



Exploring Metadiscourse in Master's Dissertation Abstracts: Cultural and Linguistic Variations across Postgraduate Writers

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Abstract

This study investigates metadiscourse in the dissertation abstracts written by Native Speakers of Turkish (NST), Turkish Speakers of English (TSE) and Native Speakers of English (NSE) in the Social Sciences to determine how they make use of metadiscourse devices. It attempts to determine whether student writers from a shared cultural background (Turkish) tend to use similar rhetorical features to those of their mother tongue or harmonise themselves with the language (English) in which they are writing. Metadiscourse as a rhetorical device for the effective use of language facilitates writers in guiding their readers, conveying their ideas, establishing and determining the social distance of the reader-writer relationship, and creating an involved style of writer persona or a more remote stance. In that sense, *interactive* resources employed by writers help readers to find the information needed and interactional resources convey to readers the personality of the writers and their assertions. In addition, using 'more personal' resources is a way of keeping readers more intentionally within the text to interpret what is proposed by the writers personally and to judge them. The overall aim of the study is to compare and contrast 90 abstracts of dissertations produced by native Turkish speakers (30), native English speakers (30) and Turkish speakers of English (30) in the Social Sciences and to consider how writing in English (L2) deviates from writing in Turkish (L1) and becomes closer to the target language in terms of the metadiscourse elements, that is, *interactive* resources (transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses) and *interactional* resources (hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions).¹

Keywords: metadiscourse, written academic discourse, postgraduate student writing, contrastive rhetoric, learner corpus

1. Introduction

The importance of abstracts in academic texts has been receiving increasing attention. Thus, the popularity of abstract investigations across disciplines or cultures reveals the significant status of the abstract as a well-established genre in the negotiation of knowledge through academic texts. It does help scholars to exchange essential parts of their work by means of a combination of community-based practices. In other words, the value and function attached by writers to their abstracts are quite crucial in addressing their research to scholars and readers who are from the same community and who are interested in the topic; abstracts clearly stand out as a consequence of the rhetorical functions of briefly introducing what has been done in the research and what the striking points are.

As Gillaerts and Van de Velde (2010) have commented, one of the most important roles of the abstract, that of revealing interaction, is a recently determined genre. That function of the abstract in highlighting interaction between a writer and a particular group of people is mostly dependent on a range of rhetorical strategies and discourse conventions of that specific community. The rhetorical variations across cultures, languages or disciplines are acquired by novice researchers in any specific community by imitating experienced and reputable researchers well-known as a result of successful publications in their particular discourse community (Day, 1988 as cited in Pedro Martin, 2003). Most of the investigations carried out in order to have a deeper understanding of the prominent nature of abstracts have examined research article (RA) abstracts across/within disciplines focusing on the function of abstracts in 'selling' the articles (for example, Salager-Myer, 1992; Hyland, 2000;



Pedro Martin, 2003; Gillaerts & Van de Velde, 2010). However, little attention has been given to the forthcoming scholar candidates of academic communities. That is, postgraduate students taking their first steps into academia after carrying out particular kinds of research in their specific areas to transmit their knowledge by contributing to the existing literature. This paper is therefore an attempt to look at the abstracts of postgraduate students' masters dissertations in order to examine the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural variations with a special focus on making a comparison of interpersonal relations within the abstracts of their final work. The reason why interpersonal relations are investigated throughout this paper is because of the nature and considerable impact of subjective exchange and organisation of knowledge in academic texts, and whether these elements vary within different groups of writers in the same discipline. As a point of departure, I have taken Hyland and Tse's (2004) framework on metadiscourse in which they differentiated two sub-categories of the concept of metadiscourse by following Thompson (2001): *interactive* and *interactional* metadiscourse. The difference between these sub-categories is clearly demonstrated in their work. The former involves looking at the aspects of writers' guidance for the intended audiences with a set of language items within the discourse produced, whereas the latter, *interactional* metadiscourse allows writers either to open a space for expressing their stance clearly by considering readers' expectations or to build a relationship with target audiences and attract their attention.

Metadiscourse has been portrayed by a range of researchers since the term was coined by Harris in 1959 (as cited in Beauvais, 1989), with a common view of the features of creating and emphasising writer-reader interaction within the discourse. Metadiscourse has been regarded as the concept of bringing many sets of different language devices into text and exploiting them for the sake of the explicit organisation of successful texts, reader engagement, and signalling attitudes towards the readers and the research itself. The robust model offered by Hyland and Tse (2004) reassessed the notion of metadiscourse and highlighted a range of key principles by analysing postgraduate students' texts. Such a well-rounded model with clear-cut distinctions is in line with the purpose of the current study as two different languages and cultures will be investigated using three different sample groups (native speakers of Turkish: NST; Turkish speakers of English: TSE; and native speakers of English: NSE).

