

Analysis of Discourse Markers in Paragraph Writings of Preparatory Elective Class Students in a State University

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Abstract

Writing is one of the productive skills and it is very important. However, it is a very difficult skill to develop even in the native language. In other words, knowing the grammar rules and vocabulary do not create a perfect writing. Using discourse markers between the sentences to relate them with one another makes it more coherent. Therefore, in this study it was aimed to scrutinize the use of discourse markers (DMs) in the paragraphs of high-scored students and low-scored students. In the final exam paper, students were asked to write a story about one of the three pictures they chose. They were expected to narrate a story with 100-120 words as they were intermediate level students (B1). After two instructors evaluated each of the students' writing exams based on the non-academic criteria with the following sub-criteria: "accuracy of vocabulary, variety of vocabulary, accuracy of grammar, variety of grammar, paragraph structure, quality and relevance of ideas, linking words, punctuation and capitalization, and spelling mistakes", the writings of students who sent their consents were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively in this current study. 10 papers for each category (low-scored students' and high-scored students' paragraphs) were examined. Results showed that high-scored students used more DMs than low scored-students. Furthermore, misuse of DMs and overuse of DMs, which result in redundancy in the texts, make the writings disorganized and incomprehensible. Finally, there was a positive relationship between advanced uses and writing scores. As an implication of the study, it should be noted that students should be equipped with the semantically and functionally correct use of DMs. Therefore, teachers should attempt to use different methods or ways to teach them in the classroom.

Keywords: University, Foreign language education, English education, Discourse markers, Paragraph writing



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of making the child an effective human being, a qualified individual for the society/nation and world (or universe) in which he lives (Toprakçı, 2012; 88). Being an active member of the world requires communication with other people. In this context, it is necessary to learn other languages (Toprakçı, 2017). Especially with its prevalence, English is one of these languages. Writing is one of the productive skills, which needs to be developed while learning English. However, it is accepted that it is a really difficult skill to acquire in a mother tongue or in a foreign language since there are various types of writing such as writing in business or professional settings or academic settings. Different genres of writing make the writer learn and use different sub-writing skills (Tribble, 1997).

Writing depends on what the writer interprets and the reader understands. Therefore, the message in the writing should be received by the readers correctly. In other words, writing can be successful and effective when the writer knows what to write in the particular context and which part of the language system to use (Tribble, 1997). That's why the use of discourse markers (henceforth DMs) in writing is essential in order to create cohesion and coherence and they should not be regarded as a part of grammar but they also have many functions (Adeyemi, 2018; Tribble, 1997; Yunus & Haris, 2014). Dumlao and Wilang (2019) claim that "Discourse marker gives a sequence of sentences a coherent texture as it shows how semantic relationships are set up by lexical and syntactic features" (p. 209). In turn, these DMs provide "a relationship between writer and reader" (Tribble, 1997, p. 35) and they make the text comprehensible (Al-khazraji, 2019). As Povolna (2012) emphasizes, the importance of teaching DMs in academic writing is really important.

When the studies in the literature are reviewed, the use of DMs by L1 and L2 learners in various written discourses such as essays or master's theses in terms of variety and function has been examined. On the other hand, story as a type of written discourse has not been examined. Therefore, this study aimed to examine DMs used by students in order to create coherence and cohesion in their stories. Within this scope, the incorrect and excessive uses of DMs in students' paragraphs were identified. Furthermore, a comparison of DMs in low- and high scored students' writings were carried out quantitatively. Finally, misused, overused and advanced (good) used DMs in the stories were analyzed qualitatively.

The following research questions framed this study.

1. Research question 1: Does correct use of DMs affect writing scores of students?
2. Research question 2: Are there any differences between the low-and high-scored paragraphs in terms of correct use of DMs?
3. Research question 3: What is the frequency of wrong and good used DMs?

Literature Review

In a well-planned text, sentences cannot be written down "...like putting up bricks one upon one" but there should be relations between them (Feng, 2010, p. 299). This could be created using DMs. These markers provide cohesion and coherence in the paragraphs and show the writer's skill to reach the readers in the text. If they are not used appropriately and correctly, the readers will not comprehend or will misunderstand what the writer intends (Adeyemi, 2018).

On the other hand, the notion of discourse marker cannot be defined in a definite way since there is a variety of terms, which refers to these elements (Urgelles- Coll, 2010) such as sentence connectives (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), semantic conjuncts (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985), discourse markers (Fraser, 1999; Feng, 2010). Fraser (1999) puts forward "Although most researchers agree that they are expressions which relate discourse segments, there is no agreement on how they are to be defined or how they function" (p. 931). However, they have some certain characteristics. That is, as Urgelles-Coll (2010) notes, "Phonologically, they are short and reduced. Syntactically, they are not integrated; and they can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence." Furthermore, some of them convey meaning while others have a discourse function (p. 41).

Fraser (1999, p. 931) exemplifies them as in the following.

- a) A: I like him. B: **So**, you think you'll ask him out then.

