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# CAUSE MARKERS IN L1 AND L2 CAUSE PARAGRAPHS: TURKISH VS. ENGLISH

## Anadil ve Yabancı Dildeki Neden Paragraflarında Nedensellik Yapıları: Türkçe ve İngilizce

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**Abstract**

Cause paragraphs are an essential part of argumentative and academic writing. As Ulucay and Hatipoglu (2017) suggested cause paragraphs which are a way of disclosing and describing how things are connected and why they happen have attracted the attention of a noticeable number of researchers. In consonance with this, the linguistic devices that are defined as cause markers; undoubtedly, are reported to be the fundamental constituents of good cause paragraphs. Therefore, misuse, lack, and insufficiency of cause markers bring about important problems in terms of cohesion in this kind of paragraphs. The current study aimed to identify, classify and analyse the use and frequency of these markers in the paragraphs written both in L1 and L2 by forty students studying at the preparatory school of a private university. The in-depth analysis of the collected data showed that the participants in this study used 5 categories of causal markers in their Turkish cause paragraphs (i.e. respectively; Nouns, Verbs, Postpositions, Connectives, and Suffixes) and again employed 5 different categories in their English cause paragraphs (i.e. respectively; Nouns, Verbs, Conjunctions, Prepositions and Complex prepositions). The study also revealed that the participants transferred their L2 knowledge into their L1 writing with respect to paragraph organisation. Finally, the current study also suggested some practical implications for teachers, curriculum specialists and textbook writers.

**Keywords:** Cause paragraphs, teaching writing, discourse markers, causality devices

**Öz**

Neden paragrafları, tartışmacı ve akademik yazmanın önemli bir parçasıdır. Ulucay ve Hatipoğlu'nun (2017) ortaya koyduğu gibi, olayların birbirine nasıl bağlı olduğunu ve neden meydana geldiklerini açıklamanın bir yolu olan neden paragrafları önemli sayıda araştırmacının dikkatini çekmiştir. Buna uygun olarak, nedensellik yapıları olarak tanımlanan dilsel aygıtların; kuşkusuz, iyi neden paragraflarının temel bileşenleri olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Bu doğrultuda, nedensellik yapılarının yanlış kullanımı, eksikliği ve yetersizliği bu tür paragraflarda uyum açısından önemli sorunlar doğurmaktadır. Bu çalışma, özel bir üniversitenin İngilizce hazırlık okulunda okuyan 40 öğrenci tarafından hem anadilde hem de yabancı dilde yazılmış paragraflarda bu belirteçlerin kullanım ve sıklığını tanımlamayı, sınıflandırmayı ve analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Toplanan verilerin derinlemesine analizi, bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların, Türkçe yazılmış neden paragraflarında (sırasıyla; İsimler, Fiiller, Edatlar, Bağlayıcılar ve Sonekler) 5 kategoride nedensellik yapıları kullandıklarını ve yine hedef dilde de (İngilizce) 5 farklı kategori kullandıklarını göstermiştir (sırasıyla; İsimler, Fiiller, Bağlaçlar, Edatlar ve Karmaşık edatlar). Çalışma, katılımcıların paragraf organizasyonu ile ilgili yabancı dildeki bilgilerini anadil yazımlarına aktardıklarını da ortaya koymuştur. Son olarak, bu çalışma aynı zamanda öğretmenler, müfredat uzmanları ve ders kitabı yazarları için bazı pratik uygulamalar önermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** neden paragrafları, yazma öğretimi, söylem belirteçleri, nedensellik yapıları

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## 1. Introduction

Writing, as a productive skill, has been one of the most significant aspects of communication and particularly language learning process. Therefore, it has appealed to many researchers involved in the fields of language teaching and second language acquisition. Most of these researchers claimed that writing is quite a challenging skill on part of learners as it requires learning various sub-skills and essential rules as well as a prerequisite sensitivity of mechanics and sociocultural norms (Algi, Hatipoglu, 2017).