This study can make a contribution to the line of investigations of crucial and rhetorical strategies of Anglophone and non-Anglophone scholars as it looks at three different groups of writers: NST, TSE and NSE. Comparisons of Anglophone contexts with others (such as Finnish by Mauranen, 1993; Bulgarian by Vassilieva, 2001; Norwegian by Blagojevic, 2004) help users of any of those languages to comprehend cultural or linguistic differences within different contexts. Most importantly, non-native writers of English would definitely benefit from such studies to pinpoint the ways in which Anglophone discourse goals and conventions are accomplished through the text. As non-native writers of English mostly follow the rhetorical and textual conventions of their own cultures and languages in constructing knowledge, this might result in inappropriate use of linguistic features in terms of the English discourse expectations. Alternatively, translation without paying much/enough attention to the discourse conventions of target language (English) would appear to be used by those non-English speaking writers and to cause some additional problems in terms of expressing themselves in the eyes of scholars who have become accustomed to finding identical strategies and linguistic resources in texts within their English-medium discourse community.

Hyland (2005) suggested that "all metadiscourse is interpersonal in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs and that it provides writers with an armoury of rhetorical appeals to achieve this" (p.41). From this point of view, the main aim of the research is to investigate descriptively whether students coming from the same cultural background (Turkish) or having the same mode of writing (English) follow the same, closer or totally different rhetorical strategies in their writings in the social sciences to accomplish interpersonal relations in their dissertation abstracts. In other words, this contrastive study will consider the non-native students' adaptation of themselves (Turkish) into the target language (English) and then tracing what their culturally identical peers (native Turkish) do when producing an interpersonal piece of work at the beginning of their dissertations. Therefore, the unit analysis of this corpus-based investigation will be particular linguistic features and strategies employed in order to produce a text which is as reader-friendly and comprehensible as possible with a focus on interpersonal relations. As Connor (1996) has argued, being unaware of cross-cultural differences may cause non-native speakers of English (Turkish writers, in this case) to be unsuccessful in achieving recognition of their particular work in the global community because English is known to be extensively based on the reader's expectation that it is a 'writer-responsible language' (Hinds, 1987). The paper also discusses potential factors which could be related to the prominent similarities or differences across the groups included in the present study.



2. Corpus, Methodology and Procedures

Ninety randomly selected and comparable master's dissertation abstracts in the social sciences (30 per group) were carefully examined quantitatively using WordSmith Tools (5.0). The corpus was in total 25,155 words. However, the variation of the length of the texts in sub-corpora was significant (NST: 9,290; TSE: 8,245; NSE: 7,620). It is worth noting that the inclusion of native Turkish student writers in the present study added highly significant value to the comparison between Turkish speakers of English writers and native speakers of English writers. The reason behind this was to look at and explain the potential traces (if there were any) that Turkish speakers of English followed their culturally identical peers in producing their rhetorically noteworthy piece of work. The quantitative nature of this kind of investigation enables the results to be compared with studies previously carried out and reported in the literature. The procedure included running that particular piece of software individually for each group, and then instances were evaluated in their specific contexts. Any instance confirming and displaying any functions of metadiscourse according to Hyland and Tse's (2004) framework was included; otherwise it was not counted as a linguistic resource contributing to a writer's expression of interpersonal resources. Some of the linguistic resources in both Turkish and English were found to have more than one meaning and the contexts revealed whether they had metadiscourse functions. For instance, the auxiliary 'can' has been treated as associated with the notion of hedging when it included epistemic realisation of presenting some information and expressing tentativeness. However, some of the cases exhibited 'can' as a way of expressing ability, in which a non-epistemic sense is conveyed to the reader as the example from the TSE sub-corpus below illustrates:

- (1). '[t]eachers can construct knowledge through interaction and collaboration with teacher educators, and colleagues.'

Instead of marking the knowledge or information as less than certain, similar to the use of *might*, the example clearly demonstrates that the auxiliary *can* within this context is easily interpreted as not associated with an observation about carrying an epistemic nature.

Following Hyland's (2005) list of potential metadiscourse resources to identify some cases of metadiscourse, I integrated a *substitution test* for the resources not found in his list but having the potential of being employed for the purpose of achieving a specific kind of interpersonal relation with the texts. To do this, provisional occurrences (new resources) were analysed within the contexts by substituting linguistic resources with lexically identical examples in Hyland's list. When similar achievements and interpretations were obtained, the provisional items were added to the search list in the corpus and an additional search for those specific words was carried out within the corpus. This was because the concept of metadiscourse confirms the idea that an open-ended set of feasible linguistic items are used to achieve different functions of metadiscoursal expressions. Therefore, a text-driven nature of research was also followed within the present study in order to find new ways of achieving interpersonal relations.