- b) John can't go. **And** Mary can't go either.
- c) Will you go? **Furthermore**, will you represent the class there?
- d) Sue left late. **But** she arrived on time.
- e) I think it will fly. **After all**, we built it right.

All these expressions in bold (so, and, furthermore, but, after all) are discourse markers. Therefore, it could be stated that these DMs "function like a two-place relation, one argument lying in the segment they introduce, the other lying in the prior discourse (Fraser, 1999, p. 938). He categorizes them as DMs which relate messages and DMs which relate topics. They are labelled as (contrastive markers, elaborative markers, inferential markers, causative markers). Martinez (2004, p. 69) added two groups to Fraser's second subcategory (elaborative markers), which are conclusive DMs (in conclusion, in short, to sum up, in sum) and exemplifiers: (for example, such as, for instance) Feng (2010, p. 300) also divides them into four categories.

1. Additive: and, or also, in addition, furthermore, besides, similarly, likewise, by contrast, for instance;
2. Adversative: but, yet, however, instead, on the other hand, nevertheless at any rate, as a matter of fact;
3. Causal: so, consequently, it follows, for, because, under the circumstances, for this reason;
4. Continuatives: now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all; etc.

Teaching the use of DMs enhances students' awareness in order to create cohesion (in terms of pragmatic) and coherence (in terms of semantic) in their writings and this will improve their writing skill. Therefore, teachers should not ignore teaching these markers (Aidinlou, 2012; Feng, 2010). In the following example, the misuse of DMs in one of a students' essay shows to what extent the sentences cannot be combined in a cohesive way (Yunus & Harris, 2014, p. 58).

- (1) Her personal qualities are she is a kind girl and smart. She is a fashion designer, actor and artist. She has a clothes-line of Abbey Dawn. In addition, the big company of Abbey Dawn is in Japan...she was a cool and hot but has brain. Very pretty girl and cute...When I grow up I want to try to be a fashion designer and try my line clothes like her. And try something new in my life but not too much.

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As noted by the researchers, these markers were used incorrectly. The student used *and* at the beginning of the sentence although it is a coordination conjunction. Another discourse marker *but* shows contrast between the sentences, which is used in a wrong way, as well.

Another researcher illustrated the overused DMs (and) in a student's writing (Al-khazraji, 2019, p. 565-566). In this example, students do not use different DMs but s/he prefers the use of *and*, which is overused.

- (2) There are lots of risks concerning the usage of the Internet, such as physical issues. This issue could lead to eye fatigue and influence eye sight in children and adults. It could also lead to obesity from sitting down for a long period of time. Obesity in people is a dangerous issue and should be focused on and people need to be taught the healthy lifestyle of living in the future.

Kuzborska and Soden (2018) demonstrate the appropriate use of DMs in students' writings. The use of DMs (*although/but*) in the following shows concession between two sentences (pp. 74-75).

- (3) It seems that, although Hong Kong English does not cause much intelligible problems, it is still not perceived as a desirable model for many learners.
- (4) In addition, L2 students sometimes have good ideas, but have difficulties in organising the ideas.

Previous Studies on the Use of DMs

In the body of the literature, discourse markers both in speaking and writing were examined in detail. Tree and Schrock (1999) searched the use of DMs in spontaneous talk, Crible and Cuenca (2017) examined the characteristics of DMs and the problems in terms of scope and structure in speaking. Tagliamonte (2005) studied DMs in the conversation of young people. Zorluel-Özer and Okan (2018)

compared Turkish and native EFL teachers' lectures with regard to DMs. Since the use of DMs in writing is the concern of this paper, studies in written discourse (Al-khazraji, 2019; Aysu, 2017; Dumlao & Wilang, 2019; Feng, 2010; Kuzborska & Soden, 2018; Martinez, 2004; Povolna, 2012; Yunus & Haris, 2014) were summarized in detail below.

Dumlao and Wilang (2019) examined 24 academic essays written by L1 and L2 English users, who are in a BA TESOL program, in terms of their DMs. Among these two groups of learners, the frequency, variety, and functions of DMs differ. L1 English users prefer elaborative markers most while L2 English users overuse temporal and inferential markers, which makes their writing incoherent. However, a study carried out with elementary level students who are L2 English users presented the similar findings as L1 English users. "And, but, because" were the most common DMs used in students' writings. Elaborative markers were preferred by the students more than contrastive, causative, or inferential markers (Aysu, 2017). Aidinlou (2012) carried out an experimental study in order to reveal the effect of teaching DMs on students' writing skill. After the treatment in the experimental group, the results showed that students who were instructed in the use of DMs created cohesion more efficiently than the learners in the control group. Povolna (2012) analyzed the use of DMs in fifteen Master theses which were written by Czech students and how they expressed casual and contrastive ideas. Results showed that students tend to use "although, but, however, on the other hand" for contrastive relations and "as, because, therefore, thus" for casual relations. Additionally, Kuzborska and Soden (2018) examined opposition markers in the assignments of Chinese students who enrolled in a master course. Analysis was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively. The form and function of these markers were compared in three levels: from low- to high- scorers. The analysis demonstrated that there was not a significant relationship between the frequency of DMs and writing score. On the other hand, there was a positive relationship between advanced uses and writing score when they were analyzed qualitatively. Feng (2010) conducted a study with 38 students who studied Tourism Management and English in China. Results showed that students used a lot of discourse markers in their writings in order to create cohesion and coherence. Similarly, Yunus and Haris (2014) conducted a study in order to scrutinize the use of DMs in the essays of 30 intermediate second language learners in a secondary school. They found out that students misused, overused, and used in an advance way. Misused and overused DMs make the writing less coherent to follow.

