and as his mother told that kind of things, he became happy and felt that he was right, and his friends were wrong. He was thinking of being right, "hmm my friends put the blame on me, but I am right".

Emotional investment and values and moral standards (EIM) assess the level of abstract thinking on morality and internalization of moral values. In examples of low scores on this dimension selfish, self-indulgent behaviors, aggression regardless of guilt; as the scores get higher some internalization of values and morals are shown, or harsh moral standards to self and others occur; and there is an investment in morals, abstract thinking and moral questions at highest levels.

"He is crying, his mother slapped him, then he gets up. Then he raises his hand to his mother. Then he slaps. Cries and cries. Then he stands up, drinks water. When he raises his hand, his father comes over, he tells his father. He said, "why did you slap my son two times?". "None of your business", she says. Then, the husband and wife fight. The kid called the police. Both were arrested. The kid played at the police station. Then he saw a scissors on the ground and

took it. He cut the mother's hair in the evening. Oh, this was a knife. He stabbed and gone with the father. Then, he looked and see she is dead, called the police again."

Understanding of social causality (SC) assesses the extent of ability to understand behavior with underlying reasons and its outcomes. The narrative with low level has incoherent narration and limited awareness with confused, disturbing content of interpersonal experiences. In higher scores, narratives become coherent with interpretations of situations and people's actions, understanding the impact of people's behaviors in interpersonal experiences.

An example of a low level is below.

His wife is sleeping. Then, a wolf man appears and hold laser light in his eyes. He closed his eyes because of too much light. That's it. Then, his wife waked up. Both fell down from the window. Here is the window. They feel sadness... they can't think because they are dead."

There is an example of 3 points on SC dimension;

She is a student, I think. She was going to school. She was thinking about "my mom and that trying to save money to get their child nurture and get better education". Then she felt sad. She went her school, study and asked herself why she is not working. She finished her school and asks her student to work with her. "We'll work together and earn money", she said. As my family tried to help me, I am going to help my students too."

Westen (1995) has reported that in using SCORS manual, interrater reliability for each category has been found between .80 to .90.

In this study, TAT responses were coded based on SCORS-G Manual (Stein et al., 2011) by students in the clinical psychology MA program who received training before the coding process. Random groups of 3 coders independently rated TAT protocols. The inter-rater reliability of coders was found to be over .70. For each protocol, to ensure a high level of interrater agreement, coders reached an agreement on ratings with a maximum 1 point of difference.

2.2.2.3 *Turkish Expressive and Receptive Language Test (TİFALDİ)*

TIFALDI (Berument & Güven, 2010) assesses the language abilities of Turkish speaking children between the ages 2-12. The test is composed of two subtests measuring the expressive and the receptive language abilities of children. At the beginning of the subtest, the age-appropriate item to start the test is determined by the children's chronological test. The test items get harder as children move forward further in the test. The expressive language subscale includes 95 black and white pictures, and it progresses by asking the children to tell the name of the thing that they see on the picture. When the test is finalized, the standardized score (M=100, SD= 15) of each child is determined by their raw score and their chronological age. By Berument and Guven (2010) the test is reported to have an adequate internal consistency in general (Cronbach's a = .98) and across age groups (Cronbach's a = .96 to .86) (Berument & Guven, 2010). The standardized scores of the expressive language subtest were also reported to have significant relevance to the WISC-R Verbal Scale (r= .521; p< .000) (Berument & Guven, 2010).

The receptive language subtest is composed of 159 cards with four black and white pictures on them. The administrator shows the card to the child and expects the child to show the picture of the word that the administrator tells. Like the previous subtest, when the test is finalized, the standardized score (M=100, SD= 15) of each child is determined by their raw score and their chronological age. As in above subtest, the receptive language subtest is also reported by Berument and Guven (2010) to have an adequate internal consistency in general (Cronbach's a = .99) and across age groups (Cronbach's a = .88 to .96) and also a significant relevance to the WISC-R Verbal Scale (r= .447; p< .000).

2.3. Procedure

The collection of data took place in Istanbul Bilgi Psychological Counseling Center, where trained master level students conduct psychodynamic

psychotherapy sessions as a part of their clinical practicum. During the initial interview, the parents are informed on the ongoing psychotherapy research conducted in the center. If parents want to volunteer as participants for the study, consent is taken from parents in written form and from the children in oral form. Parents are also expected to provide consent if they want to give permission for the recording of the procedure and the recording type that they confide (audio, video). The research was approved by the Istanbul Bilgi University Ethics committee and funded by TUBİTAK Project number 215K180.

Before starting their therapy sessions, each child was assigned to research assistants who were trained for the administration materials and were also clinical psychology master students. The administration was done in private rooms and was recorded via the recording type parents approved of. The administration was done in two different ways depending on the children's age. For children, the administration progressed as; Attachment Story Completion Task, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and Tifaldi Turkish Expressive and Receptive Language Test. The whole procedure took around one and a half hours. After this, each child was then assigned to a therapist. At intake sessions, the therapists interview the parents with the PDI to assess their perceptions of their children, the relationship between them and themselves as parents.

2.4. Data Analysis Plan

In the following section, data analyses were conducted by using the SPSS version 21. Descriptive analysis will be presented for all variables of mothers' and children's. Correlation analysis was used to test the associations between gender, age, expressive language abilities of children and mothers' education levels; and significant associations were included in hypothesis testing as control variables. In hypothesis testing section, the relationship between maternal reflective functioning (assessed by Parent Development Interview), children's attachment disorganization (ASCT) and children's mental representation (using subscales of SCORS-G on TAT responses excluding emotional Investment in

Values and Moral Standards) will be investigated by using Partial Correlation Analysis.

Chapter 3: Results

In this section, the descriptive analysis of the data and hypothesis testing analyses are presented. Before the analyses, preliminary tests were done to reveal the measures of the scales. After descriptive analyses, between-group comparisons with Mann Whitney U test and partial correlations were conducted.

