



HEDGING AND BOOSTING IN TURKISH MA THESES' CONCLUSIONS¹

Türkçe Yüksek Lisans Tezlerinin Sonuçlarında Kullanılan
Kaçınmalar ve Güçlendiriciler

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Abstract: This study aims to reveal how the authors of Turkish master's theses construct hedges and boosters in the conclusion sections. To this end, the corpus of this study is comprised of a total of eighty conclusion sections of Turkish master's theses in social sciences and humanities based on Hyland's (2005) Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse. The analysis of the study reveals that the authors boost their statements with the use of amplifiers, modal suffixes indicating certainty, emphatics, universal pronouns and hedge their statements with deploying pronouns, epistemic lexical verbs, epistemic adjectives, epistemic adverbs and epistemic modal suffixes. Various types of boosters and hedges, especially the frequent use of modal suffixes could be attributed to the agglutinative nature of Turkish language. Moreover, the overall use of hedges and boosters appeared with similar frequencies which

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resulted in confidently uncertain language use. The insights gained from this study make noteworthy contributions to our understanding of Turkish MA theses' conclusions about metadiscourse use. As metadiscourse markers are teachable, this study will provide useful insights for researchers aspiring to write theses, teachers of Turkish as a foreign language and for future Turkish metadiscourse studies, pointing to the awareness of language-specific lexicogrammatical realizations of metadiscourse units.

Key words: *Hedges, Boosters, Master's theses' conclusion sections, Social sciences and humanities, Metadiscourse.*

Öz: Bu çalışma, yazarların Türkçe yüksek lisans tezlerinin sonuç bölümlerinde kaçınma ve güçlendiricileri nasıl yapılandırdıklarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, bu çalışmanın bütüncesi, Hyland'ın (2005) Kişilerarası Üstsöylem Modeli'ni temel alarak sosyal ve beşeri bilimler alanındaki Türkçe yüksek lisans tezlerinin toplam seksen sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmanın çözümlenmesi, yazarların büyültücüler, kesinlik belirten kiplik ekleri, vurgulayıcılar ve evrensel adılar ile ifadelerini güçlendirdiklerini, adılar, bilgisel sözlüksel eylemleri, bilgisel sıfatlar, bilgisel belirteç ve bilgisel kiplik ekleri ile de kaçınma ifadelerine başvurduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Kaçınma ve güçlendiricilerin çeşitli kullanımları, özellikle üstsöylem işlevi taşıyan kiplik eklerinin sık kullanımı Türkçe dilinin sondan eklemeli doğasına atfedilebilir. Ayrıca, kaçınma ve güçlendiricilerin benzer sıklıktaki genel kullanımı, yazarların kendinden emin bir şekilde belirsiz dil kullanımını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen içgörüler, üstsöylem kullanımı açısından Türkçe yüksek lisans tezlerinin sonuçları hakkındaki anlayışımıza kayda değer katkılar sağlamaktadır. Üstsöylem belirleyicilerinin öğretilebilir olduğunu göz önünde bulundurduğumuzda, bu çalışma üstsöylem birimlerinin dile özgü sözlükbilimsel gerçekleştirmelerine ilişkin farkındalığa işaret ederek tez yazmak isteyen araştırmacılara, Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğretenlere ve gelecekteki Türkçe üstsöylem çalışmalarına fayda sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *Kaçınmalar, Güçlendiriciler, Yüksek lisans tezlerinin sonuç bölümleri, Sosyal bilimler ve beşeri bilimler, Üstsöylem*

1. INTRODUCTION

Hyland (2005b) claims that academic writing is “a persuasive endeavor involving interaction between writers and readers” rather than just being an objective form of writing. To put it another way, academic writers do not just produce texts that represent the outside

world; they also utilize language to develop social relationships and make linguistic choices which make audience feel that they are being engaged, influenced and persuaded. This act of persuasion is carried out by the author's use of logical reasoning in conveying the arguments by employing linguistic features which build relationship with the readers.

At this point, metadiscourse use is one of the crucial rhetorical strategies in this persuasive act. Similarly, Letsoela (2014) argues that the quality of academic texts can be improved with the effective employment of metadiscourse markers. Accordingly, the use of metadiscourse increases the readability of the text (Zarrati et al., 2014). In other words, "metadiscourse is interpersonal in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences, and processing needs and that it provides writers with rhetorical appeals to achieve this" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 69). Metadiscourse then is an important pragmatic feature which shows how the writers are aware of representing themselves and their research (Hyland, 1998).

In the metadiscourse literature, a number of classifications can be seen (Ädel, 2006, 2010; Crismore, 1989, 1993; Dafouz-Milne, 2003; Hyland, 1998, 2005; Vande Kopple, 1985). Hyland's model (2005) is believed to be designed specifically for academic writing (Zarei & Mansoori, 2011, p. 45). In addition, as Hyland (2005a) states this model includes the previous models in such a way that it overcomes the gaps and overlaps them. Hyland's (2005a) model includes two main categories as interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices. Interactive metadiscourse which helps to guide the reader through the text by organizing the propositional information of the text includes categories as transitions, frame markers, code glosses, endophoric markers and evidentials. On the other hand, interactional metadiscourse which indicates the writer's attitude towards the propositional content includes the use of five strategies such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions.

Although metadiscourse is a relatively new concept, there have been numerous studies of hedges and boosters in variety of languages in academic genre. Some valuable attempts are Kondowe's (2014) study analyzing hedging and boosting in literature doctoral dissertation abstracts which revealed that literature PhD candidates hedge three times more than they use boosters; Zafar's (2021) study which disclosed that Pakistani writers employed almost equal amounts of hedging and boosting in English and Education disciplines; Triyoko et

al.'s (2021) study of Indonesian scientific writing which acknowledged that hedges and boosters in the form of adverbs are the most commonly used.

Researchers have also paid attention on the use of hedges and boosters in Turkish academic texts. Below are given Turkish resources functioning as hedges and boosters respectively, pointing out the most well-known Turkish studies on these metadiscourse categories.

1.1. HEDGING DEVICES IN TURKISH LANGUAGE

Hedge, one of the interactional MDMs, enables the authors hide their authorial identity and suppress their presence. Falahati (2006) asserts that the employment of hedges leave some room for the reader to think about the writer's arguments and judge the truth value of the assertion.

Taking into consideration the findings of previous studies investigating Turkish language, hedges were found to appear in the following categories.

a) Epistemic adverbs can function as hedges, as they soften the strength of statements and add probability, subjectivity, uncertainty, indefiniteness meaning to the subsequent proposition. In Turkish, the following linguistic resources as *büyük ölçüde* "to a great extent", *hemen hemen* "almost" (indefinite adverbs), *belki* "perhaps", *muhtemelen* "probably" (possibility/probability adverbs), *sık sık* "often", *bazen* "sometimes (adverbs of frequency) are given as the examples of epistemic adverbs by Turkish writers (Akbaş, 2014; Bal-Gezegin, 2016; Dağ Tarcan, 2019; Doyuran, 2009; Esmer, 2018; Kan, 2016; Kerimoğlu, 2010; Ruhi et al., 1992; Şen, 2019).

b) Epistemic adjectives hedge the statements by giving uncertainty/indefiniteness meaning to the propositions such as *belirsiz* "doubtful", *bazı* "some", *birçok* "several", *az* "few", *bolca* "plenty of", *çokça* "a good many", *çeşitli* "various", *epeyce*, *hayli* "quite" and possibility/probability such as *muhtemel* "liable, probable, likely" (Ağçam, 2014; Can, 2006; Dağ Tarcan, 2019; Kan, 2016; Şen, 2019).

c) Epistemic lexical verbs clearly show the author's tentativeness on the subject being discussed with the main lexical verbs: *öner-* "to suggest", *kuşkulanan-* "to doubt", *şüphelen-* "to suspect", *san-* "to suppose", *inan-* "to believe", *çalış-* (*mAyA çalış-*) "to try to" (Akbaş, 2014; Alçı, 2012; Bayyurt, 2010; Doyuran, 2009; Kerimoğlu, 2010; Şen, 2019). Epistemic lexical verbs may also be formed in passive

structure such as *-il* as in *iddia edil-* “to be claimed”, *öneril-* “to be suggested”, *çalışıl-* “to be worked”, *düşünül-* “to be thought” (Akbaş, 2014; Doyuran, 2009; Kan, 2016). In addition, previous studies also showed that epistemic lexical verbs appear in the form of copulas such as *görün-*, *gözük-* “seem” (Bal-Gezegin, 2016; Doyuran, 2009; Kan, 2016).

d) Pronouns soften the strength of statements and add indefiniteness meaning to the proposition with the following indefinite pronouns as *biri/birisi/birileri* ‘somebody/anybody’, *bir kimse* “someone”, *bir şey* “something”, *herhangibiri/herhangibirisi* “anyone” *herhangibir şey* “anything” (pronominal quantifiers), *insan* “person; human being” in the singular or plural (nonspecific indefinite pronoun ‘one’) and pronominalized determiners as *bazı(ları)mız/ bazı(ları)nız /bazısı/ bazıları/ kimi/ kimimiz/ kiminiz/ kimisi/ kimileri* “some of us/ you/them”, *birimiz/biriniz/birileri* “one of us/one of you/one of them”, *birçoğu* “many (of them), *çoğu* “most (of them)” (Bayyurt, 2010; Can, 2006; Esmer, 2018; Göksel & Kerslake, 2005; Kornfilt, 1997; Şen, 2019).