METHOD

The research was carried out with the document analysis method in a qualitative design. The method section of the current study includes 3 parts: setting and participants, data collection and analysis procedures.

1.Setting and Participants

Participants of this study were 20 optional preparatory class students in a state university in Türkiye. These students were taught writing skills through writing packs prepared and used by the instructors at School of Foreign Languages in the fall and spring terms. In writing classes, they learnt how to organize and write different types of paragraphs such as narrative paragraphs, opinion paragraphs or cause and effect paragraphs. Also, they were instructed about writing topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences with correct connectives. During the preparatory class, they were asked to write many paragraphs as their portfolio tasks, pop-up quizzes, and a part of their mid-term and final exams.

Participants were selected based on the convenient sampling (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 2012) in which the researcher has an access to the participants. Thus, in this study participants were the students of the researcher. After necessary permission was provided by university ethics committee, a Google form link with a consent form was sent to a hundred ninety-two preparatory school students (the total number of students who had final exam) in order to use one part of their final exam (writing part). Seventy-four students sent their consents. Thus, the primary gathered data for this study was 74 paragraphs. Considering the aim and research questions of this study, low-scored students' and high-scored students' paragraphs were examined in order to compare the difference between the two

categories. 10 highest and lowest papers for each category were chosen to analyze as in qualitative data there is no fix number while deciding the participants (Cohen et al., 2000). These paragraphs were written by 11 females and 9 males as it is seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
Valid	Female	11	55	55	55
	Male	9	45	45	100
	Total	20	100	100	

2. Data Collection Procedure

According to the criteria of CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), B1 language users “can narrate a story” (p. 62) and “can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points” in terms of coherence. Therefore, in the final exam paper at the end of the prep class, students were asked to write a story about one of three pictures they chose. They were expected to narrate a story with 100-120 words as they were intermediate level students (B1).

While evaluating students’ writings, evaluation criteria with 25 points were employed with the following sub-criteria: accuracy of vocabulary, variety of vocabulary, accuracy of grammar, variety of grammar, paragraph structure, quality and relevance of ideas, linking words, punctuation and capitalization, and spelling mistakes. Students were informed about these criteria, and they knew that they were required to use DMs in their writings. Two instructors evaluated each of the students’ writing exam papers based on the evaluation criteria and considering the following instruction “If the difference between two raters is more than 10 points out of 100, a third rater will evaluate the assignment and it will be scored on the average of three ratings”, inter-rater reliability was assured. Finally, the writings of students who sent their consents were examined for this study, 10 papers for each category (low-scored students who got 12-17 out of 25 points and high-scored students who had 22-25 out of 25 points) were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.Data Analysis

In this study, first of all, DMs in low- and high scored students’ writings were examined quantitatively. While descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2012) was performed for qualitative data, statistical analysis such as inferential analysis (regression analysis) were also performed on the data derived from it. Misused, overused and advanced (good) DMs were analyzed qualitatively. In this study, misused and overused were categorized as wrong use and advanced uses were regarded as correct uses.

FINDINGS

The analysis of DMs in students’ paragraphs demonstrated that particularly in low-scored paragraphs there was a tendency to use less DMs and there were also many mistakes although B1- level students are considered to be able to write a story and link the sentences in an accurate way.

Table 2. Low-scored students’ paragraphs

Paper	St.1	St. 2	St. 3	St. 4	St. 5	St. 6	St. 7	St. 8	St. 9	St. 10	Total
f (correct)	3	7	4	12	0	8	3	1	3	2	43
Total	6	13	7	19	6	16	10	4	6	6	93

As it is seen in Table 2, ten low-scored students used 93 DMs in total while 43 of them were used in a correct way. St. 8, who used DMs less than others, had 4 discourse markers in his paragraph and one of them was a correct use. St. 5 used DMs more than others (19 DMs) and there were 12 correct uses.

Table 3. High-scored students’ paragraphs

Paper	St. 1	St. 2	St. 3	St. 4	St. 5	St. 6	St. 7	St. 8	St. 9	St. 10	Total
f (correct)	8	6	12	15	9	7	12	8	9	17	103
Total	13	14	15	19	10	12	20	10	12	20	145

Table 3 shows that ten high-scored students had 145 DMs in their paragraphs and 103 DMs were used correctly in students' paragraphs. High-scored students used correctly more DMs than low scored-students since the number of correct use in high-scored paragraphs is 103 whereas it is 43 in low-scored paragraphs.

