THE DISCOURSAL FEATURES OF THE TURKISH LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY[*]

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Abstract

Register studies describe the situational and linguistic characteristics of particular registers. There are also studies that make comparisons across registers. These studies have shown that different registers have systematic and important linguistic differences. Thus, the aims of this study are (1) to determine the discoursal features of the Turkish legislative language, (2) to compare these features with five other registers, as scientific research articles, newspaper feature articles, TV commercials, man/woman magazines and stand-up shows. Turkish Criminal Code is used as the corpus of the legal register. Each text type in the study consisted of approximately 30.000 words. For the purposes of analysis and comparison, 'the multidimensional approach' developed by Douglas Biber (1988) is used. In this study, only the first dimension 'informative/interactional production' is analyzed. The lexico-grammatical categories of this dimension are counted in each text type and the results are statistically evaluated.

The findings of the study indicate that Turkish legislative language has the highest frequencies of the features of a planned and informative discourse. It is followed by scientific research articles, newspaper feature articles, man/woman magazines and stand-up shows in this order. Among the text types analyzed in the corpus, the most interactional discourse is found to be as TV commercials.

Key words : register analysis, text type, legislative language, dimension, positive features, negative features.

Türk Yasa Dilinin Söylem Özellikleri: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma

Özet

Kesit çalışmaları belirli durumlarda ortaya çıkan farklı dil kesitlerinin dilsel ve durumsal özelliklerini tanımlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, kesitler arasında karşılaştırmalar yapan çalışmalar da bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmalar bize kesitler arasında önemli ve sistematik dilsel farklılıklar bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Bu çerçevede, bu çalışmanın amaçları şu şekilde sıralanabilir : 1) Türk yasa dilinin söylem özelliklerini belirlemek, ve 2) bu özellikleri bilimsel araştırma makaleleri, gazete köşe yazıları, televizyon reklamları, kadın/erkek dergileri ve tek kişilik gösteri metinleri olmak üzere beş ayrı metin türü ile karşılaştırmak. Bu çalışmada yasa dili bütüncesi olarak Türk Ceza Kanunu incelenmiştir. Her metin türü ortalama 30.000 sözcükten oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada yöntem olarak Douglas Biber (1988) tarafından geliştirilen 'çok boyutlu yaklaşım' kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamı içerisinde sadece bilgi verici üretim/etkileşimsel üretim boyutu ele alınmıştır. Bu boyutta yer alan sözcüksel-dilbilgisel özellikler her metin türünde sayılarak sonuçlar istatistiksel olarak yorumlanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları bize Türk yasa dilinin bilgi verici ve planlanmış metinlerin sözcüksel-dilbilgisel özelliklerine en fazla sahip olan metin türü olduğunu göstermektedir. Yasa dilini sırasıyla bilimsel araştırma makaleleri, gazete köşe yazıları, kadın/erkek dergileri ve tek kişilik gösteri metinleri izlemektedir. Bütüncede incelenen metin türleri arasında en etkileşimsel metin türünün televizyon reklamları olduğu bulunmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: kesit çözümlemesi, metin türü, yasa dili, boyut, pozitif özellikler, negatif özellikler.

1.Introduction

Legal discourse has become a topic of interest to social scientists, linguists, and sociolinguists since the 1970s. As Danet states, "while language is central to all human affairs, it is particularly critical in the law. Physicians work with physical substances and entities ; in contrast, the work of lawyers and judges is symbolic and abstract. In a most basic sense, law would not exist without language" (1985, p. 273).

Danet (1985, p. 277) classifies the types of language use in legal settings in terms of two criteria: 1) the modes of language use – written or spoken; and 2) the degree of formality of the style used, and distinguishes between frozen, formal, consultative and casual styles. Thus, various kinds of documents, like contracts or wills, are formulaic, frozen written uses of legal language whereas formal written genres include such types as statutes, lawyers' briefs, etc..Marriage ceremonies or witnesses' oaths are the examples of frozen and spoken types whereas formal spoken styles include the interrogation of witnesses by lawyers. Finally, casual legal discourse which is characterized by a high degree of informality might include lobby conferences between judges and attorneys or lawyer-lawyer conversations.