3.1. Descriptive Analyses

Descriptive statistics for children's age, disorganized ratings of Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT), Thematic Apperception Test Subscales (TAT), Tifaldi Expressive Language Subscale; mother's education and Parent Development Interview (PDI) were presented in Table 1, demonstrating maximum, minimum values, mean scores and standard deviations. Expressive language data of one male child and the education data of one mother were missing.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Children's Age, Disorganized Ratings of Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT), Thematic Apperception Test Subscales (TAT), Tifaldi Expressive Language Subscale; Mother's Education and Parent Development Interview (PDI).*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Age	82	6	10	7,88	1,42
Mother's Education	81	1,00	6,00	3,12	1,55
PDI	82	1,00	6,00	3,18	1,17
ASCT Disorganized Rating	82	1,00	5,00	1,68	1,33
CR	82	1,80	4,60	2,94	,53
AT	82	1,27	5,00	3,34	,69
EIR	82	1,33	4,50	2,79	,52
SC	82	1,33	4,90	2,71	,54
TAT_Mean	82	1,40	4,56	3,08	,46
Expressive Language Scale	81	39,00	141,00	112,14	18,42

Correlation analyses were conducted for preliminary analyses so as to reveal the possible associations between demographic variables and measures of scales. Pearson Correlation coefficients were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Pearson Correlation between Children's Age, Disorganized Ratings of Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT), Thematic Apperception Test Subscales (TAT), Tifaldi Expressive Language Subscale; Mother's Education and Parent Development Interview (PDI)*

	PDI	Age	Mother's education	Expressive Language	ASCT	(CR)	(AT)	(EIR)	(SC)	TAT Mean
PDI	1									
Age	0,95	1								
Mother's education	,360**	,018	1							
Expressive Language	,153	,084	,186	1						
ASCT	-,014	-,300**	,025	,067	1					
(CR)	,143	-,502**	,177	,204	-,484**	1				
(AT)	,231*	,224*	,018	,136	-,474**	,476**	1			
(EIR)	,219*	,267*	,058	,123	-, 439**	,728**	628**	1		
(SC)	,234*	,424**	,214	,265*	-,437**	,890**	,587**	,694**	1	
TAT Mean	,171	,357**	,073	,177	-,545**	814**	,848**	,865**	,857**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. *Spearman Correlation between the ages of children and measures*

	Age of the children
ASCT Disorganized Rating[2]	**-.312****
Complexity of Representations (CR)[3]	**.541****
Affective Tone (AT)[3]	**.218***
Emotional Investment in Relationships (EIR)[3]	**.244***
Understanding Social Causality (SC)[3]	**.460****
TAT Mean[3]	**.369****

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$, ASCT, TAT

Results indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between ASCT Disorganized Rating and the ages of children. Moreover, results demonstrated significant positive correlation between ages and Complexity of Representations (CR), Emotional Investment in Relationships (EIR), Understanding Social Causality (SC) and TAT mean scores. No other significant relationship has been found.

Mann Whitney U test was conducted for preliminary analyses so as to reveal the possible associations between demographic variables and measures of scales. TIF and TAT mean scores of the children according to their gender and the results of the Mann Whitney U test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *ASCT and TAT subscales mean scores of the children according to their gender and results of Mann Whitney U test*

	Gender of the children	N	M_R	S_R	U	z	p
ASCT Disorganized R	Female	34	33.00	1122.00	527.00	-3.552	**.000****
	Male	48	47.52	2281.00			
CR	Female	34	47.18	1604.00	623.00	-1.819	.069
	Male	48	37.48	1799.00			
AT	Female	34	46.99	1597.50	629.50	-1.756	.079
	Male	48	37.61	1805.50			
EIR	Female	34	47.43	1612.50	614.50	-1.898	.058
	Male	48	37.30	1790.50			
SC	Female	34	46.38	1577.00	650.00	-1.566	.117
	Male	48	38.04	1826.00			
TAT Mean	Female	34	49.54	1684.50	542.50	-2.574	**.010***
	Male	48	35.80	1718.50			

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$

Independent samples Mann Whitney U test revealed that ASCT mean ranks of boys are significantly higher than girls. TAT mean ranks of girls are significantly higher than boys.

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the partial correlation between maternal reflective functioning (PDI) and the children's TAT score was investigated. Secondly, the partial correlation between maternal reflective functioning (PDI) and children's attachment disorganization scores (ASCT). When testing both hypotheses, the children's age, gender and expressive language skills were considered as control variables.

Table 5. *Partial correlation between PDI, TAT, and ASCT when controlling for children's age, gender and expressive language.*

	PDI	ASCT	CR	AT	EIR	SC	TAT Mean
1. PDI	1						
2.ASCT	-,034	1					
3. CR	.134	-,357**	1				
4. AT	**.216***	-,393**	.380**	1			
5. EIR	**.201***	-,343**	.697**	.570**	1		
6. SC	**.210***	-,333**	.854**	.517**	.643**	1	
7. TAT (*M*)	.152	-,439**	.764**	.828**	.844**	.820**	1

*$p<.05$;
**$p<.01$

A partial correlation was run to determine the relationship between maternal reflective functioning (PDI) and children's ASCT disorganization ratings while controlling for children's age, gender and expressive language skills. There was no significant correlation between PDI and ASCT Disorganized Rating.

A partial correlation was run to determine the relationship between maternal reflective functioning (PDI) and children's TAT sub-scores and means while controlling for children's age, gender and expressive language skills. There was a small positive partial correlation between PDI and AT which was statistically significant. There was a small positive significant partial correlation between PDI and EIR. There was a small partial correlation between PDI and SC. There was no significant correlation between PDI and CR.