Table 4. Effect of correct use of DMs on writing scores

Independent Variables	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error	F Model	p
Correct use of DMs	.615	.379	.344	3.790	10.973	.004*

*p<.05

Finally, a regression analysis was carried out to identify the impact of correct use of DMs on writing score. Findings show that students' correct use of DMs significantly explains the variation in their writing scores ($F(1, 18)=10.973$, $p=.004$).

1. Misused DMs

When the use of DMs in paragraphs of students was analyzed qualitatively, it was revealed that there were many misused DMs both in low-scored and high-scored paragraphs. In the following, some of them will be discussed.

Our house burnt and we were homeless. (St. 6 -Low-scored)

In this sentence, the use of "and" is incorrect because it is an additive DM, but causal DM is necessary. Instead of "and", "so" is more appropriate.

If they wanted to kill us, they would do that. But they went across the road. (St. 4 -Low-scored)

It was so exciting to be so close to a lion. But it would be a lie to say that I was not afraid. (St. 1 - High-scored)

She tried to get her home again. But firemen didn't allow her. (St. 2 -High-scored)

When the use of "but" was analyzed in the sentences, the use of "but" at the beginning of the sentence is not accurate since it is a coordinating conjunction which connects two independent clauses. Instead of "but" in order to show contrast, "however" can be used in each sentence.

Children were not going to school. Because they were on summer vacation. (St. 8 -Low-scored)

Her brother-in-law didn't like her. Because he was a bad man. (St. 6 -High-scored)

The place of "because" in the first sentence is not appropriate as "because" is a subordinating conjunction, which indicates causation. That is, one clause depends on another clause, and it should be written as in the following: "Children were not going to school because they were on summer vacation" or "Because they were on summer vacation, children were not going to school. In the second sentence the use of "because" is incorrect. It does not show causation or reason.

I was scared very much although. They tried to attack us. (St. 4 -Low-scored)

"Although" is utilized in order to show contradiction. However, this subordinating conjunction is not suitable in this sentence.

There was a trip. It was amazing. Anyway, we attended the tour. (St. 9 -Low-scored)

"anyway", which is used in spoken discourse, is not appropriate for this sentence. Instead of "anyway", "indeed" can be utilized to affirm the previous idea.

2. Overused DMs

As well as misused DMs, overused DMs were also regarded as wrong use in this study. Students tended to use the same DMs in their paragraphs in order to avoid making mistakes since they did not know the functions (additive, causal, adversative, continuative DMs) of different DMs. Some examples will be illustrated below.

Then, she ran towards burning house and she took the cat and got out of the burning house. (St. 2 - Low-scored)

There is a picture in their hands and they looked at their parents and cried. (St. 5 -Low-scored)

That day was Sunday and we both had free time. Mike said he wanted to come home early and help me. We prepared and ate together. (St. 4 -High-scored)

Emily made a plan and she dropped the candles and burned the house. (St. 8 -High-scored)

I had breakfast then Pamuk woke up. I gave her food. Then I left the house. (St. 7 -Low-scored)

We had breakfast then we went to the sea. We sunbathed. In the evening, we talked about our future. We had beautiful dreams. Then we danced. (St. 9 -High-scored)

They would be quite crowded. So she called some of her friends to help her prepare for the party. Everything was ready around six o'clock. So she decided to change her clothes. (St. 2 -High-scored)

As it is exemplified above, not only low-scored students but also high-scored students overuse DMs in their writings unnecessarily. The use of "and", "then" "so" is excessive, which makes reading difficult for the readers.

3. Advanced DMs

After analyzing the DMs in students' paragraphs, the advanced uses or different types of DMs could be seen in high-scored paragraphs more than in low-scored paragraphs. Some of them will be demonstrated below.

Although they didn't want to go, they knew they had to. (St. 1 -Low-scored)

"Although" is used appropriately in this sentence in order to indicate concession.

She lived with cat because she lost her family in a traffic accident. (St. 3 -Low-scored)

She never liked her grandmother because she was evil. (St. 8 -High-scored)

"because" is a subordinating conjunction and indicates causation, which is utilized appropriately both semantically and syntactically.

Firstly, we saw giraffe. They were very long. Then, we saw lions. (St. 4 -Low-scored)

Firstly, we saw the giraffes. They were bigger than we saw on television. They ate the leaves of the tree. Then, we went to see zebras. Their fur was really shiny and beautiful. We even had the opportunity to feed them. (St. 7 -High-scored)

Discourse markers "firstly" and "then" connect sentences and organize the text in order to create cohesion. They are used appropriately.

She survived but she couldn't find her family. (St. 10 -Low-scored)

Anna saw her mother away. She was very surprised but she realized that she couldn't get off the train. (St. 5 -High-scored)

The use of "but" is accurate in these sentences since it is a coordinating conjunction, and it joins two independent sentences.