In this regard, as being a formal and written register, legislative language differs significantly from most other varieties not only in terms of its communicative purpose, but also in the way it is created.

2. Background to the Study

2.1. Register Analysis

One of the earliest approaches to the description of varieties in language use is termed as 'register analysis'. Ferguson, with a sociolinguistic perspective, defines register as "a communication situation that recurs regularly in a society

in terms of participants, setting, communicative purpose and so forth" (1994, p. 20). Thus, it will tend to develop identifying markers of language structure and language use, different from the language of other communication situations.

The roots of register studies can be traced back to the situational, social and descriptive analyses carried out by anthropological linguists such as Boas, Sapir, Malinowski, Whorf and Firth. However, Halliday's approach to language is considered as the basis of register analysis (Biber and Finegan, 1994, p. 2).

In his approach to register, Halliday (1978 quoted in Leckie-Tarry, 1993, p.30) employs the term 'register' to encapsulate the relationship between texts and social processes. For example, people participating in recurrent communication situations tend to make certain lexico-grammatical choices. The result of the combination of choices is what is recognized by the community as a particular register. Thus, a register is defined as a language variety viewed with respect to its context of use. Based on this assumption of register, it can be stated that "register analysis focuses mainly on the identification of statistically significant lexico-grammatical features of a linguistic variety" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 5).

Atkinson and Biber (1994, p. 352) provide a detailed description of the register studies as follows:

1) Register studies involve descriptive analysis of actually occurring discourse.

2) Register studies aim to characterize language varieties, rather than either the linguistic style of individuals or specific linguistic structures.

3) Register studies present formal linguistic characterization of language varieties and analyze the functional or conventional relationships between form and situation.

Register studies have also underlined the fact that the distribution of grammatical structures is different across various text types. The reason for this variation among different text types is, as Lemke explains, "where the field of activity differs, there are characteristic (and also statistically consistent) differences in the frequencies of grammatical patterns which in turn reflect differences in communicative purposes" (1995, p. 27).

Register studies can also be grouped into such categories as 1) single register versus register comparisons, 2) synchronic versus diachronic register studies, and 3) speech versus writing (Atkinson and Biber, 1994, p. 352).

The present study aims at investigating the discoursal features of a single register, namely, the legislative language in Turkish, by comparing and contrasting this register with five other registers, which in turn, will provide a better understanding of the legislative language.

2.2. The Multidimensional Approach

There are many studies that describe the situational and linguistic characteristics of registers. One of them which is used in the current study is multidimensional approach. The multidimensional(MD) approach to register variation was developed by the American linguist Douglas Biber (1988) to provide comprehensive descriptions of the patterns of register variation in a language. Biber and Conrad (2001, p.184) state that an MD analysis includes two major components: 1) identification of the underlying linguistic parameters, or dimensions of variation by using computer-based text corpora and computational tools; and 2) specification of the linguistic similarities and differences among registers with respect to those dimensions by the use of statistical techniques.

Both theoretical assumptions and major components of the MD approach indicate that there are three key terms of the approach as linguistic co-

occurrence, dimension and multiple dimensions. The first of these terms, linguistic co-occurrence, is considered as central in MD approach since a register is characterized by a set of co-occurring linguistic features.

Dimension, on the other hand, involves a group of linguistic features, which co-occur with a markedly high frequency in texts. Thus, dimension is used to analyze the linguistic co-occurrence. However, not a single dimension but multiple dimensions are employed in the MD approach.

The first example of the MD approach is Biber's (1988) own study. In this study, various spoken and written registers in English are compared along the following six dimensions of linguistic variation:

1) involved discourse versus informational discourse

2) narrative concerns versus non-narrative concerns

3) situation dependent reference versus explicit reference

4) overt expression of persuasion

5) abstract discourse versus non-abstract discourse

6) on-line information production

Various other register studies in English were carried out using the MD analysis. For example, Atkinson (1992) studied the historical evolution of medical research writing in terms of four dimensions proposed by Biber. Conrad (1996a; 1996b) applied the MD modal of variation in English to compare professional research articles, university-level textbooks, and university student papers in biology and history. Reppen (1994; 1995) used MD approach to study spoken and written registers used by elementary school students in English.