In addition, Turkish language has following personal pronouns: first person plural pronoun *biz* “we, first person plural suffix *-Ik, -Iz*, first person plural possessive pronoun *bizim* “our”, first person plural possessive pronoun with the particle *ki(n)* *bizimki* “ours”, first person plural possessive suffix *-(I)mIz*, first person plural object pronouns *bizi/bize* “us”, first person plural reflexive pronoun *kendimiz* “ourselves”, first person plural reflexive possessive pronoun with the particle *ki(n)* *kendimizinki* “that which is ours” (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005; Kornfilt, 1997).

These pronouns can also be analyzed as hedges when the single author of the text uses the first person plural suffix to avoid using “I” (Şen, 2019). It is named as “editorial we” (Ädel, 2006, pp. 31-33). Because of the fact that the authors do not prefer reflecting themselves on the text, hedging enables the writers to minimize their presence in the text by highlighting the tentativeness of propositions (Bayyurt, 2010).

e) Epistemic modals avoid commitment to categorical assertion by merely expressing “the modality of reasoning and belief” (Hyland, 1998, p.105). Erguvanlı-Taylan (2018) studied Turkish modality markers in the framework of Palmer’s (2001) classification of possibility and necessity modality and suggested that epistemic modality markers have three readings as prediction *-(y)Abil+-(A/I)r* “PSB-AOR”), assumption *-(A/I)r* “AOR”), deductive reasoning

(*ol+mAlı* “AUX-OBLG”). On the other hand, non-epistemic modality markers have permission $-(y)Abil+(A/I)r$, ability ($-Abil$) and deontic ($-mAlI$) readings.

Accordingly, the morpheme $-(y)Abil$ has the competence, permission and prediction readings (Güven, 2001; Savaşır, 1986). In addition, Kerslake (1990) states that the morpheme $-(y)Abil$ is the chief grammatical marker of possibility in Turkish. The combination of $-(y)Abil$ with the aorist $-(A/I)r$ is the representation of epistemic modality (Algı, 2012; Doyuran, 2009; Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018; Hatipoğlu & Algı, 2017; Yazar, 2000).

The modal force of possibility including prediction reading of $-(y)Abil+-(A/I)r$ reduces the validity of truth to gain acceptance (Akbaş, 2014; Bal-Gezegin, 2016; Bayyurt, 2010; Can, 2006; Dağ Tarcan, 2019; Doyuran, 2009; Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018; Esmer, 2018; Hatipoğlu & Algı, 2017; Göksel & Kerslake, 2005; Kerimoğlu, 2010; Kornfilt, 2013).

On the contrary, the ability and permission readings of $-(y)Abil+-(A/I)r$ are given as non-epistemic markers (see Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018). Similarly, $-(y)Abil+AcAk$ illustrates the abilitative in the future tense (Kornfilt, 1997) and has ability reading, hence does not function as a hedge.

The other epistemic modality markers functioning as hedge are as follows: $-mAlı$ “OBLG”, $-(A/I)r$ “AOR”, $-Dir$ “COP”, $-(y)AcAk+Dir$ “FUT-COP” (Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018; Yangın, 2020). Below each of these modality markers is explained respectively.

Besides frequently co-occurring with $-(y)Abil$ to give epistemic meaning, the suffix $-(A/I)r$ may reflect epistemic possibility without $-(y)Abil$ (Aksu-Koç, 1988; Kerslake, 1990; Sebzecioğlu, 2004; Yavaş, 1982).

(1) *Ali problemi çözer* “Ali solves the problem”

(2) *Ali problem çözer* “Ali solves problem” (Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018).

The suffix $-er$ in example (1) carries assumptive reading because of the object taking case suffix whereas it has the generalization reading in example (2) as the object is generic (Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018).

As a particle, the suffix $-Dir$ has two functions as a) expressing emphatic certainty at a formal, official, stylistic level and b) expressing inferred probability dependent on both grammatical and discursive

context proposition rather than being used as merely third person suffix (Kerimoğlu & Aksu, 2015; Kornfilt, 1997; Sansa-Tura, 1986).

The suffix *-Dir* can be used in nominal sentences as copular predicate and adds inferred probability to the proposition. For instance, in a situation when a teacher shows the students a picture of an animal that they do not know and asks what it is, if a student answers as in example (3), the suffix *-tir (-Dir)* adds strong assumption to the proposition as the student infers this information from its fins.

(3) *Bence bir balıktır, çünkü yüzgeçleri var* “I think it's a fish-because it has fins” (Erguvanlı-Taylan, 2018).

In addition to nominal sentences, *-Dir* can be used in verbal sentences and expresses inferred probability (Kornfilt, 1997).

(4) *Anlamışlardır* “They’ve probably understood”

In example (4), the suffix *-Dir* follows *-miş* and gives inference reading to the proposition and reflects possibility (Aksu-Koç, 1988).

When *-(y)AcAK* is followed by the aorist *-Dir*, it shows the belief and knowledge of the speaker and it makes the sentence open to the epistemic commentary, namely it reflects an assumption or hypothesis (Göksel & Kerslake, 2005; Sansa-Tura, 1986). Hatipoğlu and Alçı (2017) explain that *-(y)AcAK+Dir* assigns possibility reading in the following example:

(5) *Günümüzde yabancı dil öğrenimi gitgide arttığı için her insan bu eğitimi alacaktır.* “Today, as foreign language learning has become more common, every individual will get this education.”

The suffix *-Dir* is also used to emphasize the definiteness and shows the author’s objective attitude to the information (Kornfilt, 1996). However, merely the assumption reading of *-Dir* (in nominal predicate or after *-miş*, *-(y)AcAK*) functions as a hedging marker.

Besides being the grammatical indicator of the necessity proposition in Turkish (Kocaman, 1988, 1990), the suffix *-mAll* may also carry deduction proposition when used with the verb “-be” (Corcu, 2005, 2006; Erk-Emeksiz, 2008). Palmer (2001) suggested that deduction is one of the subtypes of epistemic modality. Erguvanlı-Taylan (2018) exemplifies the deductive meaning of *-mAll* in the following example:

(6) *Ali Bey sağlık konusunda ne kadar bilgili. Tavsiye ettiği ilaçlara bakılırsa, doktor olmalı* “How knowledgeable Ali Bey is about health

issues. Considering the medications that he recommends, he must be a doctor.”

Furthermore, Corcu (2003) puts forth that by the help of *ol-* “be” as the syntactic buffer, different aspect markers such as *-miş*, *-(I)yor*, *-AcAk* can be suffixed to *-mAll* and reveal epistemic meaning (e.g. *...sarsmış olmalı* “...must have shocked”; *...tadını çıkarıyor olmalı* “...must be enjoying”). Moreover, *-mAll* can be placed after the passive marker *(I)n/l* and the causative markers *-Dir*, *-Ir*, *-T*.

Overall, the suffix *-mAll(+dIr)* used after *V-mış ol-*, *V-(I)yor ol-*, *V-AcAk ol-* gives inferential meaning to the proposition as hedging marker.

1.2. BOOSTING DEVICES IN TURKISH LANGUAGE

Different from hedges, boosters highlight writer’s certainty and represent a confident voice. Hyland (2005, p. 52) defines boosters as “words which allow writers to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say.”

Boosters could be investigated under four sub-categories as universal pronouns, amplifiers, emphatics, modal suffixes indicating certainty. These categories are explained respectively by referring to the related previous studies.

a) Universal pronouns refer to a general audience with the following resources: as all, each, every-pronominals (e.g. everybody, everyone, everything), none, no one, nothing (Hinkel, 2005).

b) Amplifiers represent a large class of intensifiers (e.g. always, so (+adjective/adverb), too (+adjective), very, very much, never (Hinkel, 2005). They increase the lexical intensity of gradable adjective or verb (Quirk et al., 1985) and functions as intensifiers, exaggerative, and overstatement.

Bayyurt’s (2010) study revealed that Turkish writers employed the following amplifiers as *tamamen* “exactly”, *kolaylıkla* “easily”, *yakından* “closely”, *kimse* “no one” in order to boost the effect of their viewpoint on the reader and to support the truthiness of their opinion about the topics raised in essays.

Göksel and Kerslake (2005) state that the connectives such as *aksine*, *tersine*, *bilakis* “on the contrary” introduce a statement that amplifies the statement in the first conjunct, which is always negative.

(7) *Erol Semra'yı görmek istemiyor. Aksine, görecek diye ödü kopuyor* “Erol doesn't want to see Semra. On the contrary, he dreads seeing her.”