My mom cooked a meal before she left the house. (St. 6 -Low-scored)

When a herd of for lions surrounded us, some of us had extreme panic. (St. 1 -High-scored)

When I arrived home, I prepared the table with roses and candles. (St. 3 -High-scored)

She started to cry when she got on the train. (St. 6 -High-scored)

When we came back, we saw awful things. (St. 9 -High-scored)

While she was cooking, she heard some noises. (St. 10 -High-scored)

The place and use of "when", "while" and "before" in these sentences are correct as they indicate "time".

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Writing consists of sentences but these sentences cannot follow one another separately. There should be cohesion and coherence between the sentences. This could be achieved by means of DMs (Adeyemi, 2018; Kroon, 1997; Sun, 2013). In other words, writers should know how to use DMs lexically and functionally. Therefore, this study focused on the use of DMs in the paragraphs of students in order to create coherence and cohesion in their stories. Based on this aim, the correct and incorrect use of DMs in low- and high-scored students' writings were identified and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Also, whether correct use of DMs affected writing scores of students was investigated.

Firstly, results of quantitative analysis showed that high-scored students used more DMs than low scored-students. That is, students' correct use of DMs statistically significantly explains the variation in their writing scores. This result is in contrast with the study of Kuzborska and Soden (2018) in which the form and function of opposition markers were analyzed in Chinese students' writings.

Secondly, when DMs were analyzed qualitatively, it was uncovered that misuse of DMs and overused DMs, which result in redundancy in the texts, make the writings disorganized and incomprehensible as it is discussed in the previous studies of Aysu (2017), Feng (2010), Yunus and Haris (2014) and Dumlao and Wilang (2019). In other words, this present study puts emphasis on the importance of correct use of DMs which enhance the quality of writing and the flow of the message in the writing. Jalilifar (2008) also concludes "DMs, besides other textual characteristics, help identify good and poor writings, and more importantly, the quality is tapped by the use of well-functioned DMs. Thus, the larger the number of DMs in appropriate use, the higher the quality of the composition" (p.117).

Other empirical studies also support the findings of this study. Students are aware of the importance of DMs in their writing but they need further help and instruction "in order to obtain the automatic application of these DMs" (Sun, 2013, p. 2140). Furthermore, studies reach the following conclusion that students have a tendency to use some of the DMs excessively in their writing and avoid using other DMs as they are afraid of making mistakes (Al-khazraji, 2019; Aysu, 2017; Dumlao & Wilang, 2019; Povolna, 2012; Yunus & Haris, 2014). However, Aidinlou (2012) proves if students are instructed how to use DMs in their writing, they improve their writing and they use them correctly. Therefore, teachers should focus on different teaching methods in writing classes while teaching DMs in order to decrease the number of misused and overused DMs. Each DM can be taught separately with its function and place in the paragraph in writing classes (Choemue & Bram, 2021).

Sun (2013) reaches a conclusion that DMs affect learning since learning consists of comprehension and production. Therefore, to comprehend DMs in the first step and use them in the second step, teaching DMs in writing should not be neglected and the suggestions of Adeyemi (2018) should be taken into consideration: "Various strategies such as the communicative approach, the task-based method and the natural approach can be utilized to teach discourse markers to assist learners to acquire the content and improve their knowledge of them. In using these strategies, learners are opportune to think and use discourse markers in real-life situations" (p.107). Another suggestion from Sun (2013) is that "for teachers, it is advisable to point out and draw students' attention to these special linguistic items in an appropriate degree through teaching. Teachers may design some relevant exercises such as sentence-completing and sentence-reordering with these DMs, correcting students' compositions in or out of class" (p. 2138).

Some other ways to teach and learn DMs in the language classrooms are discussed by researchers. For example, Dumlao and Wilang (2019) point out that students should expose to texts written by native speakers in order to avoid redundancy or misuses and students do not focus on structure-level analysis but they should focus on whole text in order to reach unity in writing. Additionally, students should be encouraged to develop their vocabulary. Sun (2013) also discusses the stages of teaching DMs through lexical approach as in the following (p. 2139)

This method may go like this: the first stage is just memorize and recognize the basic and frequently-used DMs with the help of teachers who point out and explain these items in texts. Students begin to realize that their existence is somewhat helpful. Then students begin to try using the items they have learned in their speaking and writing. Teachers are supposed to provide timely help by

correcting their wrong and inappropriate uses. During this period students are required and encouraged to read more and listen more model materials and try to pay attention to these special items and learn to use them.

As a conclusion, relation between sentences in writing can be created through DMs and students should be equipped with the semantically and functionally correct use of DMs. Therefore, teachers can attempt to use different methods or ways to teach them in the classroom.