It is a well-known fact that writing is not only the process of putting words together, but the way of its production is also of vital importance (Ghanbari et. al, 2016, p. 1451). To be more precise, audience and genre of writing are the determining factors of how it should be designed and produced. In this sense, each genre is bound to have certain purposes and its own particularities. For instance, the differences of academic and non-academic texts may be found out easily since each requires a different kind of writing style, register and purpose which make writers draw distinctive patterns and use a rich variety of linguistic devices accordingly. On the other hand, it is not adequate to know grammar, punction or spelling etc. , writers should also be able to connect their ideas in a coherent and cohesive way. As Schiffrin et. al. (2001) pointed out discourse markers help writers to connect different thoughts and make them achieve coherence and cohesion in their writing. Awareness of these discourse markers is quite likely to help a writer to write efficiently.

As cited in Ulucay and Hatipoglu's work (2017), Povolna (2012, p.133) states that causality relations are sophisticated semantic relations that reserve indispensable parts of discourse. Thus, the researchers specialized in writing established that these relations and connections are unequivocally marked by making use of cause markers. Similarly, Crossley et.al. (2016) accentuated that problems with these causal markers are more likely to constitute the sources of incoherent paragraphs.

Acknowledging the significance of cause-effect relation and how necessary they are in expository and academic writing, the current body of literature indicates that the studies concentrating on discourse markers, especially cause markers are somehow limited. Hence, more research studies are needed in this rhetorical causality formation. Although discourse markers are of much interest in the field, specifically cause markers have not been able to appeal to a good number of researchers.

On the other hand, a few research studies have focused on the use of these markers in the first or second language. Therefore, this study targets to identify and evaluate cause markers in both L1 and L2. Secondly, it also aims not only to assess the accuracy of their use and distribution but also whether there is an effect of L1 and L2 on each other with respect to writing styles and organization. The main questions that this study endeavored to answer are:

1. What sort of causal markers do Native speakers of Turkish employ in cause paragraphs written in Turkish (L1) and English (L2)?

2. Where and how frequently are cause markers used in cause paragraphs of NS Turkish learners?

3. How accurate are causal markers used and do these languages have an impact on each other in terms of learners' writing styles and organization?

### 1.1.Literature Review

As aforementioned points have revealed the significance of this particular area of research, some researchers conducted studies, though limited, on cause-effect relations in academic writing. Some of the previous research carried out thus far dealt with identification and categorization of the causality devices in different languages whereas others compared and contrasted cause markers among different genres and in diverse contexts produced by a large range of writers who had different levels or different backgrounds.

Fang and Kennedy (1992) conducted a study to explore how the notion of causation was expressed in written British English, particularly in one million computerized word LOB corpus. They collected 130 different devices for explaining causality. They found out that followed by *causative adverb*s, *causation conjunctions* were the most used way of expressing causality. Moreover, they emphasized that causation does not always have to be placed explicitly but sometimes expressed in a rather implicit way in texts. The results of the study also indicated that there was an inclination for language to go towards the cause or reason more than effect relationship.

In a later study, Flowerdew (1998) analyzed both an expert and a learner corpus to investigate cause and effect markers using corpus linguistic techniques. The two corpora which were produced on the basis of a causal relationship as the major structural principle had almost 40.000 words. She analyzed one of the mini-corpora in the MicroConcord Academic Corpus Collection (MCC) which examined *Global Warming: The Greenpeace Report* written by experts and the learner corpus (LC) which was a sub-section of *Hong Kong University of Science and Technology 7-million word Learner Corpus*. The latter included 80 student assignments of nearly 500 words each, which discussed different problems. She analyzed the cause markers in three different groups which were *reason-result, means-result,* and *grounds-conclusion.* One of the most noteworthy differences between the two corpora was the frequency of the use of the *logical connectors* (i.e. the conjunctive and adverbial categories). For instance, *because* appeared 1.8 times more frequently in the LC than in the MCC and *therefore* 2.4 times more frequently. These findings turned out to support the previous studies. On the other hand, the fact that  MCC data predominantly included the prepositions such as *with*, *through, from* and *for* to indicate the reason-result relation was an unforeseen aspect of the MCC data.