As can be understood from the example (7), *aksine* “on the contrary” does not carry an adversative meaning rather it is an amplifier.

c) The function of emphatics is similar to that of amplifiers. They have the reinforcing effect on a proposition and strengthen the writer's conviction (Hyland, 2005). In other words, emphatics emphasize force or writers' certainty in message such as *elbet* “sure”, *elbette* “for sure”, *asla* “no way” *bile* “even”, *hatta* “even”, *gerçekten* “indeed”, *özellikle* “especially”, *tek şeyse* “one thing”, *en mükemmel* “the greatest”, *bir gerçektir* “it is a fact that”, *bir tuş kadar bize yakın* “as close as a button” (Bayyurt, 2010; Can, 2006).

d) Modal suffixes which indicate certainty were also found to function as boosters. The suffix *-Dir* is used to emphasize the truth of the explanation and longterm validity of the facts (Sansa-Tura, 1986). Moreover, it shows the definiteness, rule in a formal way and the author's objective attitude to the information (Kornfilt, 1996).

Sansa-Tura (1986) and Yavaş (1980, 1982) argue that in nonverbal sentences, *-Dir* follows the zero-tense marker. Kornfilt (1997) explains that *-Dir* has two functions, one of which is to express certainty, the other one is to express inferred probability.

The other modality markers functioning as booster are as the following: *-miş*, *-mAktA*, *-AcAk*. These markers can be followed by the aorist *-Dir* (e.g., Kan, 2016; Şen 2019). Below each of these modality markers will be explained in detail.

Akbaş's (2012, 2014) studies showed that Turkish writers employed *-miş+Dir* to signal their confidence over a statement such as *farklılık bulunmuştur* “revealed differences”, *göstermiştir* “...demonstrated”, *ortaya çıkmıştır* “...revealed”, *kanıtlamıştır* “...proved”, *bulunmuştur* “was found out”.

Kan (2016) gives the following example to illustrate the certainty reading conveyed with *-AcAk+Dir*:

(8) *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.”

Şen (2019) points out that in the following sentence, *-mAktA+dIr* is employed in order to increase the reliability of the proposition, hence functions as booster:

(9) *Hem Gazali hem de Hume, nedensellik konusunda benzer fikirlere sahip olsalar da anlama ve anlamlandırma açısından farklılıkları olduğu açıkça görül-mektedir* “Although both Ghazali and Hume have similar ideas about causality, it is clear that they differ in terms of understanding and interpretation.” Some instances of boosters employed in Turkish texts are as follows: *aslında* “in fact”, *gerçekten* “really”, *gerçekte* “in fact”, *doğrusu* “as a matter of fact”, *oysa* “in fact”, *hep*, “always”, *her zaman* “always”, *kesinlikle* “definitely”, *muhakkak* “surely”, *elbette* “certainly”, *çok* “very”, *pek* “quite”, *aslında* “actually”, *kanıtla-* “to prove”, *açık(tır)* “(it is) clear”, *açıkça* “clearly”, *aşıkâr* “explicit”, *asla* “never”, *ancak* “merely” *son derece* “extremely”, *(hiç) şüphesiz (ki)* “undoubtedly”, *bilhassa* “in particular”, *vurgula-* “to emphasize”, *yadsınamaz* “undeniable”, *en+sıfat* “the most+adjective” (e.g., Bal-Gezegin, 2016; Dağ Tarcan, 2019; Esmer, 2018; Kan, 2016; Şen, 2019).

Considering all the above-mentioned studies on hedges and boosters in Turkish language, it is obvious that researchers have focused on hedges and boosters predominantly in research articles (e.g., Çapar & Turan, 2019; Dağ Tarcan, 2017, 2019; Doyuran, 2009; Kan, 2016; Şen, 2019), argumentative essays (e.g., Alçı, 2012; Can, 2006; Hatipoğlu & Alçı, 2017) and academic book reviews (e.g., Bal-Gezegin, 2016). As for MA theses written in Turkish language, few studies have concentrated on MDMs in MA theses (Akbaş, 2012; Atasever- Belli, 2019; Atmaca, 2016; Ekoç, 2010; Kurt, 2022; Önel, 2020; Soyşekerci et al., 2022; Üstüenalp & Esmer, 2022). The other recent studies on Turkish metadiscourse markers are on the election rally speeches (Esmer 2017), the advice letters (Oktay, 2023), the materials used in academic Turkish education (Şimşek & Erol, 2023), research articles (Öztürk & İşeri, 2023; Şen & İşeri, 2023). Academix texts produced by the students learning Turkish as a foreign language were also investigated in regard to the metadiscourse use (Esmer, 2018; Kurudayıoğlu & Çimen, 2020).

Along with the contribution of these studies to the area of metadiscourse, there is a scarcity of research which focused on the conclusion sections of Turkish MA theses. Taking into consideration that previous studies reveal that use of metadiscourse devices varies across the sub-genres (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion/Conclusion) (e.g., Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988;

Marandi, 2003) and authors utilize more MDMs in the sections of conclusion to influence and persuade their audience (Falahati, 2006; Kuhl et al., 2012), the present study addresses a need to examine the use of hedges and boosters in the conclusion sections of Turkish MA theses.

Overall, this study aims to reveal the Turkish authors' general tendencies in employing hedges and boosters in their MA theses' conclusion sections written in Turkish, with an in-depth analysis of all their sub-categories. On the both quantitative and qualitative levels, this study addresses the following research questions: 1) What are the frequencies and functions of hedges in Turkish MA theses' conclusions? 2) What are the frequencies and functions of boosters in Turkish MA theses' conclusions? 3) Is there any significant difference between the use of hedges and boosters in Turkish MA theses' conclusions?

2.METHOD

2.1. CORPUS

In this study, a total of 80 MA theses were compiled from the website of the the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Theses Center (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>). The disciplines of MA theses were randomly chosen among the disciplines within social sciences on this website. These disciplines are History (HIS), Sociology (SOC), Turkish Language and Literature (TLL) and Philosophy (PHI), which are soft pure sciences according to Biglan's (1973a) classification of academic disciplines. Within soft pure sciences, History, Language, Literature, Philosophy are humanities while Sociology is a social science (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Biglan, 1973a). Below is given the rationales for investigating MDM use in the conclusion sections and in social science and humanities.

2.1.1 RATIONALE FOR BUILDING SUCH A CORPUS

Previous studies show that the use of metadiscourse units varies across the sub-genres (e.g., introduction, method, discussion, conclusion) which show the different parts of academic articles perform different rhetorical functions (e.g., Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Marandi, 2003; Salager-Meyer, 1994; Smith, 1984). More specifically, abstracts, literature review, methodology sections mainly include tables, figures,

graphics, quotations, paraphrases and citations from other studies which include descriptive information. On the other hand, in the conclusion sections authors could be free to support, reject, discuss or prove and could convey their interpretative thoughts. Accordingly, they need and use hedges and boosters more frequently to transfer their ideas, claims, arguments (e.g., Falahati, 2006; Kuhl et al., 2012). In addition, as conclusions are often the last section that audience reads, authors try to leave a good impression on the reader. Also, this section is where the potential readers mostly first read to get information about the study in detail and to decide if they should read the whole paper. For these reasons, the use of hedges and boosters were explored in the extracted conclusion sections of MA theses.

The disciplines were chosen from social science and humanities as they provide more and varied metadiscourse patterns grounding on the view that “the more ‘soft knowledge’ social science disciplines employed more metadiscourse markers” (Hyland, 2010). According to Biglan’s (1973) model of disciplines, academic disciplines can be categorized into four groups such as hard-pure, hard-applied, soft-pure, and soft-applied. Soft pure disciplines include social sciences (e.g., sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics), fine arts (e.g., theatre, music), communications (e.g., journalism, communication disorders), humanities (e.g., languages, history, philosophy). For these disciplines, content knowledge is constructive, formative, interpretative and qualitative. Previous studies have approved that soft sciences draw on hedges and boosters in the texts more than hard sciences (e.g., Dahl, 2004; Hyland & Jiang, 2018; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Khedri et al., 2013; Peacock, 2010; Ünsal, 2008) due to their interpretative nature rather than relying on scientific methods and writers’ argumentative efforts to convince their readers (Akbarpour & Sadeghghl, 2015). In this sense, the disciplines were chosen from social science and humanities in the category of soft pure sciences in order to reveal how hedges and boosters appear and function in Turkish MA theses’ conclusions. Overall, this study attempted to fill the gap in the literature by building such a corpus.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Firstly, MA theses written in Turkish and published in the fields of HIS, TLL, SOC and PHI were listed automatically as the website provides this type of search. Secondly, these MA theses were manually scrutinized one by one for detecting the MA theses to be investigated in

the current study. Specifically, the MA theses which do not have conclusion sections, which have non-Turkish named supervisors, which were written by non-Turkish named authors were excluded and the suitable MA theses for this research were determined.