The same procedure was applied to the sub-corpus of native speakers of Turkish (NST). Nevertheless, as there is not much information about metadiscourse in the Turkish language, the criteria used to identify metadiscoursal uses in NST were primarily based on the clear-cut explanations of Hyland and Tse (2004) for the subcategories of their framework, and on translated versions of particular resources (such as 'firstly' – *ilk olarak*, 'in general' – *genelde* and so on) found in Turkish texts as well. The *substitution test* and text-driven methodology for the provisional resources in Turkish texts were more fruitful as there were many linguistic items with approximately the same meaning in Turkish used by the student writers in their dissertations to accomplish interaction with their intended audience.

The design of the corpus to determine the extent to which interpersonal relations are achieved by three different groups of writers was principally based upon drawing attention to certain issues within the texts of representative writers of the three groups. However, the diversity among the selected groups of writers was also crucial in terms of revealing particular use of patterns to represent the general tendency specific to each context studied. As the distribution of the samples was not identical among the three groups of writers, non-parametric tests were run to ascertain the significance level of the differences. First, an ANOVA was used in order to measure the statistical significance between how commonly one sort of metadiscoursal item occurred within one of the sub-corpora relative to its equivalent frequency in the other sub-corpora. According to Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998), it is practical to use that statistical test to compare variance across more than two groups. Thus, due to the number of groups included, ANOVA was used to compare the extent of variations both between groups and within groups.



3. Results

3.1. Frequency of Metadiscourse

Before looking at the individual groups of writers and different metadiscourse resources, I would like to draw attention to the lengths of the abstracts included in the study. Although the same number of dissertation abstracts was included for each group, it was found that the Turkish (L1) writers tended to produce longer abstracts in comparison with the Turkish

Table 1. The size of sub-corpora and metadiscourse items

<i>Sub-Corpus</i>	<i>Total Number of Words</i>	<i>Total number of metadiscourse</i>
NST	9,690	248 items
TSE	8,245	286 items
NSE	7,620	392 items

writers of English and the native writers of English. The mean scores of the total number of words used in the abstracts differed significantly. It is obvious that the deviation in the mean scores of the Turkish native writers expresses the inconsistency of writers within the sub-corpus on the length of their abstracts, which ranged from 85 words to 825 words (*Mean: 322.83; SD: 132.933*). In contrast, both the TSE (range from 141 to 434 words; *Mean: 278.47; SD: 78.911*) and the NSE (from 116 to 486 words; *Mean: 255.60; SD: 90.120*) writers seemed more consistent with the length of their abstracts, since the standard deviation was substantially smaller than the NST.

As the number of words in the three sub-corpora was not equal (*see* Table 1), the occurrences were equalised (per 1000 words) for the subcategories of metadiscourse in order to enable a direct comparison of frequencies. The mean frequency of all metadiscourse resources was 26.7 in NST, 34.7 in TSE, and 51.4 in NSE. As can be clearly seen from Table 2 (for *interactive* and *interactional* items), NSE writers employed the highest number of metadiscourse resources in their abstracts. Although NST writers produced longer abstracts compared with TSE and NSE writers, as Table 1 displays, they made use of fairly low amounts of metadiscoursal items in their writing.

The three groups of writers employed more *interactional* resources than *interactive* resources in their texts. Specifically, in terms of the individual analyses of writer groups, it was found that TSE used 20% more *interactional* resources whereas NST and NSE writers employed approximately 66% more *interactional* resources than *interactive* ones.

However, comparison between the three sub-corpora shows that NSE writers employed around 70% more *interactional* resources (with 32.2 occurrences per 1000 words) than TSE, and twice what native Turkish writers used in their abstracts per 1000 words. The variation between the use of *hedges* and *boosters* by writers was

Table 2. Mean frequency for Interactive and Interactional Metadiscourse (per 1000 words)

<i>Category</i>	<i>NST</i>	<i>TSE</i>	<i>NSE</i>
<i>Interactive Metadiscourse</i>			
Transitions	4.3	8	10.4
Frame Markers (FM)	1.6	2.8	3.9
Endophoric Markers (EnM)	1.4	0.4	1.3
Evidentials	0.6	2.8	1.7
Code Glosses (CG)	2	1.8	2.1
Totals	9.9	15.8	19.4
<i>Interactional Metadiscourse</i>			
Hedges	5	8.4	13.3
Boosters	8.3	4.5	6.2
Attitude Markers (AM)	2.3	3.6	6.2
Engagement Markers (EM)	0.6	0.6	2
Self-Mentions (SM)	0.5	1.8	4.5
Totals	16.7	18.9	32.2



quite contradictory. As Table 2 displays, except for the NST writers, writers preferred employing approximately half as many *hedges* as *boosters* whereas native Turkish writers prioritised the use of *boosters* (66% more) over *hedges*.

