TCL - A Lexicon of Turkish Discourse Connectives

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Abstract

It is known that discourse connectives are the most salient indicators of discourse relations. State-of-the-art parsers being developed to predict explicit discourse connectives exploit annotated discourse corpora but a lexicon of discourse connectives is also needed to enable further research in discourse structure and support the development of language technologies that use these structures for text understanding. This paper presents a lexicon of Turkish discourse connectives built by automatic means. The lexicon has the format of the German connective lexicon, DiMLex, where for each discourse connective, information about the connective's orthographic variants, syntactic category and senses are provided along with sample relations. In this paper, we describe the data sources we used and the development steps of the lexicon.

1 Introduction

Discourse connectives (alternatively labelled as cue phrases, discourse markers, discourse operators, etc.) are lexical anchors of coherence relations. Such relations (with semantic labels such as expansion, contingency, contrast, concession) can be signalled with discourse connectives, but languages vary in the way they express them. For example, while languages like English and German express discourse relations lexically (with conjunctions and adverbials), Turkish conveys discourse relations through morphological suffixes, as well as lexically. Languages also diverge in the number of connectives that express the same discourse relation. For example, French and Dutch differ in the number of connectives that convey causal relations (Zufferey and Degand, 2017). Finally, discourse connectives are polysemous, expressing several discourse relations. These issues are an obvious challenge for language technologies, translation studies and language learners. What is needed is a resource that goes beyond Kezban Başıbüyük Department of Computer Engineering Middle East Technical University Ankara, Turkey kezban.demirtas@metu.edu.tr

traditional dictionaries. Our goal in this paper is to reveal the nature of Turkish discourse connectives through discourse-annotated corpora and describe the steps in constructing a discourse connective lexicon that hosts the connectives' various properties. The Turkish Lexicon will ultimately be part of the connective lexicon database (http:// connective-lex.info/) that aims to synchronize the lexicons that exist.

The interest in discourse connectives goes hand in hand with the development of discourseannotated corpora. There are three major approaches that have guided discourse research and inspired other languages to annotate discourse: RST (Mann and Thompson, 1988), SDRT (2012), and the PDTB (Prasad et al., 2014). Our focus in this paper will be the PDTB, one of the best known resources for English discourse. The PDTB takes discourse connectives (henceforth, DCs) as twoplace predicates where argumenthood is based on abstract objects (eventualities, facts, propositions, etc.) as in Asher (1993). It annotates the DC together with its binary arguments, which are semantic representations of discourse parts (cf. (Danlos, 2009)). The PDTB-style annotation has been extended to various languages other than English, namely, Arabic (Al-Saif and Markert, 2010), Chinese (Zhou and Xue, 2015), Hindi (Kolachina et al., 2012), and Turkish (Demirşahin and Zeyrek, 2017) as well as a recent multilingual resource, TED-Multilingual Discourse Bank, or TED-MDB (Zeyrek et al., 2019).

In addition to these efforts, there has been an important initiative, namely DiMLex, the discourse connective lexicon first developed for German (Stede and Umbach, 1998; Scheffler and Stede, 2016), which has subsequently been extended to multiple languages, e.g. French (Roze et al., 2012), Italian (Feltracco et al., 2016), Portuguese (Mendes et al., 2018) and recently Eng-DiMLex for English (Das et al., 2018). Such lexicons are sure to complement the ongoing efforts of discourse-annotated corpora, support discourse research and various language technology applications such as discourse parsers.

In this paper, we describe the development of TCL, a lexicon for Turkish discourse connectives, which follows the format of DiMLex. To the best of our knowledge, there is no such resource for Turkish. Thus, our aim is to fill this gap with a resource that covers Turkish discourse connectives with their various properties and a representation of their meanings. This resource will not only benefit discourse studies in Turkish but will also form the basis of future multilingual studies on discourse connectives and their meanings.

In the rest of this paper, we describe the steps in creating the TCL. In Section 2, we provide information about the data sources we used and in Section 3, we discuss the criteria for selecting connectives as TCL entries. Section 4 presents the structure of TCL and Section 5 shows how the lexicon is populated. Section 6 brings the paper to an end and draws some conclusions.