Chapter 4: Discussion

This study examined the relationship among mother's reflective functioning, children's complexity of object representations and attachment organization. A positive relationship was expected between mother's capacity to think about the child's mind, in other words, reflective function and complexity of child's object relations measured by Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Murray, 1943). It was expected that an increase in maternal reflective functioning is associated with an increase in both affective and cognitive dimensions of SCORS-G variables, namely Complexity of Representations (CR), Affective Tone of Relationship (AT), Emotional Investment in Relationships (EIR) and Understanding Social Causality (SC). The Complexity of Representations was not found to be related to the maternal RF. However, other dimensions were found to be positively correlated with maternal RF. In addition, a negative relationship was hypothesized between mother's reflective function and children's attachment disorganization. Contrary to our expectations, there was no relationship between mother's reflective function and the child's attachment disorganization. These results will be discussed below.

4.1 Association between maternal reflective functioning and child's object representations

4.1.1 Affective tone of relationship

We found a significant positive correlation between maternal reflective functioning and children's affective tone of object relations. Affect tone of object-relation specifically asks the child to integrate positive and negative affect as well as resolve the TAT narratives with positive affect attributions. Our findings indicate that the mother's ability to reflect on the child's mind helps the child attribute more positive emotions to self and others. It can be argued that the empathic failures of the primary caregiver beginning from the first interactions lead to instability in affective organization of object relations where positive and negative affects never come together, only the part object remains as malevolent and frustrating, which leave the child empty, deeply lonely and

hopeless. As Dunn and colleagues (1991) discussed, children growing up in family environment where emotions are frequently discussed, achieve better mentalizing abilities; and attachment security in their relationship with caregiver provide better understanding of affective states. Conversely, in case of parenting that caregivers think they know what feelings and thoughts the child has without respecting the fact that the child has a separate mind, namely have low levels of reflective functioning capacity, child's ability to define affective states and interpret expectations could be failed. Research by Cabrera, D'Shannon and Tamis-LeMonda (2007) explained that this kind of intrusiveness would have a negative impact on children in latency age by blocking autonomy to verbalize emotions and mental states. It is accepted mothers those who can facilitate attachment security are more likely to be emotionally engaged and active in mental state descriptions. Correspondingly, children with secure attachment base were found to be more open to interactions with emotional content and learn different emotional aspects from these interactions (Fonagy, Target, 2003).

4.1.2 Emotional investment in relationships

A significant positive relationship was found between mother's reflective function and children's ability to invest emotionally in relationships. The development in emotional investment in relationships was explained by a maturational change from a need gratifying investment in relationships to mutually satisfying patterns (Greenberg, Mitchell, 1983). As observed in the child's relationships in their social-emotional development, undifferentiated and evidential relationships shift into more durable and committed relationships. Because that EIR is one of the attachment-related dimensions, it is expected as the level of maternal RF increases, the complexity of emotional investment become more balanced in terms of distinguishing own needs and others', sensitive responding and relevant to social cues. Stein et al. (2011) suggested that Emotional Investment in Relationship was significantly positively correlated with secure attachment and positive representations of self and other. As mentioned before, internalized representations of past experiences provide the process that includes meaning attribution of motivations, attitudes in an interpersonal relationship with parents; and

these representations transferred into a relationship with others as developing emotionally invested and adjusted mutual relationships (Blatt et al., 1997). Luyten et al. (2009) supported this transmission with the inference that mothers of securely attached children encourage the development of mentalization capacities beginning from infancy and allow children's opportunities to learn and deepen their understanding of mental states and eventually apply this knowledge within other relationships in their social environment.

Fonagy and Allison (2014) explored the concept of epistemic trust as a crucial aspect of mentalization, which is defined as 'an individual's trust for new knowledge from another person is authentic, trustworthy, generalizable, and relevant to the self'. The caregiver's communication with ostensive, marked responses contributes to the development of epistemic trust in which the child addresses intentions and information coming from others. Children who are securely attached were flexible to prefer mothers' claims when they are reasonable, but they also rely on their perceptions when the mother's claims seem impossible. For children with disorganized attachment, it replaced with epistemic hypervigilance. Accordingly, secure attachment due to caregiver's mentalizing enables the child to learn from social experiences, built trust for the social world and establish positive expectation from intersubjective experiences (Fonagy, Allison, 2014).

4.1.3 Understanding Social Causality

A significant positive relationship was found between children's ability to make causal connections between the actions and internal states of TAT figures and the mother's RF. Social cognitive theories suggested that understanding social causality in children develops through developmental accomplishment such as higher complexity and accuracy in understanding of unconscious mechanisms, inferring internal perspectives rather than observable ones (Selman, 1980). Logical, accurate and complex descriptions of interpersonal experiences with their causes and consequences were assessed in this paradigm. As mentioned in mind-mindedness researches, with mothers who tend to comment appropriately on children's mind, children have higher levels of theory of mind abilities in later age (Meins et al, 2012). High levels of understanding social causality

occurred with the elaborated psychological course including thoughts, feelings, intentions; which is directly related to the one's mentalizing capacity. On the other hand, low levels of social causality were presented with illogical, inappropriate, conflicted or absent attributions in causality. Social causality is considered as one of the cognitive dimensions. Social-cognitive researches indicate that children cannot interpret the interests of others can be different from their own interests. According to Piaget's developmental concepts, children interpret interpersonal situations from their own perspectives until the age of 7 and as their ability of perspective taking and hypothetical thinking improves, they become cognitively mature to interpret situations from different perspectives (Crain, 2003). Low levels of understanding social causality were thought to be seen among children who grew up with inconsistent, unpredictable, bizarre parenting, thus they don't know how to act and what to expect because of their erratic internal working models of attachment. In a study conducted with physically abused children, Freedenfeld and colleagues (1995) found very low scores on social causality and emphasized the difficulty in making sense of the world and attributing logical meanings to relationships for those children who have traumatic relational experiences. The results of this study revealed a lack of consistency and predictability in early relationships may cause subsequent deficits in the evaluation of social causality.