2.3 PROPOSED ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

The corpus was analyzed in terms of hedging and boosting features which are interactional categories according to Hyland's (2005a) classification model of metadiscourse. However, as Turkish language has morphologically different structure from English and as previous studies have confirmed that the use of MDMs differs according to the writers' language (e.g., Jalilifar, 2011; Mirshamsi, 2013; Kuhi, 2014; Mu et al., 2015), a new analytical framework for investigating Turkish hedges and boosters was created. This framework for each category of boosters and hedges was compiled and adapted from the works of previous Turkish MDMs and the properties of Turkish language (see sections 1.1 and 1.2). Table 1 illustrates this proposed model.

Table 1. The categorization of hedges and boosters for the analysis of Turkish corpus

Hedges	Functions and Examples
Epistemic adverbs	Indefinite adverbs (e.g. <i>hemen hemen</i> “almost”, <i>kısmen</i> “relatively”) (...) Possibility/probability adverbs (e.g. <i>belki</i> “perhaps”, <i>muhtemelen</i> “probably”) (...) Adverbs of frequency (e.g. <i>genellikle</i> “usually”, <i>nadiren</i> “rarely”)
Epistemic adjectives	Indefinite adjectives (e.g. <i>belirsiz</i> “doubtful”, <i>bazı</i> “some”) Possibility and probability adjectives (e.g. <i>muhtemel</i> “liable, probable, likely”)
Epistemic lexical verbs	e.g. <i>kuşkulun-</i> “to doubt” Passive forms -(I)n/l (e.g. <i>gözlenmektedir</i> “It is observed”); Copulas (e.g. <i>görün-</i> “seem”)

Pronouns	<p>Indefinite pronouns (e.g. <i>biri/birisi/birileri</i> “somebody/anybody”, <i>bir kimse</i> “someone”, <i>bir şey</i> “something”, <i>herhangibiri</i> “anyone” <i>herhangibir şey</i> “anything”, <i>insan</i> “person; human being” in the singular or plural)</p> <p>Pronominalized determiners (e.g. <i>bazı(ları)mız/bazı(ları)nız /bazısı/ bazıları/ kimi/ kimimiz/ kiminiz/ kimisi/ kimileri</i> “some of us/ you/them”)</p> <p>Editorial we (e.g. first person plural pronouns <i>biz</i> “we”, first person plural suffixes <i>-(I)z, -(I)k</i>, first person plural possessive pronoun <i>bizim</i> “our”, first person plural possessive pronoun with the particle <i>ki(n)</i>, <i>bizimki</i> “ours”, first person plural possessive suffix <i>-(I)mIz</i>, first person plural object pronouns <i>bizi/bize</i> “us”, first person plural reflexive pronoun <i>kendimiz</i> “ourselves”, first person plural reflexive possessive pronoun with the particle <i>ki(n)</i> <i>kendimizinki</i> “that which is ours”)</p>
Epistemic modal suffixes	<p><i>-(y)Abil+(A/I)r</i> “PSB-AOR” <i>-(A/I)r</i> “AOR” <i>-Dir</i> “COP” (in nominal predicate) <i>-(y)AcAK+Dir</i> “FUT-COP” <i>-mIş+Dir</i> “PRF-COP” <i>ol+mAll</i> “AUX-OBLG” <i>-mIş ol+mAll+Dir</i> “PF AUX-OBLG-COP” <i>-(I)yor ol+mAll+Dir</i> “IMPF AUX-OBLG-COP” <i>-AcAk ol+mAll+Dir</i> “FUT AUX-OBLG-COP”</p>
Boosters	
Universal pronouns	e.g. <i>her-</i> “every”, <i>hiç-</i> “no-”
Amplifiers	e.g. <i>tamamen</i> “exactly”, <i>kolaylıkla</i> “easily”, <i>yakından</i> “closely”, <i>çok</i> ‘extremely’, <i>aşırı</i> ‘extremely’
Emphatics	e.g. <i>elbette</i> “for sure”, <i>asla</i> “no way”, <i>kesinlikle</i> “absolutely”, <i>göster-</i> “to demonstrate”
Modal suffixes indicating certainty	<p><i>-(A/I)r</i> “AOR” <i>-Dir</i> “COP” (in nominal predicate) <i>-(y)AcAK+Dir</i> “FUT-COP” <i>-mIş+Dir</i> “PRF-COP” <i>-mAktA+Dir</i> “IMPF+COP”</p>

2.4 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

This research was employed by combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. That is, metadiscourse items of each category were classified in their corresponding groups and their frequency of use was statistically analyzed.

CLAN program was used in the data analysis as it provides the frequency of each word in the texts (FREQ) and context in which the linguistic forms are used (COMBO) which is necessary to count a linguistic item as a metadiscourse resource.

An inter-rater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistics is performed to increase the degree of reliability of the analysis. The inter-rater reliability for the raters is found to be Kappa = 0.76 ($p < 0.0001$), which means a substantial agreement between the two raters.

Following the agreement between the raters, raw frequencies, overall percentages (per 100 words) and cumulative percentages of the hedges and boosters and their sub-categories were calculated to reveal their frequencies in Turkish MA theses' conclusion sections.

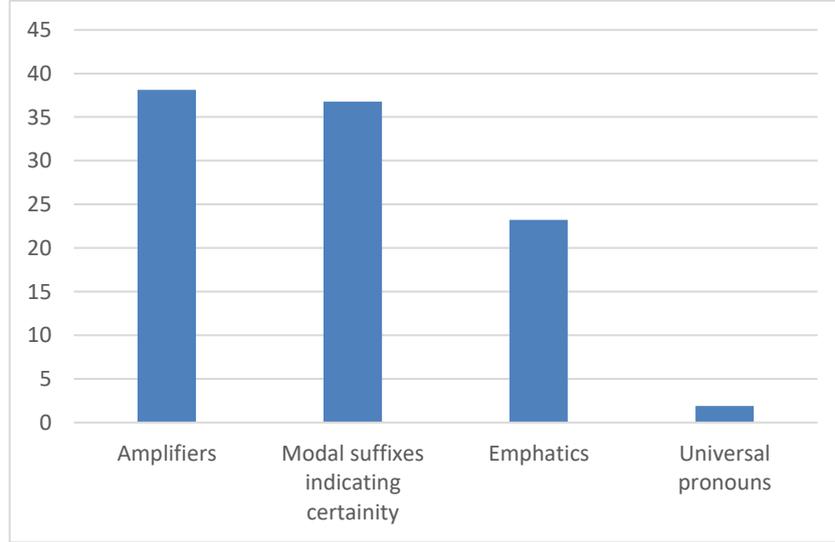
In addition to the frequency counts, log-likelihood (LL) statistics was run to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference between the use of hedges and boosters in the corpus. The web-based log-likelihood wizard (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>) was used for this calculation.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. FUNCTIONS AND FREQUENCIES OF BOOSTERS

Considering that boosters are metadiscoursal devices which create an impression of certainty and assurance, it was found that the authors preferred employing universal pronouns, amplifiers, emphatics and modal suffixes indicating certainty in order to emphasize their arguments and to convey their confidence.

A total number of 1710 items of boosters are detected and investigated over 60654 total number of words in the corpus with 2.82 instances of occurrences per 100 words. Graphic 1 presents that all the types of boosters (given in Table 1) employed in the corpus.



Graphic 1. Categorical distribution of boosters

As shown in Graphic 1, having the highest frequency of use in Turkish MA theses conclusions among booster types, amplifiers had the highest ranking (38.13%) with 1.08 tokens per 100 words. That is, the authors of Turkish MA theses showed a preference to increase the size or effect of the statements in the conclusion sections.

Some of the amplifiers from the corpus are given in the following extracted sentences:

(10) *Konu edilen dönem Gaziantep için **oldukça** hareketli geçmiştir* (CFAM_HIS_2004-1). “The period in question was **quite** active for Gaziantep.”

(11) *Bu **tamamen** epistemolojiyle ilgili bir durum olup ontolojik anlamda bedeni değersiz kılmaz* (CFAM_PHI_2004-2). “This is a **completely** epistemological issue and does not ontologically render the body worthless.”

(12) *İki karakter arasındaki ilişkisi **hiçbir zaman** anne-kız ilişkisine dönüşmez* (CFAM_TLL_2019-5). “The relationship between the two characters **never** turns into a mother-daughter relationship.”

As can be seen in the examples (10), (11), (12), the authors used amplifiers such as *oldukça* “quite”, *tamamen* “completely”, *hiçbir zaman* “never” to express certainty of their assertions by modifying

gradable adjectives or verbs and increasing their scalar lexical intensity in conclusions.

Modal suffixes indicating certainty were placed in the second rank among booster types with a percentage of 36.78% and 1.03 instances of occurrences in total corpus.

Some of the modal suffixes indicating certainty used in the corpus are given below:

(13) *Yakut türklerinde “Evlilik sönmez bir ateş yakmaktır” sözü evliliğe ilişkin, güzel bir tanımdır* (CFAM_TLL_2004-3). “The statement “Marriage is to light an unquenchable fire” in Yakut Turks is a beautiful definition-**COP-3SG** of marriage.”