The MD approach has also been used to investigate the patterns of register variation in nonwestern languages. For instance, Biber and Hared (1994) investigated register variation in Somali using three dimensions. Kim and Biber (1994) compared written registers to spoken registers in Korean along with six dimensions. Kessapidu (1997) analyzed the persuasion patterns of Greek business letters in terms of five dimensions of the MD approach.

In Turkish, several register studies have been carried out (Karaş, 1995; Oktar and Yağcıoğlu, 1996; Akar, 2000; Özyıldırım, 1999a, 1999b, 2009). However, the studies that applied the MD approach are very few. Bayyurt (2000) used the MD approach to compare various spoken and written registers in terms of formality. Özyıldırım (2002) applied five dimensions of the MD approach to study the discoursal features of the legislative texts. The MD approach has also been used to investigate the patterns of Turkish official language by Yarar (2002).

3. Aim and Method

3.1. Aims of the Study

As stated by Biber and Conrad (2001, p. 176), with respect to traditional, lexical and grammatical investigations, it turns out that functional descriptions based on texts without regard for register variation are inadequate and often misleading: for register descriptions, a comparative register perspective provides the baseline needed to understand the linguistic characteristics of any individual register. Thus, the aims of this study are:

1) to determine the discoursal features of Turkish legislative language in terms of Dimension 1 'informative (planned) versus interactional (unplanned) discourse'

2) to compare these features with five other registers, namely, scientific research articles, newspaper feature articles, TV commercials, man/woman magazines and stand-up shows.

The hypothesis is that legislative language will have the highest frequencies of an informative and planned discourse among other registers.

3.2. Method of the Study

This study employs the multidimensional approach developed by D. Biber (1988) to describe the lexico-grammatical and discoursal features of the Turkish legislative language.

Considering the limitations of this particular study, only the first dimension 'Informative (planned) versus interactional (involved) production' is used as the method of analysis.

The lexico-grammatical patterns of 'Informative versus Interactional discourse' are combined from the studies of Biber (1988) ; Biber and Hared (1994) ; Kim and Biber (1994) ; Biber and Conrad (2001) and adapted to Turkish with some eliminations and additions. Thus,

Dimension 1 in Turkish includes 14 lexico-grammatical patterns as indicated in Table 1:

Table 1. Positive and Negative Features of Dimension 1 in Turkish

Interactional (unplanned) discourse
(positive features)
1st. Person pronouns
2nd. Person pronouns
Direct questions
Causative adverbial subordinators
Wh-complement clauses
Emphatics
Amplifiers
Discourse particles
Informative (planned) discourse
(negative features)
Nouns
Postpositions
Stative forms
Agentless passives
Relative Clauses
Adjectives

There are two groups of features in Dimension 1, labeled positive and negative. The positive features represent discourse with interactional, affective and involved purposes whereas negative features represent discourse with highly informational purposes, which is carefully crafted and highly edited (Biber, 1988, p. 115). Furthermore, the two groups have a complementary relationship. That is, if a text has frequent occurrences of the positive group of features, it will have markedly few occurrences of the negative group, and vice versa.

In this study, both a microscopic and macroscopic approach are used. As stated by Kim and Biber (1994, p. 157), a microscopic approach focuses on the discourse functions of individual linguistic features in particular registers while a macroscopic approach seeks to define the overall parameters of variation among registers. Microscopic and macroscopic analyses have complementary strengths in that a microscopic analysis can pinpoint the exact communicative functions of individual linguistic features in particular registers, but it does not provide the basis for overall generalizations concerning differences among registers. In contrast, the macroscopic analysis focuses on the overall patterns of variation among registers, building on previous microanalyses to interpret those patterns in functional terms.