4.1.4 Complexity of representations

In this study, unlike other paradigms, there was no significant correlation between maternal reflective functioning and complexity of representations. This finding was unexpected but could be explained by the following reasons. It is possible that whereas the emotion-related items of TAT are less affected by age, this item is highly related to the child's developmental level. The complexity of self and object representation is understood by increasing the level of differentiation of self and other. It is also accepted that the complexity level is progressed as children mature. As the representations get more complex, and the self- representations get more integrated, positive and negative attributions of other representation become more differentiated and coherent at about age 5. Research by Livesly and Bromley (1973) found that children at the age between 7 to

15 present more psychological expressions about people focusing on abstract qualities such as personality, values and beliefs rather than defining actions or physical traits. During childhood, a greater capacity to integrate the subjective experiences of others with opposite affective valence develops in a more complex and appropriate manner (Harter, 1983), and determined by the complexity of mothers' capacity to mentalize about their relationship.

From a cognitive perspective, as the child improves cognitive abilities, their capacity to express their emotions and thoughts also improved and it is expressed in a more symbolic way such as play or narratives. In this way, children's capacity of rational thinking, representations of self and functioning in the interpersonal relationship are formed (Slade, 2000; Stern, 1985). The cognitive development and age of the child have a significant role at this point. According to Piaget, from 2 to7 years, children's language, memory and symbolic thinking abilities develop, but remain egocentric. At this preoperational stage, child becomes able to match objects with language in a symbolically represented way. Later, between ages of 7 to 11, the ability of operational thinking which is less egocentric and more logical is developed. The child develops the capacity to cope with complex problems related to different perspectives and develops the capacity to coordinate multiple social categories such as role intersections. (Flavell, 1977). Because this sample is between ages of 6 to 10, it can be thought that the symbolic expression of children is highly developed, however, developmental changes in different cognitive abilities are differed both in the context and nature of individual child between these ages.

The analysis also indicated that CR has a positive correlation with age and expressive language skills of children. Since social representations gain more importance in this age group, self and other differentiation may be affected by social interaction rather than mother's reflective functioning. CR and SC are considered to measure cognitive dimensions, while other scales are related to affective dimensions. Therefore, it may be necessary to explain the reasons for not finding a significant relationship here with social cognition theory, because it focuses on components of rational intelligent such as abstract thinking, information processing, logic and reasoning (Greenspan & Lieberman, 2000)

rather than unconscious and emotional processes in interpersonal interactions. As inferred in this result, level of ability to see self and others in complex manners may not be directly associated with mothers' level of reflective functioning but may be merely a result of the level of maturity. Future research can assess this construct with older children.

4.2 Association between maternal reflective functioning and child's attachment disorganization.

According to analysis, contrary to expectations on the first hypothesis, there was no significant relationship between mother's reflective functioning and children's disorganized attachment ratings. First of all, in this study, only disorganized attachment strategy was taken into consideration. However, it is possible that mother's inappropriate and impaired mentalization may be associated with other strategies of attachment insecurity, such as avoidance of attachment-related scenarios or hyper-arousal in such situations as opposed to mere disorganization.

Another reason may be related to children's ages. Attachment may be a more formative concept in infancy years, whose importance declines in latency and gives way to more representational processes. As assessed in the current study, latency age studies assessed attachment strategies in representational level from children's narratives in attachment evoking stories. In this study, it can be thought that since there is no relationship between maternal reflective functioning and disorganized attachment in children, contrary to expectations, one reason may be that the participants were from the latency age group in this sample and the attachment styles were affected by different factors until these ages. While it is found that level of parental reflective functioning is a predictor of attachment security of the infant (Fonagy et al., 1991), in latency period, the concept of attachment representation become secondarily because caregiver's mentalizing abilities become the central aspect on child's mentalizing capacities and organizing internal representations. Consequently, it is suggested that the attachment process and mentalization are separate processes that intertwine during developmental

stages. In other words, attachment is a kind of preparation ground for the development of mentalizing abilities (Fonagy, Target 2008). As results indicated that there is a significant negative correlation between ASCT Disorganized Rating and the ages of children, mediator effect of age can be assessed to show more comprehensive assumption on interrelation of maternal RF and child's attachment disorganization. Additionally, mother's mental representations of caregiving may be changed and become more coherent during child's development and mother's capacity to reflect upon child may become more appropriate, contingent and mind-minded in their responses (Meins 2013). As Bartel and Zeki (2004) proposed that deactivation of attachment system by established secure attachment relationships, in the second step, that leads to perceive the other as a separate mind and maternal reflective functioning may be considered as a significant determinant at this point.

Another possible explanation could be the content of scenarios in ASCT. While all scenarios trigger attachment relationship strategies by using anxiety evoking situations, the first three scenarios, Spilled Juice, Monster in the Bedroom and Hurt Knee, were more concerned with child's representations of parenting behaviors, while the Departure and Reunion stories trigger more relationship-based representations. It was found that Reunion stories showed more strong evidence in expressing pleasant interaction in family context with least negative emotions. The insecure attachment was predicted by negative emotions in reunion story in many cases (Apavaloaie, 2012) respectively, revealing the attachment representations considering the effects of nature of the scenarios on child's constructions of these representations could expand the literature.

Another reason could be related to the levels of RF in maternal narratives. In this sample, the levels of maternal reflective functioning assessed by PDI were between 1 to 6. Scales for overall scores in PDI narratives due to the valence of richness and reflectiveness varies between -1 to 9. The answers rated -1 include rejections to demand questions, hostile attitude to the interviewer, or include at least some examples of unexplained or shocking statements in any part of the interview, extremely hostile, bizarre or improper in mental state discourses. Maternal RF at this level may lead to a significant

relation with attachment disorganization in child; however, in this sample PDI scores of mothers of children with disorganized attachment were between 1,5 to 6.