(14) *Gazete devrin siyasî ve sosyal olaylarının yanı sıra edebî ve kültürel faaliyetlerini de yakından takip etmiştir* (CFAM_TLL_2019-2). “The newspaper closely follow-**PRF-COP-3SG** the literary and cultural activities as well as the political and social events of the period.”

(15) *Elbette gayrimüslimler hakkında, birçok konuda dilek ve şikâyetler söz konusu olmaktadır* (CFAM_HIS_2019-3). “Of course, there be-**IMPF-COP-3SG** many wishes and complaints about non-Muslims.”

(16) *Yine de İbn Arabî, varlığın birliği öğretisinin İslam ve İslam dışındaki diğer temsilcilerine kıyasla konusunu en ileri derecede yazıya dökemeyi başarmıştır ve bu yönüyle her zaman incelenmeye değer kalacaktır* (CMAM_PHI_2004-1). “Nevertheless, Ibn Arabî has succeeded in putting the subject of the unity of existence into writing at the highest level compared to other representatives of Islam and non-Islam, and from this aspect it will always remain-**FUT-COP-3SG** worth examining.”

Qualitative analysis reveal that modal suffixes indicating certainty deployed by the authors are *-Dir* “COP-3SG”, *-miştir* “PF-COP”, *-mektir* “IMPF-COP-3SG” and *-AcAK+Dir* “FUT-COP” given in the examples (13), (14), (15), (16), respectively. These suffixes create emphatic impressions in the reader and strengthen the authors’ statements on the issue.

The third most frequently employed booster type was emphatics which emphasized authors’ certainty in message. They occurred 23.22% among booster types and 0.66 tokens per 100 words in total corpus.

Below are given some of the extracted sentences including emphatics.

(17) *Rüyalar masallar ve mitler kesinlikle ama kesinlikle gelişmemiş insan beyninin faaliyetleri ve fantezi alanları değildir* (CMAM_HIS_2019-1). “Dreams, fairy tales and myths are **definitely** not the activities and fantasy areas of the rudimentary human brain.”

(18) *Şüphesiz İbn Sina filozof olmanın yanı sıra İslam kültürünün teşekkül ettiği bir ortamda yetişmiş bir müslümandır* (CMAM_PHI_2004-2). “**Undoubtedly**, besides being a philosopher, Ibn Sina is a Muslim who grew up in an environment where Islamic culture was formed.”

(19) *Aşk hikayeleri çok geniş bir sahada anlatılması sebebiyle bunların hepsine ulaşmak ve derlemek elbette çok zor ve zahmetli bir iştir.* (CFAM_TLL_2004- 1). “Since love stories are told in a very wide area, it is **certainly** a very difficult and laborious task to reach and compile all of them.”

The examples (17), (18), (19) illustrate that the authors use emphatics such as *kesinlikle ama kesinlikle* “definitely”, *şüphesiz* “undoubtedly”, *elbette* “certainly” which mark that the authors are certain of what they are writing.

As being the least frequently employed type among booster types in the conclusion sections of Turkish MA theses, universal pronouns had very low use of frequency with 1.87% percentage (0.05 tokens per 100 words). This finding shows that the authors did not feel very much the need to mark the extremes of the continuum of meanings.

Below are presented some examples of universal pronouns employed in the corpus:

(20) *Eski Türklerin bereket kaynağı olan kadın herkesin önünde saygıyla eğildiği bir şeref abidesi olmuştur* (CMAM_TLL_2004-3). “The woman, who was the source of blessings of the ancient Turks, became a monument of honor in front of **everyone**.”

(21) *İbn Arabi için her şey Tanrıyla bir ağırlık kazanır ve evren ikinci derecede bir işlevselliğe sahiptir* (CMAM_PHI_2004-1). “For Ibn Arabi, **everything** gains weight with God and the universe has a secondary functionality.”

(22) *Bu iç savaş sırasında Birleşmiş Milletlerin yetersizliği ya da egemen güçlerin iki ay süren iç savaş boyunca bilinçli olarak hiçbir şey yapmaması Otel Ruanda filminde tüm çıplaklığıyla ortaya konulmaktadır* (CMAM_PHI_2019-2). “During this civil war, the incompetence of the United Nations or the consciously doing **nothing**

of the sovereign powers during the two-month civil war is revealed in all its nakedness in the movie Hotel Rwanda.”

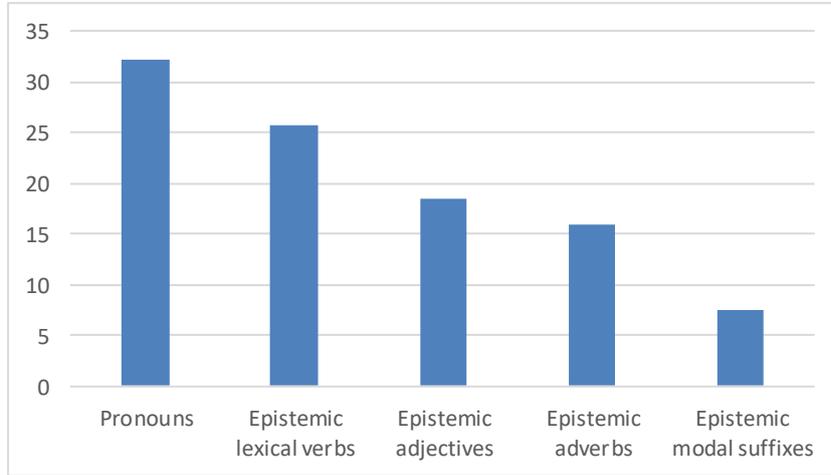
As seen in the examples (20), (21), (22), the authors employed universal pronouns such as *herkes* “everybody”, *her şey* “everything”, *hiçbir şey* “nothing” to convince the readers emphasizing the force of propositions by referring to general audience.

The authors are inclined to create emphatic impression in the reader which allow them to close down alternatives and head off conflicting views with amplifiers, modal suffixes indicating certainty, emphatics and universal pronouns. You can find the complete list of boosting devices in Appendix 1.

3.2 PRONOUNS, ADJECTIVES, ADVERBS, VERBS AND MODAL SUFFIXES AS HEDGES: FREQUENCIES AND FUNCTIONS

Considering that hedge is the reflection of uncertainty, it can be deduced that the authors are much more aware of the risks of claimmaking and more cautious in writing and reporting their opinions in conclusion sections by using pronouns, epistemic lexical verbs, epistemic adjectives, epistemic adverbs, epistemic modal suffixes.

In the present study, boosters were found to be closely followed by the use of hedges in conclusion sections in Turkish MA theses, with a total number of 1688 items and 2.78 instances of occurrences per 100 words. You can find the complete list of hedging devices in Appendix 1. Graphic 2 shows that all the types of hedges (given in Table 1) were employed by the authors and presents their categorical distribution from the most frequently used sub-categories to less frequently used ones.



Graphic 2. Categorical distribution of hedges

As shown in Graphic 2, pronouns had the highest ranking (32.29%) among hedging types with 0.90 tokens per 100 words. Specifically, in the present study the authors conveyed vagueness purposively to make the propositions more acceptable to the reader with the use of indefinite pronouns, pronominalized determiners and editorial “we”. Thus, they could reduce the risk of negation which could be arised from the readers’ perspective and increase their chance of radification. The examples of these types of pronouns are given in the following extracted sentences:

(23) *Ancak insan yetkilerini kontrol altına alabilirse o zaman özgür olur* (CFAM_PHI_2019-3). “Only if **man** can control his powers, then he will be free.”

(24) *Gayrimüslim memurlar ise ilk tahsillerini kendi oturdukları mahallelerdeki Ermeni, Amerikan, Protestan gibi azınlık mekteplerinde tamamlamış ve bazıları başka illerde üst öğrenim kademelerine geçerek eğitimlerini tamamlamışlardır* (CFAM_HIS_2019-2). “Non-Muslim civil servants, on the other hand, completed their primary education in minority schools such as Armenian, American and Protestant in their neighborhoods, and **some of** them went to higher education levels in other provinces and completed their education.”

(25) *Üzerinde çalıştığımız Eşrefoğlu Rûmî Divanı arkaik unsur bakımından oldukça zengin bir eserdir* (CFAM_TLL_2019-3). “The

Eşrefoğlu Rumi Divan, which **we** are working on, is a very rich work in terms of archaic elements.”

As seen in the examples (23), (24), (25), the authors employ pronouns *insan* “man” as an indefinite pronoun which functions as hedging marker as the person is indefinite in the sentence; *bazıları* “some of (them)” as a pronominalized determiner which functions as hedging marker as it refers to things that is not specified, *üzerine çalıştığımız* “which we are working on” which includes the first person plural suffix *-Imız* functioning as hedging marker as the author does not prefer reflecting himself/herself on the text.

The use of *we* in single-authored texts as in the present study indicates “humility, modesty, and distance, and reminds the reader of the collaborative nature of the research activity” (Hyland, 2001, p. 218). Accordingly, it could be attributed to the collaborative nature of the MA theses and collectivist cultures like Turkish culture rather than individualistic properties (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 75; Karahan, 2013). As the uses of *we*-based references in single-authored texts would be a signal to downgrade the explicit manifestation of a considerably powerful reference (*I*-based), it functions as hedge in the text (Yakhontova, 2006).

