Research Article

The Use of Interactional Metadiscourse: A Comparison of Articles on Turkish Education and Literature

Mustafa Onur Kan[1]
Mustafa Kemal University

Abstract

This study aims to determine the use of interactional metadiscourse in articles from the domains of Turkish language and literature. The study employed a descriptive research model to examine 20 articles from the *Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute* (all articles were published between 2010 and 2015 and each has only a single author). Of these randomly selected articles, 10 were on Turkish language education and 10 were concerned with Turkish literature. Hyland and Tse's metadiscourse model was adopted to examine markers of interactional metadiscourse in all fundamental parts of these articles. For the evaluation of the obtained data, the content analysis technique and the Mann–Whitney U test were used to determine whether the interactional metadiscourse demonstrates any significant differences regarding the domains of Turkish language education and literature. Experts were consulted to ensure the reliability of the research. As a result, this study revealed that there is more use of interactional metadiscourse markers in the field of Turkish language education than in the field of literature, and this difference is significant, according to the Mann–Whitney U test. Further, it was found that hedges and boosters demonstrate a significant difference in studies on Turkish language education and literature; however, no significant difference in the uses of attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions was observed.

Keywords

Metadiscourse • Interactional metadiscourse markers • Academic writing • Articles • Social sciences

1 **Correspondence to:** Mustafa Onur Kan (PhD), Department of Primary Education, Mustafa Kemal University, Antakya, Hatay 31000 Turkey. Email: mustafaonurkan@gmail.com

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Studies in the field of literature (Ädel, 2006; Estaji & Vafaeimehr, 2015; Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Khedri, Ebrahimi, & Heng, 2013) indicate that the use of metadiscourse is a basic element of academic writing. Harris, who first introduced the term "metadiscourse," defined it as an author's or speaker's way of explaining their language use in order to ensure its proper perception by the receiver. For Vande Kopple (1985), metadiscourse is a linguistic element that does not add propositional information but indicates an author's presence. Crismore (1989) also developed the theme of metadiscourse, describing it as an author's entering his own discourse, clearly or implicitly, but not in such a way as to inform the reader about the writer. Metadiscourse, which is an integral part of a text composed of sentences that cluster in a certain train of logic (Coşkun, 2011, p. 881), contributes to forms of understanding and helps authors to compose reader-friendly texts, which is crucial for academic writing (Mirshamsi & Allami, 2013, p. 23). These definitions and explanations show that metadiscourse is related to the relation between authors, who compose texts, and readers, who analyze them.

The concept of metadiscourse, which is related to academic writing, assumes an important place in the field along academic studies of different languages, cultures, and disciplines. Comparative metadiscourse studies of the entire body of literature are focused on the comparison of social studies (Pooresfahani, Khajavy, & Vahidnia, 2012; Zarei & Mansoori, 2011); however, in a limited number of studies, such analysis has been focused on the comparison of fields related to the social sciences and the physical sciences (Estaji & Vafaeimehr, 2015). This study is intended to contribute to metadiscourse studies of the body of literature on the basis of the Turkish language along with an examination of articles in Turkish language education and literature. Further, as the knowledge of metadiscourse is required for master's degree students, this study may be a source for those intending to pursue academic writing.

Metadiscourse Markers

The first model of metadiscourse in the literature was presented by Vande Kopple (1985). Thereafter, many models (Ädel, 2006; Bunton, 1999; Crismore, 1989; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Vande Kopple, 2002) of metadiscourse in literature have been suggested. Hyland and Tse's (2004) model is one of those that have been taken as a basis and accepted by numerous studies of the literature. In this model, metadiscourse markers are divided into two basic categories: interactive and interactional.

The interactive aspect shows the ways in which the author edits the reader's attention, rhetorical expectation, possible knowledge, and processing ability, such that the reader is conscious of it (Hyland, 2005, p. 49). The author's purpose is to develop and

restrict the text in accordance with the reader's needs and to edit arguments in such a way that the reader is able to evaluate the author's conscious aim and interpretation (Hyland, 2005, p. 49). Interactive metadiscourse markers are composed of transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses.

The interactional aspect demonstrates the way in which the author manages the interaction; in this aspect, the author's aim is explaining his or her own point of view and integrating the reader into the text (Hyland, 2005, p. 49). Further, interactional markers determine the level of subjectivity in a text (Hyland, 2005, p. 52). Interactional markers, as taken by articles and explained below, are composed of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions.