3.2.1. Corpus of the Study

The corpus contains the following text types: 1) legislative texts, 2) newspaper feature articles, 3) scientific research articles, 4) TV commercials, 5) man/woman magazines, and 6) stand-up shows. Thus, the corpus contains four written and two spoken texts.

The spoken texts in the corpus were first tape-recorded and then transcribed into the written language according to our interests in this particular study. Thus, in the transcription process, some characteristic features of oral language such as the different pronunciation of a sound by different participants, phonetic details of a speaker's accent, voice quality, hesitations, false starts and the like were ignored.

Each text type in the study consisted of approximately 30.000 words. Turkish Criminal Code was used as the corpus of the legislative language. Scientific research articles were collected from three broad areas as social sciences, engineering and medicine. The corpus of the newspaper feature articles were composed of articles from four different Turkish daily newspapers.

Man/woman magazines included texts from four different Turkish magazines (two for each). The corpus of the stand-up shows was composed of the texts of two famous showmen in Turkey. TV commercials, on the other hand, were collected from different Turkish TV channels. The whole corpus consisted of approximately 180.000 words and was collected between the years 2006-2008.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

The data obtained from six different text types were analyzed in terms of the 14 lexico-grammatical patterns identified for Dimension 1. Since there is no pre-existing corpora, texts are collected and entered into computer. However, as there is no tagging program available for Turkish, most of the lexico-grammatical features are counted by hand and the values are presented in terms of frequency and percentage for each register. Then, a chi-square analysis is carried out to make comparisons among registers in terms of the positive and negative features of Dimension 1.

4. The Discoursal Features of the Turkish Legislative Language : A Register Perspective

Considering the general characteristics of the Turkish legislative language, it is possible to say that Turkish legislative language exhibits the characteristic features of a highly formal language.

The studies carried out about Turkish legislative language (Özyıldırım, 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2002) indicate that legislative language in Turkish has a special discourse type which is full of technical legal terms that can only be understood by the members of the specialist community, borrowed and archaic words and expressions mostly taken from Arabic and Persian, common terms with uncommon legal meanings, long and complicated sentences, coordination, nominalizations, passives, etc.

Biber (1994, p. 33) states that typical register studies involve three components: 1) description of the situational characteristics of a register, 2) description of the linguistic characteristics, and 3) analysis of the functional associations between the situational and linguistic features. Thus, in our analysis of the discoursal features of the Turkish legislative language, these components will be considered as the general framework of analysis.

4.1. Description of the Situational Characteristics of the Turkish Legislative Language

4.1.1. Communicative Purpose

Danet (1985, p. 273) states that "the study of legal discourse is concerned with the nature, functions and concequences of language use in the negotiation of social order". Like other legal systems, Turkish laws also have two primary functions: 1) the ordering of human relations, and 2) the restoration of social order when it breaks down. As Danet further argues, with regard to the ordering function, there are two complementary tasks. Firstly, law defines relations and tells us which activities are permitted and which are not. Secondly, it also provides recipes for creating relations where none existed before (e.g. marriage ceremonies). These are, respectively, the regulative and facilitative functions of law. 'Restoration of social order', on the other hand, is concerned with the ways language usage affects both substantive and procedural justice in the disposition of cases of conflict whether between one citizen or another as in the case of civil law, or between the individual and the state as in the case of criminal law (p. 274).

In the light of these basic functions, it is possible to say that laws impose obligations, prohibit actions, confer rights or give permissions. Thus, the general function of this writing is directive. Furthermore, as Bhatia (1993, p. 102) states, these prohibitions, obligations or rights should be presented as

precisely, clearly and unambiguously as linguistic resources permit because of the human capacity to wriggle out of obligations and to stretch rights to unexpected limits.

4.1.2. Physical Relation between Addressor and Addressee

Legislative language is typically produced by writers who are separated in space (and time) from their readers, resulting in a greater reliance on the linguistic channel by itself to communicate meaning. Furthermore, in most other written varieties, the author is both the originator and the writer of the text. However, in legislative language, the draftsman of the National Assembly is only the writer of the legislative act. Moreover, the legislative writing is prepared for ordinary citizens, but the real readers are lawyers and judges, who are responsible for interpreting legislative texts for ordinary citizens. In other words, the reader and the recipient are not the same person in legislative language. Thus, it is possible to say that these unique contextual factors help to create a distance between the ordinary citizens and the legislative text.