Limitations and Suggestions

In this study, the main concern was to examine overused, misused and advanced used DMs in the stories written by 20 Turkish preparatory class students. Therefore, the limitations are listed as in the following: Types of DMs were not categorized. Comparison of DMs used by different EFL students in different genres were not carried out. So, the effect of L1 and writing genre were not considered. Also, the number of paragraphs was limited to only 20 students. Future studies can focus on the types of DMS in different genres regarding the L1 effect on the use of DMs. Finally, a large- scale study can be designed in order to present robust generalization

Bir Devlet Üniversitesindeki İsteğe Bağlı Hazırlık Sınıfı Öğrencilerinin Paragraf Yazımındaki Söylem Belirleyicilerin Analizi

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Özet

Yazma becerisi bir dildeki üretimsel becerilerden biridir ve çok önemlidir ama bu becerinin ana dilde bile geliştirilmesi çok zordur. Diğer bir deyişle sadece dilbilgisi kurallarını doğru kullanmak ve sözcük bilmek mükemmel bir yazma becerisi sağlamaz. Cümleler arasında, cümleleri birbiri ile ilişkilendirmek için söylem belirleyicilerin kullanımı, yazıyı uyumlu ve tutarlı hale getirir. Bu yüzden bu çalışmada, yüksek puan alan öğrencilerle ve düşük puan alan öğrencilerin paragraflarında söylem belirleyicilerin kullanımının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Final sınav kağıdında öğrencilerden seçtikleri üç resimden biri hakkında paragraf yazmaları istenmiştir. B1 seviye yabancı dil (İngilizce) öğrencisi oldukları için yüz ya da yüz yirmi kelimelik bir paragraf yazmaları beklenmiştir. İki öğretim elemanın öğrencilerin her birinin yazma sınavlarını akademik olmayan kritere (bu kritere bağlı çeşitli alt kriterler: sözcüklerin doğruluğu, sözcük çeşitliliği, dilbilgisi doğruluğu, dil bilgisi çeşitliliği, paragraf yapısı, fikirlerin niteliği ve uygunluğu, bağlantılar, noktalama, büyük harf kullanımı ve yazım yanlışları) göre değerlendirmesinden sonra, bu çalışma için onam formu gönderen öğrencilerin yazıları hem nicel hem de nitel olarak incelenmiştir. Düşük puanlı ve yüksek puanlı olarak her bir kategori için on öğrencinin kağıtları incelenmiştir. Sonuçlar, yüksek puan alan öğrencilerin düşük puan alan öğrencilere göre daha fazla söylem belirleyici kullandığını göstermiştir. Bunun dışında, söylem belirleyicilerin yanlış ve aşırı kullanımı yazıyı dağınık ve anlaşılabilir hale getirdiği belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, ileri düzey kullanımlar ile yazma sınavından alınan puanlar arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bir sonucu olarak, öğrencilere söylem belirleyicilerin anlamsal ve işlevsel kullanımının öğretilmesi gerektiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu yüzden de öğretmenler, yabancı dilde yazma becerisinin gelişimi için söylem belirleyicilerin farklı yöntem ve yollarla öğretimini sağlamaya çalışmalılar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Üniversite, Yabancı dil eğitimi, İngilizce eğitimi, Söylem belirleyiciler, Paragraf yazma



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Genişletilmiş Özet

Problem: Eğitim bireyin, içinde yaşadığı toplum/ulus ve dünya (ya da evren) için etkili bir insan, nitelikli bir birey haline getirilmesi sürecidir (Toprakçı, 2012; 88). Bireyin dünyanın etkin bir üyesi olması diğer insanlarla iletişime geçmesini gerektirir. Bu kapsamda diğer dilleri öğrenmek gerekmektedir (Toprakçı, 2017). Özellikle yaygınlığı ile İngilizce de bu dillerden biridir. Yazma İngilizce öğrenirken geliştirilmesi gereken üretken becerilerden biridir. Ancak iş hayatında, mesleki ortamlarda veya akademik ortamlarda yazmanın çeşitli türleri olduğu için ana dilde veya yabancı dilde edinmenin gerçekten zor bir beceri olduğu kabul edilmektedir. Farklı yazma türleri, yazarın farklı alt yazma becerilerini öğrenmesini ve kullanmasını sağlar. Başka bir deyişle, yazar belirli bir bağlamda ne yazacağını ve dili nasıl kullanacağını bildiğinde yazma başarılı ve etkili olabilir (Tribble, 1997). Bu da ancak, söylem belirleyicilerin yazıda etkin ve başarılı kullanımı ile mümkün olur (Adeyemi, 2018; Tribble, 1997; Yunus & Haris, 2014).

Alan yazındaki çalışmalar gözden geçirildiğinde, ana dil ve yabancı dil öğrenenlerin deneme veya yüksek lisans tezi gibi çeşitli yazılı söylemlerde söylem belirleyicilerin kullanımları çeşitlilik ve işlev açısından incelenmiştir. Mesela, Dumlao ve Wilang (2019), TESOL programında yer alan birinci ve ikinci dili İngilizce olan kullanıcılar tarafından yazılan 24 akademik makaleyi söylem belirleyiciler açısından incelemiştir. Bu iki öğrenci grubu arasında söylem belirleyicilerin sıklığı, çeşitliliği ve işlevleri farklıdır. Orta seviye öğrencilerle yürütülen bir diğer çalışmada ise Al-khazraji (2019), 9. sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce'nin ikinci bir dil olarak öğrenilmesi bağlamında söylem belirleyicileri kullanmanın yazıda uyum ve tutarlılığı sağlama açısından analiz yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, Feng (2010), Çin'de Turizm İşletmeciliği ve İngilizce eğitimi alan 38 öğrenci ile bir araştırma yapmıştır. Araştırmasında söylem belirleyici sayısını ve bu belirleyicilerin ne ölçüde doğru kullanıldığını öğrenmek için bu öğrencilerin makalelerini incelemiştir. Son olarak, Povolna (2012), Çek öğrenciler tarafından yazılan on beş yüksek lisans tezinde söylem belirleyicilerin karşıt fikirleri ifade etmek için nasıl kullanıldığını analiz etmiştir.