Lorenz (1999) conducted a study in which he concentrated on the stylistic development in the writing of sixth form students and undergraduates. The findings of the study showed that *conjunctions* were the most frequently used cause markers after which *adverbs*, *nouns*, *prepositions*, and *verbs* occurred respectively. One of the noteworthy conclusions that the study drew was the fact that there was a positive correlation between marking causality and stylistic maturity in argumentative writing. To be more specific, he found out that undergraduate students employed cause markers more than sixth form students.

Reynolds (2002) carried out a research study to figure out the similarity between L1 and L2 writing development and the nature of the developmental path. He analyzed the frequency of two types of causality markers in 5th–8th-grade essays written by 189 students in ESL and 546 students in regular language arts classes. The regular language arts students were found to differ in their usage of causality markers between the two topics which were "how-to" prompts, whereas the ESL students used the markers

similarly across both topics. In addition, the ESL students were found to have higher usage of causality markers in general than the regular language arts students.

Similar to Lorenz's study (1999), Tao and Huang (2010) carried out an in-depth comparative analysis of causality devices in Chinese EFL student writings, respectively junior and senior students. The study revealed better performances of senior students in the overall frequency, lexical richness, positionings and semantic prosody of the causality devices even though they were still somehow diverged from western discourse norms. The senior Chinese EFL student writings (ST6) reached 14.90 per 1,000 words, outweighing those of their junior counterparts (STS) by over 11.47%. This revealed that through their two-or-three-year further study of English, Chinese L2 learners increased their awareness of employing causality devices in argumentative writings.

A more recent research study which was carried out in the last decade by Mulkar- Mehta et. al. (2011) dealt with causality devices in 3 different genres and four corpora. The researchers uncovered that the most frequent use of cause markers occurred in scientific texts which were followed by newspaper articles concerning football and finance. The authors explained that this difference resulted from the nature of the texts which led them to have more or less causal relations. This suggested that the use of discourse markers is domain specific.

Analysing a corpus of Master's theses in the fields of study – linguistics, literature and culture, and methodology written by non-native Czech novice writers at the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno in the period from 2005 to 2008, Povolna (2012) attempted to find out which discourse markers Czech students of English used when expressing causal and contrastive relations and whether they were able to use selected DMs correctly or not. She reported that in novice academic writing causal relations expressed by explicit hypotactic DMs, although realized by three different markers only (*as, because* and *since*), tend to be slightly more frequent (506 occurrences; 1.99 tokens per 1,000 words) than those expressed by explicit paratactic markers (482 occurrences; 1.89 tokens per 1,000 words). Moreover, she concluded some of the novice academic writers tended to use only a limited range of the markers at their disposal, which might be a result of their exposure to overt teaching of certain markers only.

Holding a great significance as the first study conducted both in Turkish and English, Ulucay (2014), in her thesis study, identified and analyzed the frequencies and functions of cause markers in Turkish and English cause paragraphs produced by native speakers of Turkish. In addition to this, the study also investigated whether the use of the cause markers differed while writing in L1 versus L2 and whether the students had any problems while using the cause markers in English. Another significant focal point of her study was the effect of teaching materials on the written products of the students.

The study which was the first step in Turkish context regarding the examination of cause markers figured out that Turkish students mostly used *noun*s to mark causality (45.5%) after which *verb*s (25%) and *postpositions* (13.8%) came followed by *suffixes* (12.2%). As to *adjectivals*, they turned out to constitute 6.3% of cause markers. The least frequent category was *connectives* (0.2%) that were not preferred by the participants at all. The study concluded Turkish students had a repetitive pattern of writing in terms of causality markers. Finally, the researcher highlighted that the teaching materials and students' paragraphs had significant similarities with respect to the use of causal devices, which supported the notion that what is given as input turns out to be the out.