2 Data Sources

In building the TCL, we use three PDTBinspired annotated corpora to compile explicit DCs, namely, Turkish Discourse Bank or TDB 1.0 (Zeyrek et al., 2013), TDB 1.1 (Zeyrek and Kurfalı, 2017), and the Turkish section of TED-MDB.

- TDB 1.0 is a 400,000-word resource of modern written Turkish containing annotations of explicit DCs and the discourse segments they relate. It also annotates "phrasal expressions" such as *bunun için* 'for this (reason/purpose)', which are linking devices compositionally derived from postpositions (*için* 'since/in order to') and a deictic term. They are a subset of the PDTB's alternative lexicalizations and correspond to "secondary connectives" (Danlos et al., 2018). We used 8439 relations (explicit DCs and "phrasal expressions") from this corpus.
- TDB 1.1 is a 40,000-word-subset of TDB 1.0, where all five relation types of the PDTB are annotated together with their binary arguments (i.e., explicit and implicit relations, alternative lexicalizations, entity relations and no relations). Based on the PDTB-3 relation hierarchy (Lee et al., 2016), the senses

of explicit and implicit connectives as well as alternative lexicalizations are annotated. We used 912 explicit relations from this corpus.

• TED-MDB is a corpus of TED talks transcripts in 6 languages (English, German, Polish, European Portuguese, Russian and Turkish). We used 276 explicit relations from the Turkish section of this corpus. TDB 1.0 and TED-MDB annotation files are in pipedelimited format, the TDB 1.1 annotation files are in XML format.

By using different resources, we take advantage of the different coverage of the three corpora. As expected, while some of the connectives exist in all of the data sources, some connectives (and the information needed for the connective lexicon database) may exist in only one source (see Table 2). Moreover, resorting to different corpora is helpful as different corpora may spot new senses of a DC. For example, different senses of the postpositions *gibi* 'as' and *kadar* 'until/as well as/as much as' have been compiled from different corpora as indicated in Table 1.

3 The criteria for selection of connectives as TCL entries

Turkish is a morphologically rich, agglutinating language with suffixes added to the word root in the order licensed by the morphology and syntax of the language. In this section we describe the major syntactic categories we used to determine DCs, and how we represent suffixal connectives (converbs) in TCL. We also explain our method of determining the syntactic category of other DCs when different POS taggers provide different parses.

TCL only considers explicit discourse connectives annotated in the existing Turkish discourseannotated corpora. Unlike other DC lexicons such as DimLex and the lexicon of Czech discourse connectives (Mírovskỳ et al., 2017) it does not record non-connective usages.

3.1 Major syntactic categories

DCs are determined on the basis of the following syntactic categories:

• Conjunctions, comprising both the single type *ama* 'but/yet' and the paired or noncontinuous type such as *ne* ... *ne* 'neither ... nor'.

| TCL Entries | TDB 1.1 | TED-MDB |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| gibi 'as' | EXPANSION: Conjunction | COMPARISON: Similarity |
| | EXPANSION: Manner: Arg2-as-manner | |
| kadar 'until/as well/much as' | COMPARISON: Degree | COMPARISON: Similarity |
| | TEMPORAL: Asynchronous: Precedence | CONTINGENCY: Purpose: Arg2-as-goal |
| artık 'no longer' | EXPANSION: Level-of-detail: Arg2-as-detail | CONTINGENCY: Cause: Result |
| | TEMPORAL: Synchronous | |

Table 1: Different senses of connectives captured via discourse-annotated corpora in Turkish

| TCL Entries | Data Sourc | es | |
|-----------------------|------------|---------|---------|
| | TDB 1.0 | TDB 1.1 | TED-MDB |
| ama 'but/yet' | ama | ama | ama |
| çünkü 'because' | Çünkü | Çünkü | çünkü |
| aksine 'in contrast' | aksine | | aksine |
| sadece 'only' | | | sadece |
| sayesinde 'thanks to' | sayesinde | | |
| keza 'as well' | | Keza | Keza |
| dahası 'furthermore' | Dahası | Dahası | |