Hedges. Because the presented knowledge shows the thought, or rather the reality, hedges indicate the subjectivity of the condition; therefore, they demonstrate that the condition is open to debate (Hyland, 2005, p. 52). In hedges, words such as "belki (perhaps)," "olası (possible)," "mümkün (probable)," "yaklaşık (about)," "çalışılmak (be worked)," "düşünülmek (be thought)," and "gözükmek (seem)" and morphemes such as "-AbIlIr (can be)" are used. For example,

İlköğretim ikinci kademe derslerinde bu yöntemin kullanılması son dönemlerde başlamış, özellikle ikinci kademe Türkçe derslerinde bu yöntemin kullanabilirliliği sınırlı sayıdaki araştırmalarla gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır. (The use of this method in secondary school classes has begun in recent years; in particular, the availability of this method has been attempted to be shown in the second tier of Turkish lessons with research focusing on a limited number.)

Eğitimde drama, oyuna benzeyen doğal ortamlarda dil gelişimi için çocuğa katkı sağlayabilir. (Much like games, drama in education can contribute to the development of children's language in a natural environment.)

Boosters. These enable the author to reduce options, settle disagreements, and express the certainty of what is said (Hyland, 2005, p. 52). In boosters, words such as "kesinlikle (absolutely)," "pek (quite)," "aslında (actually)," "kanıtlamak (prove)," "açık(tır) (it is clear that)," and "gerekli (necessary)" and morphemes such as "-mElİ (should)" and "-AcAk(tIr) (would)" are used. For example,

Yapılandırmacı eğitim çerçevesinde temel dil becerileri öğrencilere kuramsal dayanaklı ve uygulamalı yöntemlerle kazandırılmalıdır. (In the framework of reconstructive education, basic language abilities should be taught to students using applied and theoretical methods.)

Türkçe öğretmenlerine hizmet içi eğitim kurslarında ve ilgili seminerlerde drama konusunda eğitim verilmelidir. (Education related to drama should be given to teachers in in-service courses and seminars.)

Bu nedenle Türkçe derslerinde dil becerilerini kazandırmada dramanın kullanımı fayda sağlayacaktır. (Therefore, the use of drama would increase the gain in language abilities in Turkish courses.)

Attitude markers. These demonstrate the author's attitude toward the propositions rather than the accuracy of the knowledge. Attitude makers do not interpret the position or the possible validity or reliability of the knowledge but express astonishment, sharing of opinions, necessity, obligation, and disappointment (Hyland, 2005, p. 53). Attitude makers can include words such as "maalesef (unfortunately)," "umarım (hopefully)," "neyse ki (fortunately)," "ilginç(tir) [interesting(ly)]," "önemli(dir) [important(ly)]," "şaşırtıcı (surprising)," "çok yararlı (very beneficial)," "katılmak (join)," "tercih etmek (prefer)," "dikkate değmek (remarkable)," and "dikkat çekmek (pay attention)." For example,

Danışman'ın eserlerinin, özellikle tarihî roman alanındaki eserlerinin tam bir listesini, yazarın biyografisini veren kaynaklardan öğrenmek ne yazık ki mümkün değildir. (Unfortunately, it is not possible to know the results of the supervisor's work, in particular, a complete list of his works in the area of the historical novel from the sources of the author's biography.)

Bu değerlendirme ve eksiklikleri düzeltmeye dönük çalışmalar öğrencilerin yazmada yeterli seviyeye ulaşmalarında önemli katkılar sağlayacaktır. (This lack of evaluation and correction-oriented work will make an important contribution to achieving an adequate level of student writing.)

Buna bağlı olarak edebî açıdan gayet iyi olsa da programa ve seviyeye uygunluk açısından anılan nitelikleri taşıyan orijinal metin, yazık ki yok denecek kadar azdır. (Accordingly, even if it is good in the literal aspect, unfortunately, the original text has limited qualifications of compliance with the program and the level.)

Öğretmen adaylarının öne çıkan görüşlerinden şiirsel dille ifade etme ve duygulara tercüman olması da bu noktada dikkat çekmektedir. (From the prominent point of view of teacher candidates, expressions using poetic language and being an interpreter of feelings are remarkable at this point.)