Pronouns functioning as hedges are followed by epistemic lexical verbs with 25.83% proportion and 0.72 tokens per 100 words in total corpus.

The authors employed epistemic lexical verbs *-maya çalışmak* “to try to”, *-Ül* (passive form), *görün-* “seem” (copulas) to reduce the force of statements while writing about the results of their studies, as seen in the examples (26), (27), (28), respectively.

(26) “*Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kurtuluşunda Rüya motifi*” adlı tez çalışmamızda dönemi için bir saltanat manifestosu niteliği taşıyıp saltanatı müjdeleyen rüyaların, hanedanının hakimiyet yetkisinin Allah tarafından verilmiş olduğu düşüncesinin halk arasında yerleşmesini hedeflediğini açıklamaya çalıştık (CMAM_HIS_2019-1). “In our thesis titled “Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kurtuluşunda Rüya motifi”, we **tried to explain** that the dreams that were a sultanate manifesto for the period and the idea that the sovereignty of the dynasty was given by Allah aimed to be established among the people.”

(27) *DP'nin çok partili siyasi yaşamın gerektirdiği toplumsal vizyona sahip olmadığı, heterojen ve hazırlıksız bir siyasi yapı olduğu düşünülmüştür* (CMAM_HIS_2004-2). “It **was thought** that the DP

did not have the social vision required by the multi-party political life and was a heterogeneous and unprepared political structure.”

(28) *Bilişim teknolojilerinin çalışma yaşamında etkin kullanımıyla ortaya çıkan işsizlik sorunu, yeni teknolojilerin ürettiği yeni işler tarafından karşılanmaktan uzak görünmektedir* (CFAM_SOC_2004-2). “The problem of unemployment that arises with the effective use of information technologies in working life **seems** far from being met by new jobs produced by new technologies.”

The third most frequently employed hedging type was epistemic adjective with 18.42 percentage among the types of hedges (0.51 tokens per 100 words). This shows that the authors were also inclined to deploy adjectives functioning as hedges to gain reader acceptance of claims by conveying their attitudes to the truth of their statements.

In the corpus, it was detected that the epistemic adjectives appeared in two ways as indefinite adjectives such as *belirsiz* “doubtful”, *bazı* “some” and possibility and probability adjectives such as *muhtemel* “liable, probable, likely”. Below these functions of epistemic adjectives are given within the sentences extracted from the corpus:

(29) *İran edebiyatının bazı şairlerinin Türk şairlerince usta kabul edildikleri bilinmektedir* (CMAM_TLL_2004-1). “It is known that **some** poets of Iranian literature are considered masters by Turkish poets.”

(30) *Temelde amaç; her iki kavramın olanaklı anlamlarını açıklığa kavuşturmak böylece muasır tartışmalarda ele alındıklarında nasıl düşünülmeleri gerektiğini ortaya koymaktır* (CMAM_PHI_2019-3). “Basically the purpose; is to clarify the **possible** meanings of both concepts, thus to reveal how they should be contemplated when considered in contemporary debates.”

(31) *Türk edebiyatı tarihi boyunca, birçok dergi yayımlanmış olsa da kimisi ekonomik nedenlerle kimisi sürdürülebilirliğini kaybetmesi nedeniyle kimi dergiler de siyasi-sosyal nedenlerle kapanmıştır* (CMAM_TLL_2019-1). “Although **many** journals have been published throughout the history of Turkish literature, some have been closed due to economic reasons, some due to losing their sustainability, and **some** journals due to political-social reasons.”

In the examples (29), (30), (31), the authors use epistemic adjectives such as *bazı* “some” which functions as indefinite adjective, *olanaklı* “possible” which functions as probability adjective, *birçok* “a lot of”

which functions as indefinite adjective, *kimi* “some” which functions as indefinite adjective respectively to avoid from certain statements but to open the arguments for discussion.

This shows that the authors were also inclined to deploy adjectives functioning as hedges to gain reader acceptance of claims by conveying their attitudes to the truth of their statements.

Epistemic adverb is another type of hedge employed in the conclusion sections in Turkish MA theses with the percentage of 15.94% among the types of hedges (0.44 tokens per 100 words). This indicates that the authors employed adverbs functioning as hedges in order to communicate their standpoint about the proposition material.

It was observed that the epistemic adverbs appeared in three ways as indefinite adverbs such as *hemen hemen* “almost” and *kısmen* “relatively”, possibility/probability adverbs such as *belki* “perhaps” and *muhtemelen* “probably” and adverbs of frequency such as *genellikle* “usually”, *nadiren* “rarely”. Below are given the extracted sentences from the corpus of the study including these functions of epistemic adverbs:

(32) *Yirmi birinci yüzyılın ilk iki onyılı ise belki de yirminci yüzyıl deneylerinin ters çevrilip gerçekleştirildiği bir dönem olarak görülecektir* (CFAM_SOC_2019-2). “The first two decades of the twenty-first century on the other hand will **perhaps** be seen as a period in which the experiments of the twentieth century were turned upside down and carried out.”

(33) *İstifa eden memurlar ise, genellikle aynı hizmeti vermeye devam etmiş, sadece buldukları kurumlardan aynı mahiyeti taşıyan başka kurumlara geçiş yapmışlardır* (CFAM_HIS_2019-2). “Civil servants who resigned **generally** continued to provide the same service, only transferred from the institutions they were in to other institutions of the same nature.”

(34) *Bu nedenle çalışma izninin işçiler tarafından alınabiliyor olması, hem ücret eşitsizliğini kısmen ortadan kaldırabilecek –asgari ücret uygulaması ile– hem de işçilerin haklarını arama mekanizmalarının önü açılacaktır* (CMAM_SOC_2019-3). “For this reason, the fact that the work permit can be obtained by the workers will both **partially** eliminate the wage inequality – with the application of the minimum wage – and pave the way for the mechanisms to seek the rights of the workers.”

The extracted sentences given in (32), (33), (34) include epistemic adverbs such as *belki* “perhaps” which functions as a possibility/probability adverb, *genellikle* “usually” which functions as an adverb of frequency, *kısmen* “partially” which functions as an indefinite adverb respectively to express the authors’ assessment of the truth value of the proposition. This indicates that the authors employed adverbs functioning as hedges in order to communicate their standpoint about the proposition material.

The least frequently employed category of hedge in the corpus is epistemic modal suffixes with 7.52% percentage among the other categories of hedges as shown in Graphic 2. This indicates that the authors did not prefer frequently the modal suffixes to hedge their statements. The extracted sentences from the corpus including epistemic modal suffixes are given below:

(35) *Araştırmada elde edilen veriler bu bağlamda değerlendirildiğinde, Fromm’un yaşadığı çağın ve olayların düşüncelerini yansıttığı **söylenebilir*** (CFAM_PHI_2019). “When the data obtained in the research is evaluated in this context, it say-**PASS-PSB-AOR-3SG** that Fromm reflects the thoughts of the era and events in which he lived.”

(36) *Gullitaire’in bize aktardığı Ayşe Hanım ile Valide Sultan’ın zaman zaman sohbet ettiği görüşü de bunlara eklendiğinde padişah harem ile vakit geçirmiş **olmalıdır*** (CFAM_HIS_2019-5). “When Gullitaire's opinion that Ayşe Hanım and Valide Sultan chatted from time to time were added to these, and padishah spend-**PF AUX-OBLG-COP-3SG** time with his harem.”

(37) *Belki de bir gün, kültürel üretim alanının toplumsal mantık kavramına göre yazma isteği, Yapıtlar bilimi projesinin olanağı ile gerçekleştirilecektir* (CFAM_SOC_2004-3). “Perhaps, one day, the desire to write according to the concept of social logic of the field of cultural production **realize-PASS-FUT- COP-3SG** with the possibility of the science of Works project.”

(38) *Öte yandan filmde hayatını kurtarmak için otele sığınan insanlar arasından batılı ülke vatandaşlarının otelden kurtarılması geriye kalan Ruandalı Turistslerin ölümüne terk edilmesinin cinayetten belki de hiç farkı yoktur* (CMAM_PHI_2019-2). “On the other hand, the rescue of western country citizens from the hotel among the people who took shelter in the hotel to save their lives, and leaving the remaining

Rwandan Tourists to die is perhaps no- **COP-3SG** different from murder.”

(39) *Bunları birer ahlak kuralı değil de prensip olarak sunmanın pek fazla bir anlam taşımadığının farkında olmalı ki Cemil Sena, oluşturmaya çalıştığı materyalist, faydacı ve göreceli makine ahlâkının, çıkarıcılık (utilitarimne) ya da ahlâkdışıcılık (immoralizm) ve şüphencilik (septisizm) gibi olumsuz doktrinlerle karıştırılmaması gerektiğini vurgulama ihtiyacını duymuştur* (CMAM_PHI_2004-4). “He should be-**AUX-OBLG-3SG** aware that it does not make much sense to present these as principles rather than moral rules, since Cemil Sena felt the need to emphasize that the materialist, utilitarian and relative machine morality that he is trying to establish should not be confused with negative doctrines such as self-interest or immoralism and skepticism.