Table 2: TCL entries obtained from various discourseannotated corpora

- Subordinators:
 - Converbs (simplex subordinators), e.g.
 -sA, 'if', -(y)ArAk 'by means of/ and'.
 - Postpositions (complex subordinators), which involve an accompanying suffix on the (non-finite) verb of the subordinate clause, *gibi* 'as'.
- Adverbs, involving single tokens such as *ayrıca* 'in addition' as well as phrasal tokens, e.g. *ne var ki* 'even so'.¹

3.2 Representing suffixal connectives

In Turkish, suffixal connectives are essentially converbs forming non-finite adverbial clauses. Converbs have complex allomorphy based on vowel harmony as well as consonant harmony (Zeyrek and Webber, 2008). We decided that such variation has to be represented in TCL. To illustrate, -(y)ArAk 'by means of/and' is a converb shown in the standard morphological notation, where the capital letters indicate alternation (-erek, -arak) and the parentheses show that y is needed if the verb root ends in a vowel (see examples (1), (2), (3)). Other converbs may additionally carry dedicated nominalization markers or person agreement markers, which have different morphological realizations. To identify all occurrences of a converb, the allomorphs need to be specified in the lexicon. By means of the TCL search tool (see 5.1 below), we specified 15 converbs and their allomorphs to be added to TCL. If any allomorph of a specific converb was missing in the corpora we used, those allomorphs were added manually.

- (1) Ali okula gid-<u>erek</u> öğretmenle görüştü.² 'Ali went to school <u>and</u> talked with the teacher.'
- (2) Ali sıkı çalış-<u>arak</u> başarı kazandı. 'Ali gained success by working hard.'
- (3) Ali şarkı söyle-yerek başarı kazandı. 'Ali gained success by singing.'

3.3 Noun-based connectives

Turkish has a group of connectives which are the lexicalized forms of nominal roots, e.g. *dahasu* 'furthermore', *amacıyla* 'with the aim of', *sonuçta* 'eventually.' For this group of connectives, the available POS taggers sometimes provide incomplete information. Table 3 shows different parses provided by different POS parsers for these connectives.

| Connectives | UDPipe | TRmorph |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| dahası 'furthermore' | Noun | Cnj:adv, Adv |
| amacıyla 'for the purpose of' | Noun | Noun |
| sonuçta 'eventually' | Adv | Adv, Noun |

Table 3: Different parses for three noun-based DCs

In such cases, we compare different sources to determine the connective's syntactic category for TCL. For example, for the connectives in Table 3, we settled on the syntactic categories provided in Table 4.

¹We note that the TDB's term "phrasal expression" is different from the DimLex term "phrasal connective", which refers to discourse connectives that involve more than one words without specifying the type of words involved in the composition of the connective.

 $^{^{2}}$ As in the PDTB, Arg2 is the discourse part that hosts the connective and in the examples, it is shown in bold fonts. Arg1 is the other argument and it is rendered in italics. The discourse connective is underlined.

| Connectives | TCL |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| dahası 'furthermore' | Adv |
| amacıyla 'for the purpose of' | Other |
| sonuçta 'eventually' | Adv |

Table 4: Syntactic categories of three noun-based DCs in TCL

4 The structure of TCL

The TCL structure is based on the structure of the connective lexicon database. Thus, it contains the following components.

• Orthographical variants: This criterion specifies whether the connective is a single token (part=single) or a phrasal token (part=phrasal); continuous (orth=cont) or discontinuous (orth=discount). For example, the phrasal connective *ne...ne* 'neither ... nor' is annotated as "discont" while the connective *öte yandan* 'on the other hand' is annotated as "cont". An entry illustrating the orthogrophical variants of the single connective *ama* 'but' is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Variants of ama 'but/yet'

In addition to these, we added the type "suffixal" to TCL to indicate converbs.

- *Canonical Form:* The canonical form of a connective is the most commonly used variant of that connective. For example, the canonical form of *çünkü* 'because' is the sentence-initial *Çünkü*, a property which is determined by the TCL search tool.
- *Frequency:* The frequency of the connective shows both how often it occurs in the corpora and the frequency of each of its sense tags.
- *Syntactic category:* The syntactic category of connectives is assigned using several sources as described in Section 5.1, namely the Turkish section of UDPipe ³, the search tool pro-



Figure 2: Main window of the TCL search tool

vided in the Turkish Linguistic Society website or TDK ⁴ and TRmorph ⁵.