Finally, Ulucay and Hatipoglu (2017) analyzed the cause paragraphs of 63 monolingual native speakers of Turkish. They stated that the participants used 6 categories of causal markers (i.e., nouns, verbs, postpositions, suffixes, connectives, adjectival) to mark causality. The researchers also indicated that different languages have different causality patterns with various devices and the findings showed that nouns and verbs are the major categories to express causal relations in Turkish. Another important aspect that the findings revealed is the fact Turkish native speakers were dependent on a very restricted group of causality markers which signaled the lack of effective writing instruction in both L1 and L2.

To the best knowledge of the researcher, the current study which is the second one to examine both Turkish and English cause paragraphs written by NS of Turkish learners is hoped to confirm the findings and reliability of the previous research and suggest insightful implications for teaching as well as paving the way for future research of the issue.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Participants

A total of 40 participants with an age range 18-22 took part in the study. The gender of the participants was not taken into account during the sampling process as the differences between males and females with respect to the use of "cause markers" were not one of the focal points of the current study. All of the participants were NSs of Turkish who were studying English at the preparatory school of a private university. Moreover, the participants had various educational backgrounds and different majors in which they would study after successfully completing the preparatory school. At the time of data collection, the participants were studying in the intermediate level classes of the preparatory school of the university which is located in Ankara, Turkey.

### 2.2. Data Collection and analysis

To answer the research questions in the current study 40 cause paragraphs written in English and 40 cause paragraphs written in Turkish by the participants were collected by getting the consent of the participants. The participants were asked to write 120-180 words cause paragraphs on the topic given by the researcher in Eglish: What *do you think are the major causes of stress?* and they were asked to write on the same topic in Turkish: Sizce *stresin ana sebepleri/nedenleri nelerdir?* two weeks later. All of them participated in the study on a voluntary basis. All of the paragraphs were typed and separately analyzed twice using the word statistics and linguistic concordance program *Wordstatix* in addition to the researcher's successive analyses to ascertain the use of the causal devices. *To* minimize the chance of skipping any item and potential errors, the statistics of the cause paragraphs were also crosschecked through using the programs *AntConc* and *Wordsmith Tools.* No error correction or revision was done in the paragraphs except for the spelling mistakes as they would have a significant effect on the results otherwise.

**Figure 1.** Wordstatix Program



### 3. Results and Discussion

The cause paragraphs written both in English and Turkish by the participants (n=40) who were native speakers of Turkish learning English as a foreign language at university level were analyzed through *Wordstatix* and both the cause markers and total word counts of the two corpora were calculated. As can be seen in *Table 1*, the English corpus had 4495 words while the Turkish corpus was comprised of 3598 words. The total number of causal devices in the English data was 225 whereas the Turkish data included 195 cause markers. An average of 5 cause markers per 100 words were detected in the English corpus whereas it was 5.4 in the Turkish corpus which means that there was a slight difference between the two corpora as regards the causality devices.

Secondly, it was clear from both corpora that the Turkish corpus inescapably had 1677 different words since it is an agglutinative language while the English corpus had a count of 790 different words, which caused a difference in terms of lexical density of the two corpora. This also suggested that the participants relied on a repetitive pattern in their English cause paragraphs.

*Table 1.* *Total and average number of words, and cause markers in the Turkish and English Corpora*

|  | ENGLISH DATA | TURKISH DATA |
|---|---|---|
| Total Number of Words | 4495 | 3598 |
| Total Number of Cause Markers | 225 | 195 |
| Average number of words per paragraph | 112 | 102 |
| Lexical Density | 17.6% | 46.6% |
| Average sentence length (words) | 10.6 | 14.3 |
| Number of different words | 790 | 1677 |
| Tokens per 100 words | 5 | 5.4 |