Engagement markers. These call out to the reader's attention or include him in a task as a participant in the discourse (Hyland, 2005, p. 53). In relation markers, words such as "bakınız (look)," "not (note)," "düşünün (think)," and "(Tablo X) göstermektedir [(Table X) shows]" are common. For example,

*Biz bu çalışmamızda Mehmet Âkif'in şiirlerine yansıyan halk kültürü ögelerinden halk edebiyatı ögelerini bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla **sizlere** sunmaya çalışacağız. (In our study, we will try to present **to you** elements of folk literature, which is an element of folk culture that reflects Mehmet Akif's poem, in a holistic perspective.)*

3. Tabloda deney ve kontrol gruplarının Türkçe dersine yönelik tutum puan ortalamaları gösterilmektedir. *(In the third table, the mean scores of experimental and control groups of attitudes toward Turkish courses are shown.)*

Dikkat edilirse yazarın tüm romanlarında, olayların temelinde genellikle Türk tarihindeki önemli kişiler yer alır. *(If we look closely, important people of Turkish history find a place on the basis of events in the novels of the author.)*

Self-mentions. These indicate the presence of the author in the text (Hyland, 2005, p. 53). The author is clearly in the presence or absence of the determination made by the authors to demonstrate the identity of the author involved in the context as a conscious choice (Hyland, 2001). In self-mentions, words such as "ben (I)," "biz (we)," "bizim (our)," and "araştırmacı (the researcher)" and morphemes such as "-(I)mIz (our)" and "-(I)m (my)" are used. For example,

Benim bu makalede üzerine durmaya çalışacağım nokta bir mekân işareti olmanın çok ötesinde anlamlarla yüklü olan -metafor olarak- ev kavramı ile Yahya Kemâl'in ne kastediği sorusuna cevap aramak ve bu bağlamda bu kavramın Türk edebiyatına ne tür etkilerde bulunduğunu tespit etmektir. *(The very meaningful point that I will dwell on in this article, which is far beyond being just a spatial point, as a metaphor, to determine the answer to what Yahya Kemal meant by the concept of home and in this context, is the determination of the kind of effects this concept has on Turkish literature.)*

Safahat da bu eğitim kurumunun baş kitabıdır, diyebiliriz. *(We could say that Safahat is the book that is the head of this educational institution.)*

Biz bu çalışmamızda Mehmet Âkif'in şiirlerine yansıyan halk kültürü ögelerinden halk edebiyatı ögelerini bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla sizlere sunmaya çalışacağız. *(In our study, we will try to present Mehmet Akif's poetic elements of folk literature from elements of folk culture reflected in a holistic perspective.)*

Bu çerçevede araştırmacı tarafından bir uygulama planı hazırlanmıştır. *(In this context, an action plan has been prepared by the researcher.)*

The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine the use of interactional metadiscourse in the basic parts of articles (introduction, method, findings, discussion, result) in the fields of Turkish language education and literature. In accordance with this fundamental purpose, the sub-goals of the research are as follows.

For the basic parts of articles in the fields of Turkish language education and literature,

- Determining the types of interactional metadiscourse,

- Determining the frequencies of interactional metadiscourse use,

- Determining whether there is any significant difference in the use of interactional metadiscourse in different domains.

Method

This research, as a model descriptive survey, focuses on articles from the *Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*. Twenty articles were randomly chosen, of which 10 were on Turkish language education and 10 were on literature; all were published between 2010 and 2015 and each has only a single author. In this group of articles, there are total of 85,917 words: 33,378 words in the articles on Turkish language education and 52,539 words in the articles on literature.

Data Collection and Analysis

As is widely used in recent research, this study uses Hyland and Tse's (2004) model of metadiscourse. The study is determined by interactional metadiscourse markers such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions. The technique of content analysis (see Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011) is used for the evaluation of the obtained data.

The Mann–Whitney U test is used to determine whether or not interactional metadiscourse use shows any significant difference in the fields of Turkish language education and literature. While all words were taken from the basic parts of the articles, metadiscourse markers were counted per 1,000 words because of the inequality of the number of words in the articles on Turkish language education and literature. The test was run on these data.

To ensure the reliability of any research, qualitative research methods and an evaluation of the research by knowledgeable experts in this field can be used (Merriam, 2009). Accordingly, this research was conducted using qualitative methods and an expert of Turkish language education was also consulted. The data from the evaluation of the thesis were examined together with the expert, thereby reaching conclusions.

Findings

Table 1 shows the frequency of interactional metadiscourse use in the articles in the fields of Turkish language education and literature and their rate of incidence per 1,000 words.

Table 1
Interactional Metadiscourse Types in the Fields of Turkish Language Education and Literature

Interactional metadiscourse type	Turkish language education		Literature	
	Per 1,000 words	f	Per 1,000 words	f
Hedges	4.29	147	2.13	101
Boosters	4.03	138	1.53	70
Attitude markers	2.02	68	2.04	98
Relation markers	2.83	103	1.61	75
Self-mentions	1.08	37	1.90	78
Total	14.25	493	9.21	422

According to Table 1, 493 metadiscourse markers were used in articles on the Turkish language field, and 422 metadiscourse markers were used in articles on Turkish literature. When metadiscourse use is examined per each 1,000 words, it is evident that there is a higher frequency of metadiscourse marker use in articles on Turkish language education than in articles on Turkish literature.