5 Populating the lexicon

5.1 The TCL search tool

We developed a search tool to populate TCL. The search tool was developed using the C# programming language. It is also extendable with new features. The main feature of the tool is that it searches different corpora to retrieve DCs (see Figure 2 for a snapshot of the main window of the tool). In addition, it uses filters for DC types, such as suffixal, single, and phrasal. When the search tool is started, file paths used by the tool are specified in the data path window, namely, the path of the text directory specifying the raw text files that will be searched, and the path of the annotation directory containing the XML or pipe-delimited files storing the annotation information.

5.2 The workflow

Using the search tool, we populated the TCL entries. Our work flow involves several steps, as described below and summarized in Figure 3.

- Firstly, the annotation files of the three corpora are parsed and the relations encoded by explicit connectives are retrieved. For this purpose, an XML parser and a pipe-delimited file parser have been developed.
- *Relation Builder:* The Relation Builder module reads the connective and its sense(s) in each relation directly from the annotation files while it reads the respective relation

³http://lindat.mff.cuni.cz/services/udpipe/

⁴http://www.tdk.gov.tr

⁵http://coltekin.net/cagri/trmorph/



Figure 3: Flow of populating TCL entries

spans from the text files; then it distinguishes suffixal DCs from non-suffixal DCs, i.e. all other types of DCs. To characterize a DC as suffixal, the Relation Builder simply checks the character preceding the DC token. If the previous character is white space, a new line, or a separator (., :; !? () `"-), the connective is labeled as *Not Suffixal*; in other cases, it is labeled as *Suffixal*. Hence, two lists of relations are formed, a list of relations containing suffixal connectives and a list of relations containing non-suffixal connectives.

• *DC Lexicon Entry Builder:* Using the two lists of relations from the Relation Builder, this module computes the following properties for each DC to be represented in the lexicon:

- Orthographical Variants: Since suffixal connectives are uniform in terms of orthography, continuity, etc. they do not have variants. Therefore, the DC Lexicon Entry Builder only searches the list of non-suffixal relations to determine the variants of all connectives. Suffixal connectives are simply tagged as "suffixal".
- Allomorphs: To handle the allomorphs of converbs, the list of suffixal relations is used. The entries of this list are analyzed to find out which entries are allomorphs of a suffixal DC.
- Continuity: Phrasal DCs can be continuous or discontinuous. This property is specified automatically by going through the multi-word connectives in the list of non-suffixal relations, and whether there are any words between the two parts of the connective is determined.
- Canonical Use: The DC Lexicon Entry Builder counts the times each variant of a DC occurs in our relation lists and labels the most frequently used variant as canonical.
- *Frequency:* To set the frequency property, the DC Lexicon Entry Builder uses both lists of relations and computes the number of occurrences of a DC as well as the number of occurrences of each sense of the DC.
- Syntactic Category Tagger: This module assigns a syntactic category to each DC. If a connective is suffixal, it is assigned the converb category. The syntactic category of nonsuffixal connectives is determined on the basis of the available POS taggers to the extent possible, otherwise by comparing various parses as described in Section 4 above.

Some of the connectives may belong to more than one syntactic category (Zeyrek and Kurfalı, 2018). For such connectives, we provide both of the syntactic categories. E.g. the DC *önce* 'before' is both an adverb (4) and a postposition (5).

(4) *Ali matematiği iyice anladı*. Ama <u>daha önce</u> **bir problemi bile**

| Connective-Lex | Syntactic Category of Turkish DCs |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| cco (Coordinating conjunction) | CCONJ |
| csu (Subordinating conjunction) | Converb, ADP |
| adv (Adverb of adverbial) | ADV |
| other | Secondary connective, Other |

Table 5: Mapping of TCL syntactic categories onto Connective-Lex categories

yardımsız çözemezdi.

Ali has now grasped math fully. But before he could not solve even one math problem without help.'

(5) Bu filmi görmeden önce romanını okumalısın.
'Before seeing this movie, you

should read the novel.'