4.3 Limitations and Future Researches

This study has some limitations to be developed in future studies. First, the sample size is relatively small and may have affected the potential for significant outcomes and the generalizability of the results to the overall population. Regarding the associations between maternal RF and child's attachment disorganization and complexity of internal representations, a larger sample helps to draw more significant conclusions. This sample consisted of participants who applied to get psychological help for their children with different symptoms. While investigating the relationship between the concepts, maternal reflective functioning and child's attachment representations, only disorganized attachment strategy was considered. In further researches, the child's attachment security can be investigated with all secure and insecure dimensions. Further, it is also supported in literature that there are several factors affecting the mother's reflective functioning capacity and children's internal representations. It may be proposed that further researches can extend the study to explore this relationship in a more complex way by adding other variables that are likely to have an effect on these concepts such as mother's and child's trauma history, diagnosis or symptoms. It was suggested that attachment is a preparation ground and mentalization become the core determinants in development of self and other representations. Therefore, the relationship between maternal RF and child's representations need to be examined in longitudinal research design in early childhood as well as in latency age, to comprehend mother's mentalizing through child's changing developmental needs. Other cognitive abilities such as auditory and visual working memory, nonverbal reasoning and second order theory of mind abilities; and child's executive functioning can be added for a more comprehensive analysis. Child's attachment representations were measured by projective technique, ASCT, in which they are asked to create stories with toys or pictures, while mother's mentalization capacity was measured by PDI in which mothers were asked questions about their ongoing, real relationship with their children. Additionally, to gain a better estimations of findings, in

terms of its contributions to child's mentalization, the difference between mother's self-mentalization and other-mentalization and the quality of mental state talks can be assessed by qualitative methods by a closer look at the content of narratives in different parts of PDI.

4.4 Conclusion and Clinical Implications

Based on attachment theory, object relations and social cognition theories, the most fundamental factor in the formation of self and other representations of the child was built on the basis of quality of the relationship established with the caregiver in the early years (Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton, 1991; Cassidy, 1990; Main et al., 1985). To explain, children with mothers who have appropriate reflective capacity tend to have a secure attachment and positive internal working models of self and other; and show representations of positive emotions within their narratives on ASCT and TAT. On the contrary, children with mothers who have low sensitiveness and capacity to understand the child's mental states more likely to develop insecure (anxious, ambivalent and disorganized) attachment representations and negative internal working models of self and others. As a strong predictor, parental reflective functioning was examined to help better understanding of the child's attachment organizations and development of mental representations.

To summarize, findings showed that; (1) children's level of affective tone of relationships, emotional investment in relationships and understanding social causality as dimensions of object representations was significantly positively related with maternal reflective functioning, (2) for the level of complexity of representations, there was no significant relationship with maternal reflective functioning, (3) disorganized attachment organization of child and maternal reflective functioning were not found to be significantly associated in this sample.

Results of this study could show the importance of maternal reflective functioning on child's mentalizing capacities and development of self and other representations. That is very important for clinicians who work with children and their families. As shown in

projective techniques, children with low mentalizing capacities had difficulties in making coherent stories with resolutions and regulating their emotions; and in their experience, they reflect these difficulties as externalizing or internalizing behavioral problems. While working with families, helping them to understand the underlying reasons for behavioral problems is very crucial. Before mentalizing the child, parents' ability to understand their own mental states could be more effective. Clinicians' mentalization-based therapy techniques could help parents to engage in their experiences of stressful situations in parenting and a better understanding of representations of child and their relationship. Thus, by improving parents' awareness of their own mental states during anxiety evoking situations, misinterpretation of child's needs and emotions could be prevented. By focusing on the child's attachment needs, enabling mothers to reflect on the child's emotional states by contingent and marked mirroring increase effectiveness in maternal mentalization and quality of caregiving. Discussing past and present experiences and making links between their current relationship with their child would provide another base for the development of secure attachment.

Both in the assessments and psychotherapy processes, it is important to keep in mind that mothers' attributions to their child's mental states could be influenced by several factors. If these attributions are usually negative or inaccurate, beginning from psychoeducation in which mother's capacity to understand their own mind is developed. Although fathers are not included in this study, the effects of the RF capacity of fathers on the development of object representations of children at this age should be investigated in future research.

Especially for the latency aged children, providing opportunities where the children talk about affective states, establishing cause and effect relationships and interpret situations from different perspectives is highly important. These abilities would develop within family interactions as well as the therapeutic process through symbolic play. By observing these interactions and play, further researches would examine the interventions for the development of secure attachment representations, mature object relations and emotion regulation capacity of children.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Parent Development Interview (PDI)

A. Çocuk Hakkındaki Görüşler.

1. Öncelikle, çocuğunuzun nasıl biri olduğuna dair biraz fikir sahibi olarak başlamak isterim... Çocuğunuzu tarif eden 3 sıfat seçerek başlayabilir miyiz? (Ebeveyn sıfatları sıralarken bekleyin.) Şimdi her sıfatın üzerinden geçelim. _____ ile ilgili aklınıza gelen herhangi bir olay ya da anı var mı? (Her sıfatı inceleyip, o sıfat hakkında belirli bir anı öğrenin.)
2. Peki şimdi çocuğunuza dönelim... Tipik bir haftada, onun yapmaktan hoşlandığı, vaktini ayırdığı şeyler nelerdir?
3. Ve en fazla problem yaşadığı şeyler nelerdir?
4. Çocuğunuzda en çok ne hoşunuza gidiyor?
5. Çocuğunuzda en az hoşlandığınız şey nedir?