4.1.3. Production Circumstances

As being a written mode, legislative writing, like the other written modes, provides extensive opportunity for careful, deliberate production ; written texts can be revised and edited repeatedly before they are considered complete.

Spoken language, on the other hand, is typically produced on-line, with speakers formulating words and expressions as they think of the ideas.

4.2. Description of the Lexico-grammatical Features of the Turkish Legislative Language in terms of Dimension I

This section includes the statistical analysis and the description of the individual items identified for Dimension 1, together with related discussions connecting the situational and linguistic features. The frequency and percentage

of the use of the 14 lexico-grammatical features identified for Dimension 1 in the Turkish Criminal Code are presented in the following table :

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of the Lexico-Grammatical Features in Legislative Language for Dimension 1 (n=32.000)

Dimension 1:Informative (planned) discourse / interactional (unplanned) discourse		
Pozitive features: Interactional(unplanned) discourse		
	Frequency	Percentage
1st. Person singular/plural pronouns	0	0%
2nd person singular/plural pronouns	0	0%
Direct questions	0	0%
Causative adverbial subordinators	70	0.2%
Wh-complement clauses	2	0.006%
Emphatics	0	0%
Amplifiers	25	0.07%
Discourse particles	0	0%
Negative features : Informative(planned) discourse		
Nouns	15.450	48.2%
Postpositions	1428	4.4%
Stative forms	250	0.78%
Agentless passives	442	1.38%
Relative clauses	1350	4.2%
Adjectives	1395	4.3%

When the Turkish Criminal Code is analyzed in terms of the positive features of Dimension 1, it is possible to say that the interactional features of this dimension occur very rarely or none at all in legislative writing.

In the Turkish Criminal Code, 1st person pronouns 'ben/biz' 'I/we'; 2nd person pronouns 'sen/siz' 'you'; direct questions; emphatics which mark the presence of certainty towards a proposition by way of certain words like 'gerçekten' 'really', 'sahiden' 'for sure', 'tabi ki' 'of course'; and discourse particles like 'tamam mı?' 'OK?', 'şey' 'what-do-you-call-it', etc. are nonexistent (0%). In other words, no examples of these features are found in the Turkish Criminal Code. The absence of these features is related with the fact that they all require a high degree of interaction and informality among the participants of a particular text type and are rarely found outside of the conversational genres.

The other positive features of Dimension 1 such as causative adverbial subordinators (0.2%) indicating causes of things or actions such as the constructions 'çünkü', '-DIğI için, 'dEn dolayı', '-dAn' 'because of…', etc. ; Wh-complement clauses (0.006%) which resemble questions and are formed by the use of a set of question words such as 'ne' 'what', 'ne zaman' 'when', 'niye' 'why' + the nominalization of the embedded verb by means of such suffixes as –EcEk, -DIk, -mEk and –mE; and amplifiers (0.07%) which are used to indicate the reliability of propositions positively by the use of adverbs like 'çok' 'very', 'tamamen' 'completely', 'kesinlikle' 'absolutely', etc. occur in very low frequencies that are close to zero percentage in legislative language since they all serve interactional functions.

As a result, when overall positive features of Dimension 1 are considered in terms of the Turkish Criminal Code, it can be said that Turkish legislative language does not exhibit these interactional features since the typical functions of these features do not fit the typical communicative characteristics of this register. In this highly formal language, there is no interaction between the sender and the receiver. Among the six registers in the corpus of this study, legislative language is identified as having the lowest frequencies of occurrence

in terms of the positive lexico-grammatical features of Dimension 1. For example, although there are informative written registers like scientific research articles, newspaper feature articles and man/woman magazines in the corpus, no other register has 0 percentage in the use of these positive lexico-grammatical features except for the 2nd person pronouns in scientific research articles. Thus, it is possible to say that legislative language in Turkish has a strong register norm rejecting the use of these interactional and informal features.