The syntactic categories we assign to the DCs are; CCONJ, Converb (Simplex Subordinator), ADP (Postposition, Complex Subordinator), ADV, Secondary Connective ("phrasal expressions") and Other categories, such as noun-based connectives. These syntactic categories are mapped onto the categories which the Connective-Lex website offers (cf. Table 5).

- *DiMLex Formatter:* After creating the list of DC lexicon entries with all the properties described so far, the entries are mapped onto the DiMLex XML format. Firstly, an XML document is created and for each entry of the lexicon, an XML node is created. The XML elements and attributes are filled with the properties of lexicon entries following the DimLex format.
- *DCs in the DiMLex format:* At the end of these steps, we have a list of 180 DCs with their respective syntactic categories and other properties.

In Figures 4, 5 and 6, we provide how DCs are represented in the DiMLex format. Figure 4 presents the entry of a suffixal connective, Figure 5 shows the entry for a single connective belonging to the postposition category and Figure 6 illustrates the entry for a phrasal discontinuous connective.

We computed the sense distribution of Turkish explicit DCs by using our corpora and compared the results with the sense distribution of explicits in the PDTB 2.0 (Prasad et al., 2014). Table 6 displays the distribution of top-level classes comparatively and shows that the PDTB 2.0 displays an order of Expansion (33%), Comparison (28.8%), Contingency (19.2%) and Temporal (19%). This distribution is preserved in Turkish to a great extent in the order of Expansion (36%), Contingency (24.4%), Comparison (22.3%), and Temporal (17.3%).

| Sense Class | Turkish corpora | PDTB |
|-------------|-----------------|-------|
| TEMPORAL | 360 | 3696 |
| CONTINGENCY | 507 | 3741 |
| COMPARISON | 463 | 5589 |
| EXPANSION | 748 | 6423 |
| TOTAL | 2078 | 19449 |

Table 6: Distribution of top-level sense classes among explicits in the PDTB 2.0 and discourse-annotated corpora of Turkish

Table 7 provides the most frequent 15 discourse connectives and their second-level senses compiled from all data sources.

6 Conclusion

In sum, the major contributions of this paper have been:

- to characterize various properties of Turkish discourse connectives including their syntactic categories and the senses they convey via discourse-annotated corpora,
- to develop a DimLex-style lexicon of discourse connectives to host Turkish discourse connectives together with their various properties and sample relations retrieved from annotated corpora.

TCL is populated by DCs gleaned from texts belonging to different genres. Given that DCs are sensitive to genre (Webber, 2009), in future work, we will compute the distribution of senses in different genres and work on incorporating this information into DiMLex. This aim goes in parallel with our plan of extending the DC search tool with new facilities.

| DC | Gloss | Senses | Total |
|----------|-------------|--|-------|
| ve | and | Conjunction (395), Cause (39), Cause+Belief (2), Asynchronous (24), Syn- | 480 |
| | | chronous (8), Level-of-detail (3), Conjunction Level-of-detail (3), Conjunc- | |
| | | tion Contrast (1), Conjunction Synchronous (1), Conjunction Cause (3), Con- | |
| | | junction Instantiation (1) | |
| ama | but/yet | Contrast (92), Concession (135), Exception (8), Concession+SpeechAct | 256 |
| | | (8), Correction (6), Cause+SpeechAct (2), Conjunction (3), Conces- | |
| | | sion Synchronous (1), Concession Conjunction (1) | |
| için | to/since | Purpose (167), Cause (39), Cause+Belief (3), Degree (2), Level-of-detail (1) | 212 |
| sonra | then | Asynchronous (142) | 142 |
| çünkü | because | Cause+Belief (17), Cause (76) | 85 |
| ancak | however | Concession (36), Exception (4), Contrast (27), Conjunction (1), Exception (1) | 69 |
| ayrıca | in addition | Conjunction (41) | 41 |
| -ken | while | Synchronous (33), Conjunction (2), Concession+SpeechAct (1), Contrast (1) | 37 |
| gibi | as | Conjunction (6), Manner (30), Similarity (1) | 37 |
| -(y)HncA | when | Synchronous (19), Cause (6), Asynchronous (10), Level-of-detail (1) | 36 |
| -(y)Hp | and | Conjunction (33), Manner (2), Synchronous Conjunction (1) | 36 |
| yani | that is | Equivalence (17), Level-of-detail (4), Cause+Belief (10), Substitution (3), | 35 |
| | | Cause+SpeechAct (1) | |
| -sA | if | Condition (23), Concession (2), Negative-condition (4), Condition Purpose (1), | 34 |
| | | Condition+SpeechAct (3), Substitution (1) | |
| -dA | when | Synchronous (29), Condition (1) | 30 |
| önce | before | Asynchronous (30) | 30 |