In terms of *interactive* resources found in the corpus of the study, the normalised frequencies per 1000 words demonstrate wide differences across the writer groups. The amount of *interactive* resources which Turkish native writers employed (9.9 times per 1000 words) was almost half of the amount which native writers of English used (19.4). The sharpest variation in individual *interactive* resources found in the whole corpus was between the equalised frequencies of *transitions* used by Turkish (L1) and English (L1) writers. The least salient *interactive* resource in the whole corpus was *endophoric markers*. In the TSE sub-corpus, there were hardly any *endophoric markers* except for a few occurrences (0.4 times per 1000 words).

The next section will describe whether the differences found in the comparison between the sub-corpora are statistically significant or not, and the level of significance across groups based on the ANOVA tests.

3.2. Statistical Analysis of Metadiscourse use by the Student Writers

After counting the frequencies of *interactive* and *interactional* metadiscourse resources within the three sub-corpora of Turkish (L1) and English (L1 and L2) student writers, normality tests were applied to ascertain the distribution of the student writers' use of those items and to determine whether parametric or non-parametric tests would be appropriate for statistical analysis. The homogeneity of variances demonstrated that the distribution was normal except one group. As the complete sets of resources were not found in some of the texts within just one of the groups (NST) for *interactional resources*, this group seemed to have a non-normal distribution according to the Shapiro-Wilk test (see Appendix A). Nevertheless, a further visual analysis with Q-Q plots and checking the values for *skewness* (as suggested by Field, 2009) results of that specific violating group showed that the distribution is reasonably normal. This was also supplemented by satisfying normality using the Central Limit Theorem (CLT). After finding Gaussian normality using the CLT, ANOVA was, therefore, selected to compare the differences across sub-corpora as the data is normally distributed. The small deviation of NST from normal distribution might have very little effect because analysis of variance is known to be robust against such small deviations (Schminder, Ziegler, Danay, Beyer and Buhner, 2010) since equal numbers of samples were included.

Table 3 clearly shows that there was not a statistically significant difference for the overall use of *interactive resources* among the three different writer groups (see Appendix B). However, an individual comparison of dependent variables of *interactive* metadiscourse categories revealed that the student writers differed significantly in the use of *transitions*.

As ANOVA is not itself enough to explain which groups caused this significant difference, one of the most flexible *post hoc* methods, Bonferroni, was run to comprehend the stem of the significance. According to the *post hoc* test, it was found that the difference between Turkish L1 writers' and native English writers' use of *transitions* was statistically significant whereas the difference between the use of *transitions* by TSE and the other groups was not statistically significant (see Appendix C for the post hoc of transitions). As stated in the

Table 3. ANOVA test results for interactive and interactional metadiscourse across groups

<i>Category</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Interactive MD</i>	2	49.267	24.633	2.343	.102
Transitions	2	24.067	12.033	3.983	.022*
Frame Markers	2	3.756	1.778	1.230	.297
Endophoric Markers	2	1.756	0.778	0.880	.418
Evidentials	2	4.867	2.433	1.634	.201
Code Glosses	2	.289	.144	.157	.855
<i>Interactional MD</i>	2	174.200	87.100	5.098	.008*
Hedges	2	51.536	25.678	4.434	.015*
Boosters	2	32.089	16.044	3.342	.040*
Attitude Markers	2	11.622	5.811	4.088	.020*
Engagement Markers	2	1.622	.811	1.745	.181
Self-Mentions	2	15.556	7.778	4.234	.018*

* *The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.*



previous section, the sharpest variation found in the comparison between sub-categories of *interactive resources* was in the use of *transitions*, which is now confirmed by both the ANOVA and Bonferroni tests as statistically significant.

In contrast to *interactive metadiscourse*, it is clearly seen from Table 3 that there is a statistically significant difference in the use of overall *interactional metadiscourse* across groups. In other words, the likelihood of the observed differences (as a result of the analysis using WordSmith Tools 5.0) between the three sub-corpora is not due to chance when the pre-determined level of significance ($P < .05$) is considered. It is clear that the significance of the difference between the groups is explained by the probability level ($P = .008$) of the three groups in terms of the use of overall *interactional metadiscourse*, which is smaller than alpha.