### 3.1 Turkish Cause Paragraphs

As can be seen in *Figure 2*, similar to the findings Ulucay's study (2014), *nouns* (50%) were the most frequent way of expressing causality followed by *verbs* (29%). After the verbs, *post-positions* were found to constitute 15% of the cause markers employed in the data. As for *connectives*, it can be seen that they formed a relatively small part of the overall number of cause markers (4%). However, no *adjectival* was found functioning as a cause marker, which was not much different than what Ulucay (2014) reported as the least frequent category (0.2%) in her thesis study. This might be a result of the fact that the students were intermediate level students and their range of employed causality devices was somehow limited.
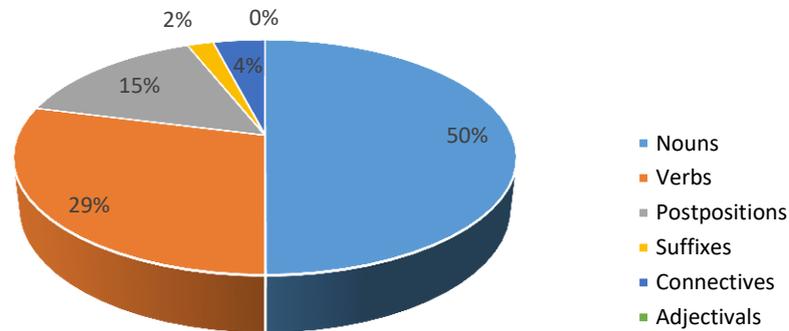


**Figure 2.** Distribution of Cause Markers in Turkish

As *Table 3* illustrates the details of each category, it can be seen that *sebep* (%70) and *neden* (%17) were the most frequent nouns utilised in Turkish cause paragraphs by the participants. The nouns *faktör, etken* and *etmen* were relatively less preferred. The *connectives* category were comprised of only two connectives which were *bu yüzden* (57%) and *çünkü* (43%). The participants did not use any different connectives than the ones above, which suggested they were heavily dependent on a very limited causality and

lexical devices. As to the postpositions category, *için* (36%) and *ile* (32%) seem to be dominating the category. Regarding the verbs, *sebep olmak* (30%) and *neden olmak* (16%) turned out to be the most frequent one in the corpus. It seemed very interesting that the students utilized the noun *sebep* more than *neden* and the verb *sebep olmak* more than *neden olmak* although they are exactly true synonyms.

**Table 2.** Comparison between the most frequent nouns and verbs

| Nouns | | Verbs | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Sebep* | *Neden* | *Sebep olmak* | *Neden olmak* |
| n=68 | n=15 | n=17 | n=9 |

**Table 3.** The specific cause markers under each category and example sentences from the Turkish data

| TYPES | MARKERS | % | EXAMPLE SENTENCES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **I.Nouns** 50% | sebep (n=68) | 70 % | Bir diğer <u>sebep</u> gelişen dünya ile birlikte sorumlulukların... |
| | neden (n=15) | 17% | |
| | faktör (n=5) | 6% | Çağımızın sorunu stresin pek çok <u>nedeni</u> vardır. |
| | etken (n=3) | 4% | Strese <u>sebep</u> olan bir çok <u>faktör</u> vardır. |
| | etmen (n=2) | 3% | Mutluluk oranlarının düşmesindeki en büyük <u>etken</u> geçim... |
| | | | ... dokümanlar,patronlar,mesailer vb. gibi <u>etmenler</u> gittikçe ... |
| **II. Connectives** 4% | bu yüzden (n=4) | 57% | <u>Bu yüzden</u> size en büyük tavsiyem kaygılarınızdan kurtulun. |
| | çünkü (n=3) | 43% | <u>Çünkü</u> iş sıkıntısı olan bir ülkedir Türkiye. |
| **III. Postpositions** 15% | için (n=10) | 36% | ... ve bunları aşamadıkları <u>için</u> stresle yüz yüze geliyorlar. |
| | ile (n=9) | 32% | |
| | yüzünden (n=2) | 7% | ... düşmeme çabası ve rezil olma düşüncesi <u>ile</u> ortaya çıkar. |
| | -dan /-den dolayı (n=2) | 7% | ... çocuklar da sürekli değişken eğitim sistemi <u>yüzünden</u> ... |
| | sonucu (n=2) | 7% | ... sınavlar<u>dan dolayı</u> ter dökeriz zaman zaman. |
| | dolayısıyla (n=2) | 7% | ... geçim sıkıntısı <u>sonucu</u> stres olmalarıdır. |
| | gereği (n=1) | 4% | <u>Dolayısıyla</u> kaza sayısı ve çarpık kentleşme artıyor. |
| | | | İnsan doğası <u>gereği</u> stres yaşar. |
| **IV. Verbs** 29% | sebep olmak (n=17) | 30% | ... ailemizle daha az zaman geçirmemize <u>sebep oluyor</u>. |
| | neden olmak (n=9) | 16% | ... bedenen hastalıklara ve psikolojik kaygılara <u>neden olur.</u> |
| | sokmak (n=9) | 16% | ... düşününce neredeyse her şey bizi strese <u>sokuyor</u>. |
| | kaynaklanmak (n=7) | 13% | Stres psikolojik ve doğal bir çok sebepten <u>kaynaklanır.</u> |
| | yol açmak (n=5) | 9% | ... bedensel de birtakım sorunlara <u>yol açar.</u> |
| | doğurmak (n=4) | 7% | |
| | | 2% | |
| | | 2% | |
| | | 5% | |