B. Çocuk ile İlişkisi Hakkındaki Görüşler

1. Çocuğunuzla olan ilişkinizi yansıttığını düşündüğünüz 3 sıfat seçmenizi rica ediyorum. (Sıfatları sıralarken bekleyin.) Şimdi de bu sıfatların üzerinden geçelim. _____ ile ilgili aklınıza gelen herhangi bir olay ya da anı var mı?
(Her sıfatı inceleyip, o sıfat hakkında belirli bir anı öğrenin.)
2. Son bir hafta içinde, çocuğunuzla gerçekten iyi anlaştığınız bir anı anlatabilir misiniz? (Gerekirse şu sorular eklenebilir: Bana bu andan biraz daha bahsedebilir misiniz? Siz nasıl hissettiniz? Sizce çocuğunuz nasıl hissetti?)
3. Şimdi de, son bir hafta içerisinde çocuğunuzla iyi anlaşmadığınız bir anı anlatır mısınız? (Gerekirse şu sorular eklenebilir: Bana bu andan biraz daha bahsedebilir misiniz? Siz nasıl hissettiniz? Sizce çocuğunuz nasıl hissetti?)
4. Çocuğunuzla olan ilişkiniz, onun gelişimini ya da kişiliğini nasıl etkiliyor sizce?

C. Ebeveynlikte Afektif Deneyim

1. Bir anne/baba olarak kendinizi tanımlayabilir misiniz?
2. Anne/baba olarak size en çok keyif veren şey nedir?
3. Anne/baba olarak sizi en çok zorlayan ya da size en çok acı veren şey nedir?
4. Çocuğunuzla ilgili en çok nelerden endişe duyuyorsunuz?
5. Çocuğunuzun olması sizi nasıl değiştirdi?
6. Son 1-2 hafta içinde, bir anne/baba olarak öfkeli hissettiğiniz bir zamanı anlatır misiniz? (Gerekirse şu sorular eklenebilir: Bana bu durumdan biraz daha bahsedebilir misiniz? Öfke duygularınızla nasıl başa çıktınız?)

6a. Bu duygular, çocuğunuzda nasıl bir etki uyandırıyor?

7. Son 1-2 hafta içinde, bir anne/baba olarak kendinizi suçlu hissettiğiniz bir anı anlatır mısınız? (Gerekirse şu sorular eklenebilir: Bana bu durumdan biraz daha bahseder misiniz? Suçluluk duygularınızla nasıl başa çıktınız?)

7a. Bu duygular, çocuğunuzda nasıl bir etki uyandırıyor?

8. Son 1-2 hafta içinde, birinin sizinle ilgilenmesine ihtiyaç duyduğunuzu hissettiğiniz bir zamanı anlatır mısınız? (Gerekirse şu sorular eklenebilir: Bana bu durumdan biraz daha bahseder misiniz? Bu ihtiyaç duygularınızla nasıl başa çıktınız?)

8a. Bu duygular, çocuğunuzda nasıl bir etki uyandırıyor?

9. Çocuğunuz üzgün olduğunda ne yapar? Bu *sizi* nasıl hissettirir? Bu zamanlarda siz ne yaparsınız?

10. Çocuğunuzun, kendisini reddedilmiş hissettiği oldu mu?

D. Ebeveynin Aile Öyküsü

Şimdi size, sizin anneniz ile babanız ve anneliğe/babalığa dair hislerinizi etkilemiş olabilecek çocukluk deneyimleriniz hakkında birkaç soru soracağım.

1. Sizden, annenizle çocukluğunuzdaki ilişkinizi tanımlayan 3 sıfat seçmenizi rica ediyorum; hatırlayabildiğiniz en eski anılardan başlayın. (Sıfatları sıralarken bekleyin.) Şimdi geri dönüp bu sıfatların üzerinden geçelim. _____ ile ilgili aklınıza gelen herhangi bir olay ya da anı var mı?

2. Şimdi de babanızla çocukluğunuzdaki ilişkinizi tanımlayan 3 sıfat seçebilir misiniz? (Ebeveyn sıfatları sıralarken bekleyin.) Şimdi de bu sıfatların üzerinden geçelim. _____ ile ilgili aklınıza gelen herhangi bir olay ya da anı var mı?

3. Küçük bir çocukken, anneniz ya da babanız tarafından (fiziksel ya da duygusal anlamda) reddedildiğinizi hissettiniz mi hiç?

4. Ailenizin sizi yetiştirme şeklinin, sizin anne/baba oluşunuzu nasıl etkilediğini düşünüyorsunuz?

5. Sizce neden anneniz ve babanız çocukluğunuzda bu şekilde davranıyorlardı?

6. Bir ebeveyn olarak, ne açılardan anneniz gibi olmayı istersiniz ve ne açılardan bunu istemezsiniz?

7. Peki ne açılardan babanız gibi olmayı istersiniz ve de istemezsiniz?

8. Bir ebeveyn olarak annenize benzeyen ve benzemeyen yanlarınız neler?

9. Bir ebeveyn olarak babanıza benzeyen ve benzemeyen yanlarınız neler?

E. Bağımlılık/Bağımsızlık

1. Çocuğunuz ne zaman sizden ilgi bekler? (Kendiliğinden devam etmezse sorun: Bu durumda siz nasıl hissediyorsunuz?)

2. Neden bu alanlarda yardıma ihtiyaç duyduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

3. Ne zaman kendi başına bir şeyler yapma konusunda rahat hisseder? (Kendiliğinden devam etmezse sorun: Bu durumda siz nasıl hissediyorsunuz?)

4. Kendi başına bir şeyleri yapamadığında ne olur? (Kendiliğinden devam etmezse sorun: Bu durumda siz nasıl hissediyorsunuz?)

F. Ayrılık/Kayıp

1. Şimdi de, çocuğunuzla birlikte olmadığınız, ayrı olduğunuz bir zamanı düşünmenizi rica ediyorum. Bunu bana anlatır mısınız? (Gerektiğinde şu sorular eklenebilir: Bu durum, çocukta nasıl bir etki yarattı? Sizde nasıl bir etki yarattı?)

Not: Eğer ebeveyn yakın zamanda (bir sene içinde) yaşanmış bir ayrılığı anlatmazsa, soruyu, yakın zamanlardaki ayrılıkları öğrenmek adına tekrar edin.