The individual statistical analysis performed in the sub-categories of *interactional metadiscourse* demonstrated that the use of all sub-categories except *engagement markers* differed at a significant level. Although *engagement markers* were used more frequently by NSE writers in their abstracts (two instances per 1000 words), from a statistical point of view, no significant difference was found across the sub-corpora. The statistical evidence of the difference in the use of *attitude markers* (.040) was also at a reasonable significance level (although not as significant as *hedges*, *boosters* or *self-mentions*) as Turkish L1 writers and Turkish writers of English employed that *attitude markers* at a close frequency level (see Table 2). The result of a Bonferroni multiple comparison test of *attitude markers* (see Appendix D) shows that attitude resources were employed by NST and TSE writers almost identically (.997) as the value is bigger than alpha (.05) and close to 1.000.

3.3. Examples from the Corpus

Although the three different writer profiles employed different rhetorical strategies to attract their readers' attention and guide them through their texts in a way in which they could effectively express their stance, a range of similarities between NST, TSE and NSE were also found. This is probably due to the generic nature of abstract writing, for instance, introducing the topic and mentioning the methods with some tentative results. Some examples from the actual corpus will illustrate such similarities in addition to clear-cut differences across the writer groups.

3.3.1. Interactive Resources in Abstracts

NSE writers employed more frequent organisational features for interaction in their abstracts compared with Turkish writers. It was found that NSE texts included the method of occupying the research niche after arguing important elements of information to express centrality and to announce the goal(s) of the research by employing different *interactive resources*. Nevertheless, while doing so, the writers greatly illustrated the relations between sentences or clauses (such as adding new information, contrast, cause and effect, and so on.) with *transitions*, which had statistically significant differences across the sub-corpora as stated in the previous section. The example below from the NSE sub-corpus clearly shows the maintenance of displaying interpersonal relations by the way explained above (Claiming Centrality – Marking a change in the discourse – Announcing Goal(s)):

(2). 'The massacres at My Lai in Vietnam and El Mozote in El Salvador came to be regarded by many as the defining actions of those wars. These tragedies, **however**, were not isolated examples, **and** civilians in each war often bore the brunt of military operations designed to defeat the leftist insurgencies that had erupted in these countries. **This thesis will examine** why soldiers committed such war crimes in Vietnam and El Salvador.'

The writer holds the ground for introducing the aim of the whole study by talking about the tragedies in Vietnam and El Salvador, and by showing a gap to the intended audience with the help of a concessive form ('however') and building new information after that contrast with an additive form ('and'). After clearly indicating what the research will be looking at, the writer announces the goal of the discourse with a *frame marker* ('This thesis will examine').

In contrast to NSE, Turkish writers (writing in both Turkish and English) mostly started their abstracts with apparent *frame markers* without giving any background information about the topic or discussing key issues briefly to create a research niche. The examples below display how similarly Turkish and English texts written by Turkish writers were organised.

(3). **Bu araştırmada**, Sosyal Bilgiler dersinde yapılandırmacı yaklaşımın yaratıcı düşünme becerisi desteklenerek uygulanan eğitimin, öğrencilerde akademik başarıyı, becerileri, cinsiyet değişkeni içinde başarılarının artıp artmadığı **ve** sosyal bilgiler dersine yönelik tutumları üzerinde etkisi olup olmadığı araştırılmıştır. Araştırmada nitel ve nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırma Gündoğdu Nene Hatun ilköğretim okulunun 6/Ave 6/B sınıfı



öğrencileri ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya 36 deney 33 kontrol grubundan olmak üzere toplam 69 öğrenci katılmıştır...'

(4). 'The present study targets at providing efficient data on the use of attentional resources through exploring the effects of cognitive task complexity on written output. Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis (2001a) and Skehan and Foster's Limited Attentional Capacity Model (2001) are tested to see which one is a better predictor of academic writing performance. In this study, 40 intermediate level preparatory learners of English who received Basic English classes during the 2009-2010 academic year at Hacettepe University were under investigation ...'

As can clearly be seen, the way in which the Turkish writers introduced their whole research to the intended audience is quite similar from an organisational perspective: starting with a *frame marker* and then moving on to the methodology without making the pragmatic connections between propositions as explicit as NSE writers did. In other words, instead of making their texts more interpretively guide their readers, Turkish writers preferred to describe some important elements of the whole dissertation (commonly methodology including participants, and methods of investigation) by using less *interactive metadiscourse* features. However, it is worth noting again that the difference (except for *transitions*) was not at a significant level according to the ANOVA results.