| | yaratmak (n=1) tetiklemek (n=1) sürüklemek (n=3) sağlamak (n=1) | 1% | İşsizlik geçim sıkıntısını da doğurur. Aslında bunu biz kendimiz yaratıyoruz. Stres insanların başarısını tetikleyebilir. Başarısızlık insanı strese sürükler. ... yönlendirmemizi ve rahatlamamızı sağlarken... |
|---|---|---|---|
| **V. Suffixes** 2% | -mesi / -ması (n=5) | 100% | Bunun sebebinin güneşin az görünmesi olduğunu söylüyorlar. |
| **100%** | **Total number of cause markers (n=195)** | | |

On the contrary, Ulucay's study (2014) revealed the neden/olmak was more frequent than sebep/olmak in the data *(See Table 4).* The participants of her study reported that they did not have any specific reasons for employing a certain cause marker more than others, which showed that the participants did lack the awareness of the linguistic devices they used in their production.

**Table 4.** Ulucay (2014)

| Nouns | | Verbs | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Sebep* | *Neden* | *Sebep olmak* | *Neden olmak* |
| 47.3% | 31.2% | 25.8% | 32.3% |

The *suffixes* were the least preferred ways of marking causality with a percentage of 2% among all the cause markers. However, the *adjectivals* were not used by any participants of the current study, which most probably resulted from their levels of proficiency. Although Turkish is the native language of the participants, a considerable number of them had difficulties connecting their ideas in a coherent and cohesive way in addition to their organization problem, which brings about a few critical questions about the writing training they got in their L1. As Ulucay and Hatipoglu (2017) emphasized; why do the students overuse or repeat same devices? Did not they know how to use them or were not they taught how to? As cited in Ulucay and Hatipoglu, when considering the vocabulary used in written discourse as a part of active vocabulary (Temur 2006), could it be said that the participants lacked a lexical richness in their active vocabulary?

These questions still remain unanswered, but as Ulucay (2014) claimed in Turkey there have been no shared practices of teaching writing which probably leads students to become inefficient and disorganized writers even in their mother tongue.

### 3.2 English Cause Paragraphs

The analysis of the collected data in English revealed that the category of *nouns* (63 %) turned out to be the favorite marker used by the students in the data (*See Figure 3*). *Verbs* (13%) and *conjunctions* (13%) followed the *nouns* as the second most popular types of cause markers. *Prepositions* (8%) as cause markers, on the other hand, were found to be the third category in terms of frequency whereas the least frequently used category was *complex prepositions* (3%). Finally, *adjective phrases* as causal devices were not employed by any of the participants in the study in their English cause paragraphs. The results showed significant similarity to the findings of Ulucay's (2014) study.