2. Bugüne dek, çocuğunuzu biraz olsun kaybetmekte olduğunuzu hissettiğiniz bir zaman var mı? Bu sizin için nasıl bir histi?

3. Sizin için çok önemli olsa da çocuğunuzun tanımadığı, ama "keşke çocuğum onunla yakın olsa" dediğiniz biri var mı?

4. Çocuğunuzun hayatında, onun için aksilik olduğunu hissettiğiniz deneyimler var mı?

G. Geriye ve İleriye Bakış

1. Çocuğunuz şimdiden _____ yaşında ve siz deneyimli bir annesiniz/babasınız (Uygun şekilde değiştirin). Tüm bu deneyimi en baştan yeniden yaşasaydınız, neleri değiştirirdiniz? Neleri değiştirmezdiniz?

2. Çocuğunuz bir yetişkin olduğunda, onunla nasıl bir ilişkiniz olacağını düşünüyorsunuz?

3. Kendinizi anneanne/babaanne/dede olarak hayal edebiliyor musunuz? Ne şekilde hayal ediyorsunuz? Neler ümit ediyorsunuz?

Appendix B. Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT)

Yönerge: Şimdi, nelerimiz var bir bakalım (aile figürlerini çıkarın). Bak bu bizim ailemiz. Bu büyükanne, bu anne, bu baba ve bunlar da çocuklar. (figürleri katılımcıya gösterin ve isimlerini söyleyin). Katılımcının çocuk figürüne isim vermesi sağlanır.

Uygulamacı: bu annesi, bu babası, bu büyük annesi, bu da çocuk. Hadi çocuğa isim verelim. Çocuğun ismi ne olsun istersin

Uygulamacı: Şimdi ailemizle ilgili bazı öyküler uydurup, oynatacağız. Ben bu aile ile ilgili öyküler anlatmaya başlayacağım, sende bu öykülerin sonunu anlatacaksın.

Doğum günü öyküsü (ısınma oyunu)

Bu bir masa. Bakalım üzerinde ne varmış (katılımcı pastayı görüp isimlendirene kadar beklenir) bu ne pastası..... Evet bir doğum günü pastası. Şimdi öyküyü dikkatlice dinle. Anne çok güzel bir doğum günü pastası yapmış. Şimdi de herkesi masaya çağırıyor.

Anne: büyükanne, baba, çocuklar hadi gelin. Doğum günü partisi yapalım. Hadi bakalım sen bu öykünün gerisini oynat.

Kazara Dökülen Meyve Suyu Öyküsü

(Çocuk, anne, baba, masa, tabaklar)

Uygulamacı: "Tamam, Aklıma yeni bir hikaye geldi" (büyükanneyi alın ve yeni figürleri aşağıda gösterildiği gibi yerleştirin, masadan uzaklaştırın.)

Uygulamacı: (içinde sofra malzemelerinin olduğu kutuyu sallayın) "akşam yemeği için sofrayı hazırlamamda bana yardım eder misin?" (kutu katılımcıya verilir, katılımcı sofrayı hazırlayana kadar beklenir, eğer yardım isterse yardımcı olunur.)

Uygulamacı: "Şimdi aileyi yemek masasının etrafına oturtalım, böylece yemeğe hazır olsunlar" (katılımcı figürleri yerleştirene kadar beklenir)

Uygulamacı: (kaldığı yerden devam eder) "Burada ailemiz akşam yemeği yiyor. ..... (çocuğun verdiği isim) ayağa kalktı, uzandı ve meyve suyunu kazara devirdi." (çocuk figürünü

meyve suyu kabını devirecek şekilde hareket ettirin, çocuğun kabı açıkça görmesini sağlayın)

Anne: "....., meyve suyunu döktün" (sitemli ama aşırıya kaçmayan bir ses tonuyla; anneyi .....'a çevirin ve konuştuğu sırada hareket ettirin).

Uygulamacı: "şimdi ne olduğunu bana göster"

Yatak Odasındaki Canavar Öyküsü

(Çocuk, anne, baba, üzerinde battaniyesi olan bir yatak)

Uygulamacı: "Ailemizi yeni oyun için hazırlayabilir misin?" (Eğer katılımcı bu şekilde düzenlemezse, oyuncakları aşağıda görüldüğü gibi yerleştirin. Tekrar, ailenin geri kalanının yatak odasındaki yataktan en az 30 cm uzak olması oldukça önemlidir.)

Uygulamacı: "Şimdi neler olduğuna bak. Dikkatlice dinle"

Anne: (annenin yüzü öyküdeki çocuğa çevrilir ve konuşurken hafifçe hareket ettirilir.) "Yatma vakti. Hadi bakalım, odana git ve uyu."

Baba: "Şimdi yatağına git" (yüzü çocuğa dönerek, bir parça hareket verip ve sesi kalınlaştırarak)

Çocuk: "Tamam anne baba gidiyorum." (çocuk figürünü yatağa doğru yürütün)

Uygulamacı: (açımlama yapar) "..... üst kattaki odasına gidiyor, gidiyor"

Çocuk: "Anne! Baba! Odamda bir canavar var! Odamda canavar var! (korkmuş bir ses tonuyla)

Uygulamacı: "şimdi ne olduğunu bana göster"

Yaralı Diz Öyküsü

(Çocuk, anne, baba, kayalık için sünger, çimen için keçe)

Uygulamacı: "Tamam, Şimdi başka bir öyküm var. Ben bunları toplarken, sen ailemizi oraya koy ve yeni öykü için hazırla." (Uygulamacı masanın köşesini gösterir. Öyküde kayalığa tırmanan çocuk dışında ailenin geri kalanının kayalıktan en az 30 cm uzak olması önemlidir.)

Uygulamacı: "Bak şimdi elimde neler var! (Bir parça yeşil alan ve kayalık yerleştirilir.) Bu bir park. Anne babanla parka gider misiniz?" "Bunlar bizim ailemiz, parkta dolaşmaya çıkmışlar ve bu parkta yüksek, oldukça yüksek bir kayalık var."