In the examples (35), (36), (37), (38), (39), epistemic modal suffixes *-nAbilir* “PASS-PSB-AOR-3SG”, *-miş olmalıdır* “PF AUX-OBLG-COP-3SG”, *-AcAktır* “PASS-FUT- COP-3SG”, *-Dir* “COP-3SG” (in nominal predicate), *ol+mAlI* “AUX-OBLG-3SG” were used to express the possibility and deduction in the proposition by giving present, past and future references.

In addition to the sub-categories and their forms discussed above, in the corpus of the study, it was also detected that *olsa gerek* “must be” was employed to restrain from certain statements as anticipating possible objections. This can be exemplified in the following excerpted sentences from the corpus:

(40) *Tanrı'nın, ya "Hz. Muhammed'in dediği gibi, "kulların zannına göre olduğunu" kabullenmek ya da O'nu evrende işleyen ebedî ve tümel bir zekâ ve enerji saymak zorunlu olur" diyen Cemil Sena, pragmacı-realist tavrının bir sonucu **olsa gerek**, insanların her çeşit inançlarla bağnazlıklardan kurtulup irade ve özgürlüğünü korumaları açısından için böyle bir inancın pratik yararlar sağlayabileceği görüşündedir* (CMAM_PHI_2004-5). “Cemil Sena, who said, "It is necessary to accept that God is either according to the beliefs of the servants, as the Prophet Muhammad said, or to regard Him as an eternal and universal intelligence and energy operating in the universe," **must be** a result of his pragmatic-realist attitude, has the opinion that such a belief can provide practical benefits for people to get rid of all kinds of beliefs and bigotry and protect their will and freedom.”

In the example (40), *olsa gerek* “must be” expresses the author’s logical deduction and uncertain statements. Göksel and Kerslake (2005) and Kerimoğlu (2019) explain that *olsa gerek*, as a non-fact modality marker and a lexical- morphological-syntactic structure consists of the conditional *-sA* “if” and *gerek* “necessity” which expresses probability/possibility.

Overall, the use of various functions of boosters and hedges could be attributed to the functional nature of conclusion sections as boosters are used to emphasize arguments and subjective nature of conclusion sections as the authors present their ideas by employing hedges. That is to say, as the conclusion section is not just a re-statement of the research points bringing forward the results and findings but also a synthesis of key points stressing their significance, the authors preferred making use of boosters and hedges to make their theses’ conclusion sections more persuasive and reader-friendly.

3.3 NEAR FREQUENCY USE OF HEDGES AND BOOSTERS

In the present study, it was found out that the corpus involved almost equal frequency use of hedges (f:1688) and boosters (f:1710). LL analysis showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the use of hedges and boosters in the conclusions of Turkish MA theses (LL ratio= +0.14, $p>0.05$).

Frequent use of boosters was also observed in some previous studies investigating soft disciplines (e.g., Hyland, 1998; Peacock, 2006) and low use of boosters was detected in sciences (Hyland, 1998) as the authors persuade their readers with empirical findings. Similarly, Hyland (2011) argues that researchers in soft sciences and humanities use hedges twice as common than in hard sciences to eschew the direct involvement in the text. Hence, frequent use of boosters in the present study could also linked to the characteristics of the discipline from social sciences and humanities.

Beyond these issues, data analysis clearly showed that high use of modal suffixes indicating certainty paved way for the boosters to catch up with the hedges in regard to the frequency of use (see Graphic 2). Unlike English, in which the most common elements of metadiscourse in the category of boosters appeared as adverbs and quantifiers (Algı, 2012), Turkish language is classified as an agglutinating pro-drop language (Underhill, 1986). This gave rise to the high occurrences of boosters in this study as modal suffixes indicating certainty such as

-Dir “COP-3SG” (in nominal predicate), *-(A/I)r* “AOR-3SG”, *-mİş+Dir* “PRF-COP-3SG”, *-mİş+lAr-Dir* “PRF-3PL-COP”, *-Il-mİş+Dir* “PASS+PRF-COP-3SG”, *-mAktA+Dir* “IMPF+COP-3SG”, *(y)AcAK+Dir* “FUT-COP-3SG”. It could be asserted that highly agglutinative structure of Turkish language resulted in high employment of boosters in this corpus.

Thereby, it could be asserted that the use of various metadiscourse elements used in academic language is greatly influenced by the linguistic differences as also suggested in some previous studies, e.g., English-Hausa research articles (Uba, 2020), English-Brazilian Portuguese book reviews (Junqueira & Cortes, 2014), Persian-English master’s theses (Marandi, 2003). More clearly, the distinctiveness of languages is reflected on the use of various metadiscourse items. Considering that metadiscourse is a type of communicative act which supplies social interaction between the producer and receiver, the present study demonstrated that authors made specific use of hedges and boosters in accordance with the structure of their language in order to make themselves realized and interact with their readers. Nevertheless, it should be regarded that it is through the lenses of the socio-rhetorical framework that authors produce metadiscoursal devices in order to build social interaction with the readers. As Zarei and Mansoori (2011) stated, “metadiscourse is not an autonomous stylistic feature of language dissociated from the broader social texture of the language.”

Near frequency use of boosters and hedges in the present study disclosed the confidently uncertain attitude of authors while presenting their ideas in the conclusion sections. Furthermore, bearing in mind that hedges limit the information conveyed by the author (Hyland, 2005), it can be concluded that Turkish authors are deliberate in offering knowledge. Moreover, it could be said that the authors used metadiscourse markers in accordance with the expectations of a particular professional community in order their theses to be accepted within the academic environment, hence various lexicogrammatical realisations of metadiscourse units appear in the texts.

5. CONCLUSION

This study reveals the distributional patterns and various functions of hedges and boosters in Turkish MA theses’ conclusion sections. In

addition, the findings suggest and support some interesting points regarding the use of metadiscourse items in written texts. First of all, the various forms and functions of hedges and boosters in the conclusion sections of Turkish MA theses show that the authors benefit from these devices to make their theses' conclusion sections more persuasive and more reader-friendly, which explains that metadiscourse is an important characteristic feature of Turkish MA theses' conclusions. Therefore, this study confirmed the vital role that metadiscursive devices play in academic genres (Swales, 1990) and the idea of universality of metadiscourse (Bartholomae, 1986).

Frequent and various use of hedges and boosters also could be attributed to the functional and subjective nature of conclusion sections as the authors indicate their certainty with the use of amplifiers and modal suffixes and hedge their statements with mostly deploying pronouns and epistemic lexical verbs for plausible reasoning. Moreover, it could be asserted that highly agglutinative structure of Turkish language lead to appearance of the various functions of hedges and boosters such as the use of modal suffixes. As a consequence, the results of this study also point to the awareness about language-specific lexicogrammatical realisations of metadiscourse units. The other reason of frequent and various use of hedges and boosters may be because of the characteristics of soft disciplines. More specifically, the authors need more hedging and boosting devices in soft sciences to eschew the direct involvement in the text (Hyland, 2011) whereas the authors of academic texts in sciences scarcely need and use these devices as they mostly include empirical findings (e.g., Hyland, 1998; Peacock, 2006).

This study adopted both corpus-based approach and corpus-driven approach. More clearly, the researcher prepared the analytical framework for Turkish metadiscourse markers according to the previously identified Turkish metadiscoursal items and also uncovered new metadiscoursal items through the inductive analysis of the corpus. As listed in Appendix 1, Turkish metadiscoursal items uncovered in this study are expected to contribute to the future metadiscourse studies and corpus studies in Turkish language. This metadiscourse list also provides an important key for teachers of Turkish as a foreign language to support them in using metadiscourse more effectively, taking into consideration the language-specific aspects of metadiscourse use. That is, it could be concluded that the new search list which was created for the analysis of Turkish corpus grounding on Hyland's (2005a)

taxonomy is useful to identify and categorize the hedging and boosting resources in written language.

The results might not be generalized to other parts of MA theses, other disciplines or to all native Turkish-speaking academic authors' academic writing output. Accordingly, the manifestation of metadiscourse markers in MA theses need to be further investigated in order to suggest that the findings of this study form the conventionalised use of hedges and boosters in MA theses, namely to achieve more plausible and attestable insights about the fixedness of patterns of metadiscourse markers.

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List of abbreviations

AOR	Aorist
AUX	Auxiliary verb
COP	Copula
CMAM	The corpus of male authors' MA theses
CFAM	The corpus of female authors' MA theses
FUT	Future
HIS	History
IMPF	Imperfective
LL	Log-likelihood
MDMs	Metadiscourse markers
OBLG	Obligative

PASS	Passive
PF	Perfective
PHI	Philosophy
PL	Plural
PSB	Possibility
PSY	Psychology
SG	Singular
SOC	Sociology
TLL	Turkish Language and Literature

APPENDIX

HEDGES

(Epistemic adverbs)

Adeta “almost”

(A/I)rcAsInA/-mİşçAsInA “as if”

-(A/I)r gibi “like...”