**Table 5.** The specific cause markers under each category and example sentences from the English data

| TYPES | MARKERS | % | EXAMPLE SENTENCES |
|---|---|---|---|
| **I. Nouns** 63% | reason (n=99) | 69% | Another <u>reason</u> is our thought. |
| | cause (n=42) | 30% | Second <u>cause</u> is our responsibilities. |
| | trigger (n=2) | 1% | Everyone had different stress <u>triggers</u>. |
| **II. Verbs** 13% | cause (n=9) | 31% | It <u>caused</u> obsession and depression. |
| | lead (n=1) | 4% | ... all the causes <u>lead</u> to stress. |
| | push (n=2) | 7% | ...they <u>push</u> you too much for that. |
| | bring (n=3) | 10% | ... this state <u>brings</u> stress. |
| | create (n=3) | 10% | ... you <u>create</u> the stressful situations. |
| | make (implicit)(n=11) | 38% | It <u>makes</u> people get stressed. |
| **III.Conjunctions** 13% | because (n=20) | 72% | ... <u>because</u> we want to be successful. |
| | as (n=4) | 14.% | ... <u>as</u> we live like a robot... |
| | as a result (n=4) | 14 % | <u>As a result</u>, stress occupies a big place... |
| **IV.Prepositions** 8% | by + noun (n=3) | 16% | ... <u>by</u> exams... |
| | by + ing (n=2) | 12% | ... just <u>by worrying</u> about things. |
| | from (n=3) | 16% | ... <u>from</u> relatives or friends... |
| | for (n=10) | 56% | They strive <u>for</u> a happy life. |
| **V.Complex Prepositions** 3% | because of (n=5) | 72% | ... stress <u>because of</u> your family. |
| | due to (n=2) | 28% | ... <u>due to</u> internal and external causes |
| *100%* | **Total number of cause markers (n=225)** | | |
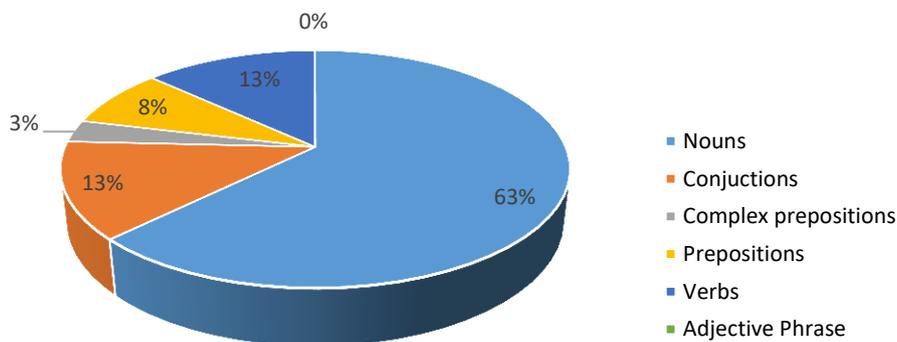


**Figure 3.** Distribution of Cause Markers in English

As can be seen in *Table 5*, the most frequent nouns were *reason* (69%) and *cause* (30%). Secondly, *cause* and *make* turned out to be the favorite verbs to express causality. It was not surprising that *because* constituted 72 % of the conjunctions. At the end of her

interviews with her participants, Ulucay (2014) suggested that this overuse of *because* stemmed from the participants' previous educational settings (i.e. primary school or high school) claiming that the students started to learn other conjunctions such as *since* and *as* etc. when they started their university education, which also made them not to take any risks but stick to what they had already known.

Although *because of* was the most frequently employed *complex preposition* in the data, a considerable number of mistakes were detected in relation to its use. Similar to what Ulucay (2014) found out, the participants of the current study turned out to have some problems in differentiating *because* and *because of*. They used them interchangeably in their English cause paragraphs, which signals a need for more practice and efficient teaching on not specifically these markers but other discourse markers as well to help them improve their writing proficiency.

## 6. Conclusions

As one of the most significant productive skills, writing is a continuous and complex process requiring many skills, sub-skills, and techniques. It is a well-known fact that developing writing skills is a challenging task for both language teachers and learners as it requires a good variety of rules and structures for each genre as well as demanding a special and culture/language specific training. The current study concentrated on cause paragraphs written both in English and Turkish by NS of Turkish who were learning English as a foreign language at the preparatory school of a private university.