Table 1 further reveals that hedges are the most common metadiscourse markers in not only studies on Turkish language education but also studies on Turkish literature. In articles on Turkish language education, self-mentions are the least common metadiscourse markers, whereas in literature articles, boosters are the least common markers. Further, in the articles on the field of literature, relation markers are used nearly as rarely as boosters.

The Mann–Whitney U test is used to determine whether interactional metadiscourse use shows any significant difference in the fields of Turkish language education and literature. The results of this test are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Mann–Whitney U Test for Interactional Metadiscourse Markers Used in the Fields of Turkish Language Education and Literature

	Hedges	Boosters	Attitude markers	Relation markers	Self-mentions	Total
Mann–Whitney U	21.000	16.000	47.000	26.000	41.000	18.000
Wilcoxon W	76.000	71.000	102.000	81.000	96.000	73000
Z	−2.192	−2.570	−.227	−1.814	−.681	−2.206
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.010	.821	.070	.496	.027

Table 2 demonstrates that there is a significant difference in the studies on Turkish language education not only in the total use of metadiscourse but also in the use of hedges and boosters. However, it can be seen that attitude markers, relation markers, and self-mentions do not show a significant difference.

Discussion and Result

This study broadly reviews the use of interactional metadiscourse in articles on Turkish education and literature. Both author groups use interactional metadiscourse in the examined articles. In addition, articles on Turkish education more frequently use interactional metadiscourse than those on Turkish literature (per 1,000 words, 14.25 versus 9.21, respectively) and this difference is meaningful, according to the Mann–Whitney U test. It can therefore be inferred that authors of educational articles work more on creating bonds with the reader.

Hedges are the most common element used in interactional metadiscourse. Nonetheless, there is a solid difference showing that authors of studies on Turkish education use more of interactional metadiscourse than do authors of studies on Turkish literature, according to the Mann–Whitney U test. Considering that hedges restrict information delivered by the author (Hyland, 2005, p. 49), it can be stated that writers of Turkish education are more deliberate in offering knowledge.

Boosters are the second most commonly used interactional metadiscourse element in our sample articles. However, it is the least common element used by authors of studies on Turkish literature. There is a meaningful difference showing that authors of studies on Turkish education use boosters significantly more often than do Turkish literature authors. Considering that boosters strengthen the precision of information, we can state that the authors of Turkish education offer more precise knowledge to readers (Hyland, 2005, p. 49).

Comparing the fields of Turkish literature and education in terms of the use of interactional metadiscourse, there are significant differences between these fields in the social sciences. These fields are related to each other but are separated in their usage of interactional metadiscourse. Hyland (1998) also states that the differences in usage of interactional metadiscourse is a tool to separate discourses. Similarly, Ünsal's (2008) study demonstrates that there is a difference in fields of social sciences (econometrics, history, sociology) in terms of the usage of interactional metadiscourse. On the other hand, Estaji and Vafaeimehr's (2015) study shows no significant differences in the fields of medicine and science in terms of usage of interactional metadiscourse. This result may be caused by an observation of subject that was not comprehensive or an incomplete search for all interactional metadiscourse types.

Also, it can be stated that markers of attitude are used more often in the field of Turkish education than in Turkish literature, but there is no meaningful difference, according to the Mann–Whitney U test (per 1,000 words, 2.02 versus 2.04, respectively). This result shows that authors in the field of Turkish education tend to work more to create connections with readers, although there is no significant difference.

Moreover, self-mentions are used more in the field of literature per 1,000 words compared to Turkish education, but there is no meaningful difference according to the Mann–Whitney U test (per 1,000 words, 2.83 versus 1.61, respectively). Further, self-mentions are the least used element of interactional metadiscourse in field of Turkish education. Even though there is no meaningful difference here, this result shows that authors of studies on Turkish literature refer more often to themselves than authors of studies on Turkish education.

In the light of this study's outcomes, the following proposals can be made:

- In academic writing courses, metadiscourse education can also be taught as part of text linguistics.

- The outcome of this study is limited by the observations of articles in the fields of Turkish education and literature. Other social-science fields or fields of science can be observed and compared using the results of this study. Moreover, master's theses, doctorate theses, and proposals can be examined.

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