3.3.2. Interactional Resources in Abstracts

The ways in which the student writers made their textual voices explicit for their intended audiences show a great deal of statistically significant difference. However, the use of *engagement markers* across sub-corpora did not show that significance level no matter how frequently native English writers made use of such resources (almost three times more than Turkish writers) within their community-recognizable and rhetorically forceful piece of work. NSE writers employed more *interactional* metadiscourse resources compared with both NST and TSE writers. The frequency was approximately twice that used by NST writers in their texts whereas Turkish speakers of English employed interactional category of metadiscourse in between the frequencies of NST and NSE writers, with 18.9 items per 1000 words. Nevertheless, the pair-wise comparison of the Bonferroni *post hoc* test (see Appendix E) across the writer groups revealed that the difference between Turkish writers (L1) and Turkish writers of English is statistically insignificant. Thus, it is clear that the significance stemmed from the *interactional metadiscourse* use of native speakers of English in their abstracts. NSE writers mostly grounded their propositions within a lower degree of subjective certainty with high use of *hedges*; NST writers, in contrast, did not open a dialogue with their intended audience to express a degree of caution as often as NSE writers did, but amplified their degree of certainty with the higher use of *boosters*.

How NST, TSE and NSE writers presented their degree of confidence towards the propositions which they were introducing to their intended audiences can be illustrated by the following examples from (5) to (10) with *hedges* and *boosters* respectively.

(5) Yalnızca Sayı Öbeği değil, sayıların ve niceleyicilerin *Niceleyici Öbeği* (NÖ), '*tane, adet, salkım*' vb. gibi ölçü- miktar- sayı belirten birimlerin de *Ölçüm Öbeği* (ÖÖ) işlevsel ulamını oluşturduğu **ileri sürülmektedir**. (NST)

(6) Based on the findings of the study, **it could be said** that there are a number of important changes that need to be made related to the working conditions, status and education of adult educators. (TSE)

(7) This **suggests** further studies, in which varying the model, and/or use of more sophisticated optimisation methods, **may** yet produce synthesis that is perceived as more natural for any input text. (NSE)

The three groups of writers with the typical examples given above represented the notion of hedging to suggest ideas tentatively based on the findings of their entire research. However, it should be remembered that such occurrences were more frequently employed in NSE texts (13.3 times per 1000 words) compared with Turkish writers' texts. Supporting this, in contrast, native speakers of Turkish preferred describing and reporting what their research had come up with by using a less tentative approach (66% more *boosters* than *hedges*).

(8) Bu fikirler çerçevesinde aksaklıkların ortaya çıkarılması ve yeni nesil teknolojilerin yardımıyla bu aksaklıkların giderilmesi ile katılımcı tatmininde ve portföyünde gelişmeler **yaşanacağı kesindir**. (NST)



(9) The study results **demonstrated** that international students who have low acculturative stress, low perceived cultural distance and high use of positive coping skills were better adjusted to college. (TSE)

(10) **Without doubt**, the profile of the modern translator is undergoing a significant change, sidelining individuals who are not able or willing to adapt. (NSE)

The frequency of the explicit markers indicating the affective of writers towards their propositions or readers varied across sub-corpora significantly. Such expressions were far more frequently employed in English abstracts by TSE and NSE writers. The occurrences of *attitude markers* included a range of adjectives as illustrated in (11) and (13) and sentence adverbs (12).

(11) Bu ihtiyaçların doğru bir şekilde karşılanabilmesi için her yaş dönemine ait gelişim özelliklerin bilinmesi ve ona göre hareket edilmesi çok **önemlidir**. (NST)

(12) **Hopefully**, this study will help English teachers to plan their lessons and to define their teaching philosophies according to student interests. (TSE)

(13) It would also be **interesting** to make a long-term study to see if the sustainable messages have any lasting effect on the students after 10 years and 20 years as they become adults with the associated responsibilities. (NSE)

Although the results of the ANOVA tests revealed that the difference between the writers in terms of *engagement markers* was not at a significant level, the qualitative analysis demonstrated that the Turkish writers tended to involve their readers by equating themselves with their intended audience (the inclusive *we*) but not with a direct personal pronoun (*you*) to them, as in the example (16) from the native speakers of English texts.

(14) **Bizim** yapmamız gereken bu tür fırsatlar elde etmektir. (NST)

(15) The resulting framework of the study gave **us** clues about the student attitudes against techniques and frequency of teachers' usage. (TSE)

(16) I tend to think of myself as bodily. Probably, so do **you**. (NSE)

It is interesting to note that although the dissertations were all written by single authors, tokens of the exclusive *we* were found in both the NST and NSE sub-corpora. However, the choice of native Turkish writers in referring to themselves as the researchers/writers of their research was quite the opposite of the other writers. There were only five instances of *self-mentions* in the NST texts, all of which were based on the exclusive *we* (17).