Ancak, söylem belirleyiciler alanyazında yazılı bir söylem türü olarak hikâye yazımında incelenmemiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, öğrencilerin hikayelerinde uyum ve bütünlük oluşturmak için kullandıkları söylem belirleyicileri incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu kapsamda öğrencilerin paragraflarında yeralan söylem belirleyicilerin yanlış ve aşırı kullanımları tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, düşük ve yüksek puanlı öğrencilerin yazılarındaki söylem belirleyicilerin karşılaştırması nicel olarak yapılmıştır. Son olarak öykülerdeki yanlış, aşırı ve ileri düzeyde (iyi) kullanılmış söylem belirleyiciler niteliksel olarak analiz edilmiştir.

Bu çalışmayı aşağıdaki araştırma soruları şekillendirmiştir.

1. Söylem belirleyicilerin doğru kullanımı öğrencilerin yazma puanlarını etkiler mi?
2. Düşük ve yüksek puanlı paragraflar arasında söylem belirleyicilerin doğru kullanımı açısından fark var mıdır?
3. Yanlış ve iyi kullanılmış söylem belirleyicilerin sayısı nedir?

Yöntem: Araştırma nitel desende doküman inceleme yöntemiyle yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada katılımcılar, araştırmacının katılımcılara erişiminin olduğu, uygun örneklem (Cohen, Manion ve Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 2012) temel alınarak seçilmiştir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmada katılımcılar araştırmacının öğrencileridir. Üniversite etik kurulu tarafından gerekli izinler verildikten sonra yüz doksan iki hazırlık okulu öğrencisine (final sınavına giren toplam öğrenci sayısı) yarıyıl sonu sınavlarının bir bölümünü (yazma bölümü) kullanabilmek için onam formu Google formu linki gönderilmiştir. Yetmiş dört öğrenci izinlerini göndermiştir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma için ilk olarak toplanan veriler 74 paragraftır. Bu çalışmanın amacı ve araştırma soruları dikkate alınarak, iki kategori arasındaki farkı karşılaştırmak için düşük puan alan öğrenci ve yüksek puan alan öğrenci paragrafları incelenmiştir. Nitel verilerde katılımcılara karar verilirken sabit bir sayı olmadığı için analiz etmek için her kategori için en yüksek ve en düşük 10 yazı seçilmiştir (Cohen ve diğerleri, 2000).

Her bir öğrencinin yazılı sınavı iki öğretim elemanı tarafından değerlendirme kriterlerine göre değerlendirdikten sonra, bu çalışma için izinlerini gönderen öğrencilerin yazıları incelendi ve çalışma kapsamında her kategori için 10 kağıt (25 puan üzerinden 12-17 alan düşük puanlı öğrenciler) 25 puan üzerinden 22-25 arası yüksek puan alan öğrenciler) hem nicel hem de nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Nitel

veriler için betimsel analiz (Creswell, 2012) (frekans) ve buradan türetilen verilere de çıkarımsal analiz (regresyon analizi) gibi istatistiksel analizler, yapılmıştır.

Bulgular: Nicel analiz sonuçları, yüksek puanlı öğrencilerin düşük puanlı öğrencilere göre daha fazla söylem belirleyici kullandığını göstermiştir. Yani, öğrencilerin söylem belirleyicileri doğru kullanmaları, yazma puanlarındaki değişimi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde açıklamaktadır. Bu sonuç, B1 düzeyindeki öğrencilerin öykü yazabilecekleri ve cümleleri doğru bir şekilde bağlayabilecekleri düşünülmese de öğrencilerin paragraflarındaki söylem belirleyicilerin analizi özellikle düşük puanlı paragraflarda daha az söylem belirleyici kullanma eğiliminin olduğunu ve ayrıca birçok yanlış olduğunu göstermiştir.

Söylem belirleyiciler niteliksel olarak incelendiğinde, daha önceki çalışmalarda da tartışıldığı gibi, söylem belirleyicilerin yanlış kullanımının ve metinlerde fazlalığa neden olan aşırı kullanılan söylem belirleyicilerin yazıları düzensiz ve anlaşılabilir hale getirdiği ortaya çıkmıştır.