Çocuk: "Anne, baba bakın. Bu yüksek, çok yüksek kayalığa nasıl da tırmandığımı seyredin." (çocuk figürünü kayalığa tırmandırılmaya başlanır, daha sonra düşer) "off!, dizim acıyor" (ağlamaklı bir sesle)

Uygulamacı: "şimdi ne olduğunu bana göster"

Ayrılık Öyküsü

(Çocuk, anne, baba, büyükanne, çimen ve araba için bir kutu)

Uygulamacı: "Hadi bu sefer büyükanneyi kullanalım." (Yeşil alan ve arabayla birlikte, aile ve büyükanneyi masaya aşağıdaki gibi yerleştirilir. Arabanın katılımcının önünde olması ve her iki ebeveynin çocuklara ve büyükanneye bakıyor olası önemlidir.)

Uygulamacı: "Burası onların ön bahçesi, ve bu onların arabası. Bu ailenin arabası." (Araba katılımcının önünde durduğu sırada anne ve babanın yüzlerini çocuk ve büyükanneye çevrilir.)

Uygulamacı: "Sanırım (katılımcının ismi), anne ve baba tatile gidiyorlar."

Anne: "Evet çocuklar (kızlar). Babanız ve ben bir tatile gidiyoruz. Şimdi sizden ayrılıp, tatile çıkıyoruz." (Anne hafifçe hareket ettirilerek çocuklarla konuşturulur.)

Baba: "Bir hafta sonra görüşürüz. Büyükanneniz sizinle kalacak." (Baba hafifçe hareket ettirilerek çocuklarla konuşturulur.)

Uygulamacı: "Şimdi ne olduğunu bana göster"

Yeniden Bir araya Gelme Öyküsü

(Çocuk, anne, baba, büyükanne, çimen ve araba için bir kutu)

Araba içindeki iki ebeveynle beraber masanın altından geri getirilir. Çocuklardan uzak olacak şekilde masanın üzerine yerleştirilir. (örneğin, katılımcının ulaşmasını ve arabayı sürmesini

engelleyecek şekilde uygulamacının yakınına konulur.) Eğer bir önceki oyunda katılımcı çocuklar ve büyükanneyi masanın ortasına yaklaştırmışsa, geri gelen araba ve çocuk figürleri arasında mesafe oluşturacak şekilde bu figürler katılımcıya yakın bir yere geri koyulur.

Uygulamacı: "Tamam, Ne oldu biliyor musun? Bir hafta geçti ve büyükanne pencereden dışarı bakıyor." (Büyükannenin yüzü arabaya doğru çevrilir ve konuşurken biraz hareket ettirilir.)

Büyükanne: "Bakın çocuklar, anne babanız geri geldi. Tatilden eve geri döndüler."

Uygulamacı: "Şimdi ne olduğunu bana göster" (katılımcının arabayı eve yaklaştırmasına izin verilir ve gerekiyorsa yardımcı olunur.)

Appendix C. Social Cognition And Object Relations Scale - Global Rating Method Manual

Complexity of representation of people: 1 = is egocentric, or sometimes confuses thoughts, feelings, or attributes of the self and others; 3 = tends to describe people's personalities and internal states in minimally elaborated, relatively simplistic ways, or splits representations into good and bad; 5 = representations of the self and others are stereotypical or conventional, is able to integrate both good and bad characteristics of self and others, has awareness of impact on others; 7 = is psychologically minded, insight into self and others, differentiated and shows considerable complexity

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Affective quality of representations: (i.e., what the person expects from relationships, and how s/he tends to experience significant others and describe significant relationships): 1 = malevolent, abusive, caustic; 3 = largely negative or unpleasant, but not abusive; 5 = mixed, neither primarily positive nor primarily negative, (needs to have some positive to be scored 5); 7 = generally positive expectations of relationships (but not pollyannaish), a favorable and affirmative view of relationships

Note: where affective quality is absent, bland, or limited, code 4

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Emotional investment in relationships: 1 = tends to focus primarily on his/her own needs in relationships, has tumultuous relationships, or has few if any relationships; 3 = somewhat shallow relationships, or only **alludes to others**; 5 = demonstrates conventional sentiments of friendship, caring, love, and empathy; 7 = tends to have deep, committed relationships with mutual sharing, emotional intimacy, interdependence, and respect, positive connectedness and appreciation of others

Note: where only one character is described, and no relationship is depicted, code 2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Emotional investment in values and moral standards: 1 = behaves in selfish, inconsiderate, self-indulgent or aggressive ways without any sense of remorse or guilt; 3 = shows signs of *some* internalization of standards (e.g., avoids doing "bad" things because knows will be punished for them, thinks in relatively childlike ways about right and wrong, etc.), or is morally harsh and rigid toward self or others; 5 = is invested in moral values and tries to live up to them; 7 = thinks about moral questions in a way that combines abstract thought, a willingness to challenge or question convention, and genuine compassion and thoughtfulness in actions (i.e., not just intellectualized)

Note: where no moral concerns are raised in a particular story, code 4

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Understanding of social causality: 1 = narrative accounts of interpersonal experiences are confused, distorted, extremely sparse, or difficult to follow, limited awareness and coherence; 3 = understands people in relatively simple, but sensible ways, or describes interpersonal events in ways that largely make sense but may have a few gaps or incongruities; 5 = tends to provide straightforward narrative accounts of interpersonal events in which people's actions result from the way they experience or interpret situations; 7 = tends to provide particularly coherent narrative accounts of interpersonal events, and to understand people very well, understands the impact of their behavior on others and others behavior on them. **Note: where subject describes interpersonal events as if they just happen, with little sense of why people behave the way they do (i.e., alogical rather than illogical stories that seem to lack any causal understanding), code 2**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7