(17) Post modernizmin romana ne derecede uygulanabildiği gibi konularda birtakim çıkarımlarda **bulunduk**. (NST)

(18) Qualitative data analysed by coding system were collected from the reflection journal of the subject and the interviews conducted by **the researcher** with the subject. (TSE)

(19) **My** central aim is to highlight the power of animals to make profound and far-reaching changes in society, and specifically in the British metropolis. (NSE)

In contrast, TSE and NSE writers mostly took on the responsibility as researchers by employing first person singular pronouns (19) to a greater extent than the exclusive 'we' or other expressions such as 'the writer' or 'the researcher' (18).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

It is evident that the three groups of writers made use of both *interactive* and *interactional* metadiscourse with particular community-based strategies. Similarities have been found in the abstracts of these writers based on the fact that the total number of *interactional* metadiscourse items was more than that of *interactive* resources for each group. In other words, all the writers employed more *interactional metadiscourse* to clearly express their stances rather than *interactive resources*. Individual analyses of sub-categories also revealed that *transitions* were the most common interactive subcategory used across the sub-corpora. The other strategies varied (see Table 2) in terms of the frequencies. However, as the aim of this current research is to determine whether the use of metadiscourse resources differed across groups, namely native Turkish writers, Turkish writers of English, and native writers of English, I shall look at community-based diversity as well as the traces in the texts of TSE from Turkish and English speaking peers.

The results based on the three-way comparisons between the groups demonstrated that NSE texts included more *interactive* and *interactional* metadiscourse. That is to say, English-speaking writers produced their abstracts with more interaction and guidance compared with Turkish writers. Interestingly, Turkish writers of English



stood between native Turkish and native English writers in terms of the total number of *interactive* and *interactional* metadiscourse resources. This indicates that the level of interaction and guidance with which TSE writers organised their texts and expressed their stance in addition to using strategies to engage their readers was not as high as NSE or as low as TSE. It is possible to argue that the TSE produced their abstracts using a mixture of their cultural tendencies and an adaptation of themselves to the target language conventions. For instance, there was not even one instance of the first person singular pronoun in the Turkish texts, but on the other hand, native English writers made their authorial presence explicit with the employment of 'I' in their abstracts, as did TSE. Other studies have also demonstrated that Turkish writers preferred a style in which they downplayed their personal and authorial roles in the discussion sections of their MA dissertations (Akbas, 2011a) and in their introduction and conclusion sections (Akbas, 2011b). In contrast, Turkish writers of English had the tendency, as this study reveals, towards establishing their authorial self by using a quite different rhetorical stance close to NSE writers. The reason for this could be due to the literature (in English) which TSE writers had read so far; the more they see such occurrences, the more they get used to including them in their target language writing. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the harmonisation of Turkish writers themselves with the target language, English, is not yet at a significant level according to pair-wise comparison of Turkish writers using the Bonferroni test (see Appendix F), and this may be an indication that they are still following the cultural tendency of Turkish academic prose.

As stated by Hyland (2005), Anglo-American academic English has a tendency towards making organisation patterns and purposes more explicit. The findings of my research also support the idea that English-speaking writers pay more attention to guidance within the text in order to produce a reader-friendly text. In this sense, the numbers of sentence connectors ('such as', 'however', 'therefore' and so on) used by NSE and TSE writers are basically more than twice the numbers used by native Turkish writers (see Table 2 for *transitions*). It could therefore be argued that by signalling the pragmatic connection between sentences, English-speaking writers make their texts more coherent as a result of these connections between propositions compared with Turkish texts with greater numbers of isolated sentences.

Another tendency of Anglo-American writing based on many studies (as cited in Hyland, 2005) is the tentativeness and cautiousness displayed by writers from that community. As can be clearly seen from the frequencies of *hedges* in Table 2, native speakers of English preferred that style of writing in their abstracts whereas Turkish writers did not follow such conventions, and made use of more *boosters* to introduce their claims with a more confident manner. From a wider perspective in terms of *interactional metadiscourse* resources, it is easily noticeable that native English writers offer more credibility to represent themselves and their research within their abstracts by building solidarity with their intended audience, and elaborating a platform for alternative voices/opinions to be interpreted from the propositions and evaluated material. Conversely, native Turkish writers employed such strategic metadiscoursal features far less frequently to promote their research. For example, by minimizing their involvement in the discourses by not making use of *self-mentions*, except for a few exclusive *we* items, I suggest that the Turkish L1 student writers did not want to express their authorial identity as the owners of claims as explicitly as English writers in favour of being objective. Instead, many other ways of expressing such claims were employed, such as using the passive voice or impersonal forms to represent their identity implicitly. The reason why they enhanced their presence with the employment of the exclusive *we* with a particular suffix (*bulunduk*, *şekillendirdik*, *ortaya koyduk*) at some points could be related to the potential inclusion of their supervisors in recognition of their help and guidance during the time when the research was being carried out. By doing this, they are simply implying the presence of their supervisors and strengthening their own stance with the established presence of experienced researchers. In other words, as Hyland (2001) emphasised, reducing personal intrusion is a matter of a writer's choice, and Turkish students minimised that to a very low level in order to convey their authorial identity behind their personal voices implicitly.