Considering the negative features of Dimension 1, it can be said that legislative language exhibits these features in very high frequencies. Even a short extract from Turkish Criminal Code (article 3) shows the high density of informational features from Dimension 1 (nouns are inderlined, postpositions italicized, attributive adjectives capitalized, and passives put in parentheses) :

Türkiye'de suç işleyen kimse, Türk kanunlarına *göre* (cezalandırılır) ve bundan *dolayı* bir Türk *hakkında* yabancı memlekette hüküm verilmiş olsa bile Türkiye'de (muhakeme olunur). Böyle bir fiilden *dolayı* Türkiye *dışında hakkında* hüküm verilmiş olan yabancı dahi Adliye Vekilinin talebi *üzerine* Türkiye'de (muhakeme edilir).

Translation:

Anyone who commits a crime in Turkey shall be punished according to Turkish laws. A Turkish citizen must also be tried in Turkey even if s/he is sentenced in a foreign country. A foreigner who has committed a crime in Turkey, and is sentenced in a foreign country because of this act, can be retried in Turkey at the request of the Minister ofJustice.

Nouns are the most common lexical features in the negative group. Of the total words used in the Turkish Criminal Code, 48.2 % are found to be nouns. This finding is also consistent with the view that written language is highly nominal (Halliday, 1985, pp. 330-31). Furthermore, this finding clearly shows

that Turkish legislative language has a highly abstract informational focus. As stated by Biber (1988, p. 227), the overall nominal characterization of a text and the distinction between nominal and verbal styles is identified as one of the most fundamental distinctions among registers. A high nominal content in a text indicates conceptual abstractness and high informativity as opposed to primarily interpersonal or narrative foci.

Prepositions in English are considered as an important device for packaging high amounts of information into nominal discourse. Chafe (1982, p. 41) describes prepositions as a device for integrating information into idea units and expanding the amount of information contained within an idea unit. Turkish is a postpositional language and Turkish postpositions function similar to prepositions in English (Lewis, 1967, p. 85). In Turkish Criminal Code, postpositions like 'için' 'for', 'gibi' 'like', 'ile' 'with', 'hakkında' 'about', etc. are used frequently in order to expand the amount of information about rights, obligations, prohibitions, etc. and to cover as much detail as possible in order to be all-inclusive. The percentage of postpositions in the Turkish Criminal Code is 4.4.

Stative forms or sentences with nonverbal predicates might be considered as the markers of a static, informational style common in writing since they preclude the presence of an active verb (Biber, 1988, p. 228). Stative forms in Turkish include sentences with nominal and existential predicates. The percentage of the use of stative forms in the Turkish Criminal Code is 0.78. . In nonverbal Turkish sentences –DIr might also follow the zero tense marker. Sansa Tura (1986, p. 145) states that all nonverbal sentences in Turkish expressing generic facts, universal truths, permanent generalizations, scientific or quasi scientific statements contain this particle. Thus, the addition of -DIr gives the meaning of certainty and unchangeability to the nonverbal legislative sentences. It is observed that all instances of nominal predicates are also

followed by –DIr particle in the Turkish Criminal Code. Not only nonverbal sentences but also verbal sentences present certain characteristics in the Turkish legislative language. 40.07 % of the verbal predicates in the Turkish Criminal Code are composed of forms as ' a nominal element + a 'light verb' as Kornfilt (1997, p. 321) calls them such as 'et', 'eyle', 'yap' all meaning 'do' and 'ol' meaning 'be' or 'become'. This finding also shows us the highly nominal and static characteristic of the legislative language.

The use of passives is also an important characteristic of the legislative language. Biber (1988, p. 228) states that passives are taken as one of the most important surface markers of the decontextualized or detached style that stereotypically characterizes writing. In passive constructions, the agent is demoted or dropped altogether, resulting in a static, more abstract presentation of information. The percentage of agentless passives in the Turkish Criminal Code is 1.38. Moreover, of the total of all passives used in the corpus, 93% is agentless indicating that in legislative language the action is more important than the doer of the action. In other words, in legislative sentences, the action which causes the wrongdoing is more important than the doer of the action who does not have a salient role in the legislative discourse.