Az “little”

Az çok “more or less”

Bazen “sometimes”

Belki/belki de “maybe”

Benzer bir şekilde “in a similar way”

Bir nebze “a bit”

Bir nevi “a kind of”

Büyük ihtimalle “most likely”

Bir o kadar “just as much”

Bir ölçüde “to some extent”

Büyük ölçüde “highly”

Çok “many”

Çok fazla ...-mAmAkta “not too many”

-DIğI gibi “just like...”

Dönem dönem “from time to time”

Elverdiği ölçüde “to the extent allowed”

Genellikle “generally”

..gibi görün- “to look like”

Hemen/hemen hemen “almost”

Kısmen “partially”

(sanki)... - (y)mİş gibi “as if”

-mİş gibi görün- “pretend to...”

Muhtemelen “probably”

Neredeyse “almost”

Sıkça “frequently”

Sık sık/sıklıkla “often”

Sürekli “continually”

Sürekli olarak “always”

Tıpkı ... -DIğI gibi “just like...”

Yaklaşık “approximately”

Yok denecek kadar az “hardly any”

(Epistemic adjectives)

-A açık “-able”

-A doğru “towards the...”

-A yakın “close to”

Bazı “some”

Belirsiz “uncertain”

Birçok “many”

Birkaç “a few”

Bir takım “some”

Çoğu “most”

Fazla (Diğerine oranla) “more (compared to the other)”

...gibi “like a...”

Herhangi bir “any”

İzafi “relative”

... kadar “as...as”

Kimi “some”

Muhtemel “likely”

Olanaklı “possible”

Pek çok “most”

Şu ya da bu “this of that”

Türlü/çeşitli “a variety of”

(Epistemic lexical verbs)

Algıla- “to perceive”

Belir- “to appear”

Belirt- “to state”

Benzerlik göster- “to show similarity”

Çıkarırsa- “to infer”

Düşün- “to think”

Fark et- “to notice”

...gibi algıla- “to perceive as”

Görün-/gözük- “to seem”

İddia et-/iddiasında bulun- “to claim”

İleri sür- “to assert”

İmkan tanı- “to allow”

İnan- “to believe”

İste- “to want”

Kanaatinde ol- “to consider”

-Maya çalış- “to try to...”

-miş görün- “to seem as if”

Mümkün ol- “to be possible”

Olanak sağla- “to enable”

Öngör- “to foresee”

Öner- “to suggest”

Savun- “to support”

San- “to suppose”

Varsay- “to assume”

Yadı- “to deny”

Yaklaşım/tavır sergile- “to display an attitude”

Yorumla- “to interpret”

The use of passives (e.g. *görül-* “to be seen”, *sayıl-* “to be regarded”, *gözlemlen-* “to be observed”)

(Pronouns)

Bazısı/bazıları “some”
Birçoğu “many”
Bir çoğunluğu “majority”
Biri/birisi “someone”
Bir kısmı/bölümü “some”
Bir şey/ler “something”
Çoğu “many”
Çoğunluğu “many”
Herbiri “each one”
Herhangibiri “anyone”
Birey/ler “individual/s”
İnsan “one”
Kişi “person”
Kimi/kimisi/kimileri “some”
Şey “thing”
Biz “we”, first person plural pronoun
Bize/bizi “us”, first person plural object pronoun
Bizim “our”, first person plural possessive pronoun
-(I)k, -(I)z, first person plural suffixes
-(I)miz, first person plural possessive suffix

(Epistemic modal suffixes)

-(A/I)r “AOR-3SG”
-Dir (in nominal sentence) “COP-3SG”
-(y)AcAk+Dir “FUT-COP-3SG”
-miş+Dir “PRF-COP-3SG.”
Ol+mAll “AUX-OBLG-3SG”
-mAll+Dir “OBLG-COP-3SG”
Ol+mAll+Dir “AUX-OBLG-COP-3SG”
-miş ol+mAll+Dir “PRF AUX-OBLG-COP-3SG”
-(I)yor ol+mAll+Dir “IMPF AUX-OBLG-COP-3SG”
-AcAk ol+mAll+Dir “FUT AUX-OBLG-COP-3SG”
-(y)Abil+-(A/I)r “PSB-AOR-3SG”
-(I)l/(I)n+Abil+-(A/I)r “PASS+PSB-AOR-3SG”
-(I)yor ol+Abil+Ir/lAr “IMPF AUX-PSB-AOR-3SG/3PL”
-miş ol+Abil+Ir/lAr “PF AUX-PSB-3SG/3PL”
-(I)yor ol+sun “IMPF AUX-COND-3SG”
-miş ol+mAll “PF AUX-OBLG-3SG”
Olsa gerek “must be”

BOOSTERS

(Universal Pronouns)

Bütünü “the whole”
Hepsi “all”
Herbiri “each one”
Her insan “every humanbeing”
Herikisi “both of them”

Herkes “everybody”
Her şey “everything”
Herüçü “each of three”
Hiçbiri “none”
Hiçbir şey “nothing”
Kimse “nobody”
Tamamı/tamamında “all/whole”
Tümü “all”

(Amplifiers)
Ağırlıklı olarak “mainly”
Asla “never”
Aslında “in fact”
Aşırı “extreme”
 ... -*In başında gel-* “to be the leading of”
Başta “first”
Başta ...olmak üzere “notably”
Baştan aşağı “top to bottom”
Baştan sona “entirely”
Binlerce “thousands”
Bol bol “a lot of”
Böylesine “so”
Bütünü “all”
Büyük bir (çelişki/etki) “a great (conflict/influence)”
Büyük oranda “substantially”
Büyük ölçüde “highly”
Çok “a lot”
Çokça “much”
Çok çok “very much”
Çok daha “much more”
Çok farklı biçimde “in a very different way”
Çok tutarsız “very inconsistent”
Çok önemli “very important”
Daha/daha fazla “more”
Daha da “even more”
En/en çok “the most”
Fazlaca “much”
Hayli/bir hayli “a lot”
Hep “always”
Her/herbir “each”
Her defasında “each time”
Her derecede “in every degree”
Her konuda “in all matters”
Her ne zaman...-sA “whenever”
Her türlü “all kinds”
Her yer “everywhere”
Her yönden “in every way”
Her zaman “anytime”
Hiç “none”
Hiçbir “no”
Hiçbir sebeple “for no reason”

Hiçbir suretle/şekilde “by no means”
Hiçbir zaman “never”
Kolaylıkla/kolayca “easily”
Oldukça “increasingly”
Onlarca “dozens”
Pek “very”
Sadece/ancak/yalnızca “only”
Son derece “extremely”
Tamamen “Completely”
Tam “full”
Tüm “all”
Yakından “closely”
Yüz binlerce “hundreds of thousands”
Yüzyillardır “for centuries”

(Emphatics)
Açık (bir) şekilde “clearly”
Açıkça “clearly”
...apaçıktır “it is obvious that”
...aşıkardır “It is obvious that...”
Bariz “obvious”
Belli/açık “clear”
Bile “even”
Bilhassa “especially”
Bul- “to find”
(Tanrıları) dahi (aşan) “even” (going beyond Gods)
Elbette “certainly”
Er ya da geç “soon or later”
Gerçekten “really”
Görül- “to be seen”
Göster- “to show”
Gözlen- “to be observed”
Halen “currently”
Hangi durumda bulunursa bulunsun “in any case”
Hatta “even”
Hiç kuşkusuz “no doubt”
İstisnasız bir şekilde “unexceptionally”
Kaçınılmaz olarak “inevitably”
Kanıt- “to prove”
Kesin “definite”
Kesinleş- “to become definite”
Kesinlikle “definitely”
Kesinlikle ama kesinlikle “definitely but definitely”
Kesin olarak “definitely”
Kuşkusuz “no doubt”
...muhakkaktır “it is surely that”
Net/net bir şekilde “clear/clearly”
Olsun olmasın “whether or not”
Ortada ol- (açık) “to be obvious”
Ortaya çık- “to show up”
Ortaya kon- “to be revealed”

Ortaya koy- “to reveal”
Özellikle “especially”
Sapta- “to detect”
Sımsıkı “tightly”
Sınırsız olarak “unlimitedly”
Sonucuna ulaş- “to conclude”
Suretiyle “by means of”
Şüphesiz “no doubt”
Tek başına “all by oneself”
Temelde “basically”
Tespit et- “to identify”
Tek tek “one by one”
Tek (yolu) “the only” (way)

(Modal suffixes indicating certainty)
-Dir “COP-3SG” (in nominal predicate)
-(A/I)r “AOR-3SG”
-miş+Dir “PRF-COP-3SG”
-miş+lar-Dir “PRF-3PL-COP”
-il-miş+Dir “PASS+PRF-COP-3SG”
-mAktA+Dir “IMPF+COP-3SG”
-(y)AcAK+Dir “FUT-COP-3SG”