The analysis also shows that the native Turkish students offered their potential intended audience their personal voices by displaying their complete commitment within their propositions. The number of *boosters* used by NST writers is almost half of the *interactional* resources used by that group in their abstracts. Hinkel (2002) stated that some rhetorical conventions of different languages other than English mean that it could be quite normal to express a higher degree of certainty within their academic community as this can be a style of persuading the intended audience effectively. Thus, the way in which the Turkish students intensified their degree of confidence over the meanings might be explained by this argument. However, this has not been confirmed in the texts of the Turkish speakers of English. They employed that kind of resource in a similar way to the NSE writers. This means the student writers who produced texts in English seemed more self-aware compared with Turkish L1



writers. Most of the points by which the English writing students (TSE and NSE) emphasised the truth of their propositions were about the findings that their research revealed, therefore the TSE and NSE student writers felt sufficient confidence to strengthen such values and claims based on their actual findings.

Turning back to the one of the main aims of this research paper, this paper investigated whether culturally identical students (Turkish L1 and Turkish writers of English) and students producing the same language (English) follow similar or different rhetorical strategies in their abstracts to contribute to the literature with their research. According to the findings based on how Turkish speakers of English employed *interactive* and *interactional* metadiscourse resources – they are the joint members of the groups specified above (culture vs. language) – it could be argued that, as cross-cultural comparison has highlighted, Turkish writers of English followed similar rhetorical strategies to those used by the native speakers of English, producing a more cautious and engaging level of interaction even though the levels are all higher in the NSE texts.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Tests of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Interactive	Turkish	.212	30	.001	.823	30	.000
	Turkish of English	.180	30	.015	.932	30	.055
	English	.172	30	.024	.846	30	.001
Interactional	Turkish	.124	30	.200	.921	30	.028
	Turkish of English	.165	30	.037	.881	30	.003
	English	.189	30	.008	.917	30	.022

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Appendix B

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Interactive

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	49.267 ^a	2	24.633	2.343	.102
Intercept	1512.900	1	1512.900	143.876	.000
Group	49.267	2	24.633	2.343	.102
Error	914.833	87	10.515		
Total	2477.000	90			
Corrected Total	964.100	89			

a. R Squared = .051 (Adjusted R Squared = .029)



Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Interactive

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^a	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^a	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Turkish	Turkish of English	-1.233	.837	.433	-3.277	.811
	English	-1.767	.837	.113	-3.811	.277
Turkish of English	Turkish	1.233	.837	.433	-.811	3.277
	English	-.533	.837	1.000	-2.577	1.511
English	Turkish	1.767	.837	.113	-.277	3.811
	Turkish of English	.533	.837	1.000	-1.511	2.577

Based on estimated marginal means

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni

Appendix C

Multiple Comparisons

Bonferroni : Transitions

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Turkish	Turkish of English	-.87	.449	.170	-1.96	.23
	English	-1.23*	.449	.022	-2.33	-.14
Turkish of English	Turkish	.87	.449	.170	-.23	1.96
	English	-.37	.449	1.000	-1.46	.73
English	Turkish	1.23*	.449	.022	.14	2.33
	Turkish of English	.37	.449	1.000	-.73	1.46

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 3.021.



Appendix D

Multiple Comparisons

Bonferroni : Attitude Markers

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Turkish	Turkish of English	-.30	.308	.997	-1.05	.45
	English	-.87*	.308	.018	-1.62	-.12
Turkish of English	Turkish	.30	.308	.997	-.45	1.05
	English	-.57	.308	.207	-1.32	.18
English	Turkish	.87*	.308	.018	.12	1.62
	Turkish of English	.57	.308	.207	-.18	1.32

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 1.421. *. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Appendix E

Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Interactional

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^a	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^a	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Turkish	Turkish of English	.100	1.067	1.000	-2.505	2.705
	English	-2.900*	1.067	.024	-5.505	-.295
Turkish of English	Turkish	-.100	1.067	1.000	-2.705	2.505
	English	-3.000*	1.067	.018	-5.605	-.395
English	Turkish	2.900*	1.067	.024	.295	5.505
	Turkish of English	3.000*	1.067	.018	.395	5.605

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.



Appendix F

Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Self Mentions

		95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^a				
(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^a	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Turkish	Turkish of English	-.333	.350	1.000	-1.188	.521
	English	-1.000*	.350	.016	-1.854	-.146
Turkish of English	Turkish	.333	.350	1.000	-.521	1.188
	English	-.667	.350	.180	-1.521	.188
English	Turkish	1.000*	.350	.016	.146	1.854
	Turkish of English	.667	.350	.180	-.188	1.521

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Note:

1. The earlier version of this paper has been presented at the 2012 CCCC Convention in St Louis, USA.