Relative clauses are said to function as restrictive or nonrestrictive modifiers of noun phrases. In that respect, they are functionally similar to attributive adjectives (Quirk et.al., 1985, p. 1048). Ochs (1979, p. 69) states that referents are marked differently in planned and unplanned discourse: simple determiners are preferred in unplanned discourse, whereas relative clauses are used for more explicit and elaborated reference in planned discourse. In general, it can be said that relative clauses occur more frequently in writing than in speech. Relative clauses are also one of the important characteristics of the Turkish legislative language. 4.2 % of the words used in the Turkish Criminal Code are relative constructions. These elaborated noun phrases serve the

function of providing detailed and elaborated information in legislative sentences. Furthermore, the use of relative clauses is a convenient device to refer to as many aspects of human behaviour as required and at the same time be able to incorporate as many details as necessary at various syntactic points in legislative sentences. Thus, the legislative text becomes as informative as possible by using less number of sentences.

The last category of the negative features is adjectives. Biber (1988, p. 237) states that Adjectives, like adverbs and postpositions, expand and elaborate the information presented in a text. In our corpus, 4.3 % of the total words are adjectives. In the Turkish Criminal Code, they are mainly used for expanding and elaborating the information about legislative sentences and, thus, serve the purpose of making them precise, unambiguous and all-inclusive.

As a result, when overall negative features of Dimension 1 are considered in terms of the legislative language, it can be said that they occur very frequently in the Turkish Criminal Code. Thus, it is possible to say that Turkish legislative language has a strong register norm favoring the lexico-grammatical features of an informational and planned discourse. However, these lexico-grammatical features are distributed in different ways across registers.

4.3. Register Comparisons

In addition to the descriptions of a single register, a corpus-based approach enables comparative analyses of register variation. One advantage of a comparative register perspective is to understand the linguistic characteristics of a particular register relative to a representative range of registers in the language. As Biber and Conrad (2001, p. 179) state, most grammatical features are distributed in very different ways across registers. These overall distributional patterns correspond to the differing production circumstances, purposes and levels of formality found across registers.

This section focuses on the relative frequencies of co-occurring linguistic features across registers. To illustrate, consider the comparison of the six registers in our corpus for Dimension 1 in Table 3 :

Table 3. The Comparison of the Positive and Negative Features in Six Registers for Dimension 1

Registers		Frequency		
		Positive features (Interactional production)	Negative features (Informative production)	Total
Legislative language	n	97	20315	20412
	%	0,5	99,5	100
Scientific research articles	n	293	25028	25321
	%	1,2	98,8	100
Newspaper feature articles	n	707	16652	17359
	%	4,1	95,9	100
Man/woman magazines	n	2080	21034	23114
	%	9	91	100
Stand-up shows	n	6889	9938	16827
	%	40.9	59.1	100
TV commercials	n	16406	19274	35680
	%	46	54	100
Total	n	26472	112241	38713
	%	19,1	80,9	100

$\chi^2=35823,7$ p<0.00

When all the registers in our corpus are compared for Dimension 1, legislative language is identified as the register that makes the most frequent use of the negative group of features, and conversely, the least frequent use of the positive features. It is closely followed by scientific research articles, newspaper

feature articles and man/woman magazines in this order. These written registers are marked for the very frequent occurrences of the negative features combined with relatively few occurrences of the positive features. Written registers are associated with an explicit and elaborated presentation of information. At the other extreme, TV commercials are identified as the register that makes the most frequent use of the positive features. Thus, oral registers like TV commercials and stand-up shows tend to have frequent occurrences of the positive group of features, and relatively few occurrences of the negative group of features. Oral registers are produced on-line and they typically have involved interpersonal purposes. These registers have conventional associations with colloquial and informal language. These forms are considered inappropriate when used in formal written prose.