Table 7: 15 most frequent discourse connectives and their second-level sense distribution in discourse-annotated corpora

```
<entry id="6" word="-(y)Hp">
 <orths>
   <orth canonical="0" orth_id="601" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">ip</part>
   </orth>
   <orth canonical="1" orth id="6o1" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">ip</part>
   </orth>
   <orth canonical="2" orth_id="6o1" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">up</part>
   </orth>
   <orth canonical="3" orth_id="6o1" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">up</part>
    </orth>
   <orth canonical="4" orth id="601" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">yip</part>
   </orth>
   <orth canonical="5" orth id="601" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">yip</part>
    </orth>
   <orth canonical="6" orth id="601" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">yup</part>
   </orth>
   <orth canonical="7" orth id="601" type="cont">
     <part type="suffixal">yüp</part>
   </orth>
  </orths>
 <syn>
    <cat>Converb</cat>
   <sem>
     <pdtb2 relation anno N="36" freq="33" sense="EXPANSION:Conjunction" />
     <example>hazırlanıp arabaya bindi.</example>
   </sem>
    <sem>
     <pdtb2 relation anno N="36" freq="2" sense="EXPANSION:Manner:Arg2-as-manner" />
     <example>Oğlum oturup yesene,</example>
   </sem>
   <sem>
      <pdtb2_relation anno_N="36" freq="1" sense="TEMPORAL:Synchronous" />
     <example>bu tarafa çevirip, 6 milyar kilometre öteden Dünya'nın fotoğrafını çektirdiler.</example>
   </sem>
  </svn>
</entry>
```

Figure 4: A suffixal connective -(y)Hp 'and', the senses it conveys and representative examples

```
<entry id="34" word="gibi">
  <orths>
   <orth canonical="0" orth id="34o1" type="cont">
     <part type="single">gibi</part>
   </orth>
  </orths>
  <svn>
   <cat>ADP</cat>
    <sem>
     <pdtb2 relation anno N="37" freq="6" sense="EXPANSION:Conjunction" />
      <example>kahve değirmeninin nerede olduğunu bilmediği gibi bulacağını da sanmıyordu.</example>
    </sem>
    <sem>
      <pdtb2 relation anno N="37" freg="30" sense="EXPANSION:Manner:Arg2-as-manner" />
      <example>beni büyülenmiş gibi dinliyorlardı.</example>
    </sem>
   <sem>
      <pdtb2_relation anno_N="37" freq="1" sense="COMPARISON:Similarity" />
      <example>adeta çok küçük bir kasabada yaşıyormuşuz gibi gözüküyor.</example>
    </sem>
  </svn>
</entry>
```

Figure 5: A single connective gibi 'as', the senses it conveys and representative examples

```
<entry id="50" word="ya ... ya da">
  <orths>
    <orth canonical="0" orth_id="50o1" type="discont">
      <part type="phrasal">ya ya da</part>
    </orth>
    <orth canonical="1" orth_id="50o1" type="discont">
      <part type="phrasal">Ya ya da</part>
    </orth>
  </orths>
  <syn>
    <cat>CCONJ</cat>
   <sem>
      <pdtb2 relation anno N="2" freq="2" sense="EXPANSION:Disjunction" />
      <example>ya tamamen Yok olmuşlar, ya da cins ve tür düzeyinde önemli ölçüde azalmışlardır.</example>
    </sem>
  </syn>
</entry>
```

Figure 6: A phrasal connective ya ... ya da 'either ... or', its sense and a representative example

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