The participants in this study used 5 categories of causal markers in their Turkish cause paragraphs (i.e. Nouns, Verbs, Postpositions, Connectives, and Suffixes) and again employed 5 different categories in their English cause paragraphs (i.e. Nouns, Verbs, Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Complex prepositions). The findings seem to support Ulucay and Hatipoglu's (2017) claim that the participants in the study relied on a limited group of causal devices *(i.e. sebep/olmak, neden/olmak, bu yüzden, çünkü, için and-mesi/ -ması)* rather than making use of the rich variety of cause markers present in Turkish. In light of this finding and the fact that Turkish was the native language of the participants, the scope and the quality of writing training they were given need to be questioned closely. The same issue occurred also in L2 writing. Even though they were intermediate learners of English, they heavily depended on the nouns *cause* and *reason*, the verbs *cause* and *make* and *because* as a conjunction. Finally, one explanation for heightened use of some causal devices in L2 might be students' misusing some of them (Reynolds, 2002). For instance, a considerable number of students in the current study utilized *cause* and *reason* in the same sentence improperly.

In Raimes's (1983, p. 5) words "There is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL/EFL classes. There are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles". Regardless of instructional methodologies to employ, as the current research on writing suggest that our main concern should be saving our students from memorizing and repeating certain patterns and being monotonous or inefficient writers.

Although L1 and L2 (i.e. Turkish and English) are interrelated in some ways and have many processes in common; however, as Silva (1993) underscored there are significant differences in terms of possible length, structural complexity, errors, and other morphosyntactic features. Thus, writing training in native language and foreign language should be differentiated and given importance by keeping their specific characteristics.

As they lacked an effective writing instruction in their L1, most of the participants used the most common English academic cause paragraph organization which includes a topic sentence, major/minor supports, and conclusion. This L2 transfer to L1 obviously affected even their wording, particularly the lexical items and discourse markers they used in their Turkish cause paragraphs. At this point, as Lorenz (1999) indicated, if the existence of positive correlation between marking causality and stylistic maturity in argumentative writing is taken for granted, it seems that there is an urgent need to develop their stylistic maturity through quality and effective instruction both in L1 and L2.

### 6.1 Implications for Teaching Writing

Since the current study not only focuses on L2 but also L1 writing the following suggestions could be considered for both;

1. To help L2 learners to be proficient writers in the target language, before or during their L2 instruction, they should not be deprived of a comprehensive writing training in their own mother tongue, otherwise, it would make them hardly conceptualize both the target language and its linguistic devices.

2. It is known that teaching language components and expecting students to immediately be able to use them accurately might not be a realistic aim. Thus, not only while teaching discourse markers but also other elements, students should be provided with more opportunities to have practice and internalize them.

3. Practitioners should provide students with some exercises by which they can analyze different relationships and come up with an understanding that is rooted in practice and discovery.

4. For curriculum developers and textbook writers, it is advisable to give writing and its practice a larger space in curricula and textbooks, as writing is an authentic skill which is a need of every individual both in their native language and foreign languages.

### 6.2 Limitations

As the corpora of the present study are limited to 80 paragraphs, the findings should be interpreted cautiously. The second limitation was that the students had been studying in the preparatory school for almost 4 months and during this time they had not taken any Turkish courses or written any similar academic formal texts in Turkish. Another limitation is about the writing prompt given to the students to elicit data from them, which asked *"the causes of stress"* and *"stresin nedenleri/sebepleri"* might have triggered them to use more of these three cause markers in their paragraphs. The final limitation was the lack of time to interview with students about their use of cause markers and choices to gain a deeper insight into the data and explore the participants' awareness of the linguistic markers.

### 6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study conducted using small size corpora, thus richer corpora in Turkish and English could be analyzed to confirm these earliest studies and interviews might be employed to explore learners' awareness of these linguistic devices. A comparative study between different groups with an effective writing training and one lacking it could be examined in relation to their use of causal devices.

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