Legislative language which has the highest negative feature score among other registers in Dimension 1 is associated most notably with informational exposition, and is interpreted as reflecting careful production and a highly informational focus. That is, nouns, postpositions, adjectives, relative clauses, etc. all function to convey densely packed information. Such densely informational and precise text is nearly impossible to produce without time for planning and revision. Clearly, the emphasis in this text is on transmitting information precisely and concisely, not on interactive or affective concerns. Of the total lexico-grammatical features used in the Turkish Criminal Code, 99.5 % is negative. The score for positive features is only 0.5% indicating a presentation of information with no interaction and acknowledgement of personal attitude.

Legislative language is closely followed by scientific research articles in terms of the use of negative features of Dimension 1. Of the total features used in the scientific research articles, 98.8 % is negative. The score for positive features is 1.2 %. These results indicate that scientific research articles share

similar characteristics with the legislative writing in that academic writing also requires careful production circumstances, an expository, informational purpose and a formal tone.

The third largest negative score belongs to the newspaper feature articles. Among the six registers compared in this study, newspaper feature articles tend to be more argumantative dealing with a wide range of topics, like international relations, domestic politics, etc..Of the total number of lexico-grammatical features in this register, 95.9 % is negative and 4.1 % is positive. Thus, it is possible to say that newspaper feature articles are also highly informational texts and are associated with explicit and elaborated presentation of information.

Man/woman magazines which fall into the category of popular writing include various periodical articles, interviews with famous persons like movie stars, singers, etc. are more interactional in nature when compared with the other written registers in the corpus. The negative score of this register is 91 %, and the positive feature score is 9 % which is the highest positive score among the other written registers.

The last two registers are the oral registers of our corpus and they are associated with involved and interpersonal purposes. Thus, they present relatively few occurrences of the negative features and higher occurrences of the positive ones, such as 1st. and 2nd. person pronouns, direct questions, emphatics, amplifiers, discourse particles, etc.

Among our registers, the fourth register in terms of the use of the negative features is stand-up shows. Of the total lexico-grammatical features used in this register, 59.1 % is negative. The positive feature score, on the other hand, is 40.9 %. Although stand-up shows exhibit a remarkable increase in the use of the positive features when compared with the other written registers, its

positive score is not very high. The reason for this relatively low interaction might be explained in the monologue form of the show where only one person is involved, which, in turn, reduces the number of the interactional features.

The most interactive oral register in our corpus is found to be as TV commercials. This register has the lowest negative score (54 %) and the highest positive score (46 %) among the registers compared. These scores indicate an interactive and involved discourse type when compared with the other registers. However, TV commercials also have edited kind of conversations. It can be expected that private conversations, which do not take place in this corpus, will represent more features of an interactional discourse and have higher positive scores.

5. Conclusion

For the purposes of this study, it can be concluded that legislative language is a special register rarely equalled by any other variety of Turkish. It has special lexico-grammatical features that reflect its high informational and expository focus, careful production and explicit and elaborated presentation of information. Within this framework, it is possible to say that legislative discourse is highly informative, impersonal, decontextualized and formal.

This study also shows that comparisons among registers play an important role in any thorough description of a language. The register comparisons presented in this study indicated that legislative language has the largest negative score and the lowest positive score in terms of the features of Dimension 1 'informational /interactional discourse'. In other words, legislative language can be considered as the most informative, formal and decontextualized discourse type among the six registers compared in this study.

In a paper of this size, it is impossible to give complete accounts and interpretations of register analysis. Thus, this study is by no means complete. In

order to give complete accounts of a register, other dimensions should also be studied. Moreover, this study only covered six registers for comparison. Various other oral and written registers are needed for more comprehensive accounts of register variation in a language.

Nevertheless, this study has provided a glimpse into the value of corpus-based investigations for increasing our understanding of language use. In addition, not only our understanding of discourse but our understanding of language acquisition and issues within educational linguistics can benefit from the analysis of register variation. Finally, such analyses will also provide a framework for additional cross-linguistic investigations, eventually allowing identification of universal tendencies.

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