Yanlış kullanım olarak çalışmadan bazı örnekler aşağıdaki gibidir:

Evimiz yandı ve evsiz kaldık. (6. Öğrenci -Düşük puanlı)

Bizi öldürmek isteselerdi, bunu yaparlardı. Ama yolun karşısına geçtiler. (4. Öğrenci -Düşük puanlı)

Tekrar eve götürmeye çalıştı. Ancak itfaiyeciler ona izin vermedi. (2. Öğrenci -Yüksek puanlı)

Kayınbiraderi onu sevmiyordu. Çünkü o kötü bir adamdı. (2. Öğrenci -Yüksek puanlı)

Bu cümlelerde söylem belirleyici “ve, ama, ancak, çünkü” olan kullanımı işlev, yer ya da anlam olarak yanlış kullanımlardır.

Ardından yanan eve doğru koştu ve kediyi aldı ve yanan evden çıktı. (2. Öğrenci -Düşük puanlı)

Ellerinde bir resim vardı ve anne babalarına baktı ve ağladılar. (5. Öğrenci -Düşük puanlı)

O gün pazardı ve ikimizin de boş vakti vardı. Mike eve erken geldi ve bana yardım etmek istediğini söyledi. Beraber hazırladık ve yedik. (4. Öğrenci -Yüksek puanlı)

Oldukça kalabalık olacaktı. Bu yüzden partiye hazırlanmasına yardım etmeleri için bazı arkadaşlarını aradı. Saat altı gibi her şey hazır. Bu yüzden kıyafetlerini değiştirmeye karar verdi. (2. Öğrenci -Yüksek puanlı)

Bu cümlelerde söylem belirleyici “ve, bu yüzden” aşırı (fazla) kullanıma örnektir.

Diğer ampirik çalışmalar da bu çalışmanın bulgularını desteklemektedir. Yapılan araştırmalarda öğrencilerin yazılarında bazı söylem belirleyicileri aşırı kullanma eğiliminde oldukları ve hata yapmaktan korktukları için diğer söylem belirleyicileri kullanmaktan kaçındıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır (Al-khazraji, 2019; Aysu, 2017; Dumlaoui ve Wilang, 2019; Povolna, 2012; Yunus ve Haris, 2014). Aidinlou (2012) öğrencilerin yazılarında söylem belirleyicileri nasıl kullanacakları konusunda bilgilendirilirse yazılarını geliştirdiklerini ve doğru kullandıklarını kanıtlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, yanlış ve aşırı kullanılan söylem belirleyicilerin sayısını azaltmak için öğretmenler yazılarında söylem belirleyicileri işlerken yazma sınıflarında farklı öğretim yöntemlerine odaklanmalıdır. Yazma derslerinde her bir söylem belirleyici ile ilgili, işlevi ve paragraftaki yeri hakkında çalışmalar yapılmalıdır (Choemue ve Bram, 2021).

Bu çalışmada doğru kullanılan söylem belirleyiciler de vardır. Bu örnekler ise şöyle sıralanabilir:

Gitmek istememelerine rağmen gitmeleri gerektiğini biliyorlardı. (1. Öğrenci -Düşük puanlı)

Ailesini trafik kazasında kaybettiği için kediyle yaşadı. (3. Öğrenci -Düşük puanlı)

Önce zürafaları gördük. Televizyonda gördüğümüzden daha büyüktüler. Ağacın yapraklarını yediler. Sonra zebra gibi görmeye gittik. Kürkleri gerçekten parlak ve güzeldi. Onları besleme fırsatımız bile oldu. (7. Öğrenci -Yüksek puanlı)

Bir aslan sürüsü etrafımızı sardı zaman, bazılarımız aşırı paniğe kapıldı. (1. Öğrenci -Yüksek puanlı)

Bu cümlelerde söylem belirleyici “ragmen, için, önce, sonra, ve, -dığı zaman” doğru (iyi) kullanıma örnektir.

Sonuç olarak, yazıda cümleler arasında söylem belirleyiciler aracılığıyla ilişki kurulabilir ve bu nedenle öğrencilere söylem belirleyicilerin anlamsal ve işlevsel olarak doğru kullanımı öğretilmelidir. Bu nedenle öğretmenler sınıfta bunları öğretmek için farklı yöntemler veya yollar kullanmaya çalışmalıdır.

Sınırlılıklar ve Öneriler: Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, yirmi isteğe bağlı İngilizce hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisi tarafından yazılan öykülerdeki aşırı, yanlış ve ileri düzeyde kullanılan söylem belirleyicilerin incelenmesidir. Bu nedenle, sınırlamalar aşağıdaki gibi listelenmiştir: Söylem belirleyici türleri kategorize edilmemiştir. Farklı İngilizce öğrencilerinin farklı türlerde kullandıkları söylem belirleyicilerin karşılaştırılması yapılmamıştır. Dolayısıyla ana dil ve yazma türünün etkisi dikkate alınmamıştır. Ayrıca paragraf sayısı sadece 20 öğrenci ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar, ana dilin söylem belirleyici kullanımı üzerindeki etkisi ile ilgili olarak farklı türlerdeki söylem belirleyici türlerine odaklanabilir. Son olarak, bir genellemeye ulaşabilmek için büyük ölçekli bir çalışma tasarlanabilir.

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