BOOSTERS AS INTERACTIONAL METADISCOURSE MARKERS: A CORPUS-DRIVEN COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This paper examined and compared two corpora in terms of boosters, a category of interactional metadiscourse markers. Boosters strengtens the writers' existence, position, argument, claims, and commitment into the texts. One hundred articles are composed of the corpora; 50 from non-native researchers' papers (Turkish writers), and 50 from native researchers' papers. Two corpora were compared under 4 types of boosters: modals (type 1), adjectives and adverbs (type 2), verbs: introductory verbs and cognitve verbs (type 3), and Solidarity features/clusters (type 4). In the upshot of this research, it is seen that non-native writers overuse modal auxilarities and verbs as boosters, but underused adjectives-adverbs and Solidarity features/clusters. The two groups have similar ratios, slightly in favour of non-native writers. Besides, two group writers seem to avoid overusing boosters in their texts most probably as the literature suggests that writers intentionally avoid overusing boosters to reduce the risk of readers' opposition and not to have personal responsibility for their arguments.

Keywords: Metadiscourse, interactional markers, boosters, non-native writers, native writers

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing has always been an important skill for those who use their texts to reflect their knowledge, ideas,argument, opinion, position, stance, and/or whatever their intention. While writing, writers use specific methods and linguistic structures to achieve their aims. These linguistic structures and methods are called metadiscourse markers. Through metadiscourse markers, writers gain an advantage to transmit their message easier and more effectively when they use these markers skilfully. Also, they can give some cues to their readers about their scope and intent. Metadiscourse markers afford assistance to the writers to establish a good relationship with the readers. According to Hyland & Jiang, (2018:19), metadiscourse is the producers' interpretation on their own speaking or writing. It is one of the most productive way of modelling interaction, that is, it means the writer's rhetorical awareness of the reader as a participant in the discourse. Through metadiscourse markers, the reader can be engaged, guided and swayed by a text that is both comprehensible and persuasive. In sum, metadiscourse requires and allows writers to have familiarity with their readers, indentifying patterns of interaction specific to different language and geNWes mostly in terms of academic area (Hyland and Jiang, 2018:20).

Bax, et al. (2019:80) propound that metadiscourse markers are useful as they have at least two functions: textual level and interpersonal level. The former provides cohesion among the text and indicates structural relationships, such as conjunctive and/or additive, adversarial,

causal and temporal, in the text to convince the readers. The latter shows the writer's attitude, position, aim, and intention to the text or to the text's subject matter.

Academic texts are one of the significant grounds that metadiscourse markers are commonly used. Sure, the academic writers do not aim to transmit scientific and ideational data plainly, but to project their identity and presence through some rhetorical strategies and pragmatic features of the language (Hyland, 2002). Unlike in the past, as Hyland (2004) remarks, academic writers do not just write comprehensibly about external realities; contrariwise they utilize the language in a convincing and persuasive way to give voice to themselves and declare their work and product. Also, they use the language to sustain social relations with readers. He considers metadiscourse markers as a key feature of successful academic writing. Academic writers can balance their existence in their texts, pursue the rapport between them and the readers, commentate their product, and acknowledge another views. Çapar and Turan (2020:325) say that academic writers use a specific language to interact with and to convince the readers. Also they affirm that academic writers basically have two aims by using metadiscourse: the first is to ease the comprehension of the text, make it more proper to and plausible for readers, and the second is to grap the readers' attention and to pursue the interaction with them. Because when writers manage the interaction with the readers, they can strengthen their arguments and propositions, and may pave the way to maket hem more acceptable by the readers (Hyland, 2005). In a similar vein, Hyland and Jiang (2018:19) indicate that Writers write their academic works sensitively to the expectancy and aspects of a specific disciplinary group. That is why one can find the the traces of the social interaction between writer and reader in academic texts. Writers try to balance their arguments for their research against the opinions and expentancies of of the readers. Through metadiscourse instruments, writers can detect readers'probable objections, background knowledge, rhetorical expectations ans processing needs (Hyland and Jiang, 2018:19).

Çapar and Turan (2020:350) also remark that each culture has its own norms and writers do not have to adjust their rhetoric norms according to the target language. All the same, they had better learn norms of the target language if they desire to publish in international journals. On the other hand, Hyland (2005:175) emphasizes that interaction in academic writing essentially involves 'positioning', or adopting a point of view in relation to both the issues discussed in the text and to others who hold points of view on those issues." As seen, interaction between the writer and reader in academic writing is a stubborn truth, and the writer takes position, or employs a point of view according to the issues in the context and the interlocutors to those issues.

Similarly, Hyland, (2020:109) accepts metadiscourse as "the interpersonal resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader". Therefore, through metadiscourse, Hyland (2004) points out that it can be understood how academic writers state their interpersonal insights, or how they efform their arguments to form persuading and coherent discourse specific to certain social and institutional contexts. He (2000:148) highlights that the importance of metadiscourse as an analytical tool therefore lies in its close association with the contexts in which it occurs. That is to say, the contexts involving metadiscourse and the significance of metadiscourse as an analytical instrument are parallel to one another. Thanks to this joint, writers express themselves and their propositions

and build rapport with their readers according to specific social and professional groups' needs and/or desires. That's why metadiscourse analysis is crucial for examining the different academic groups' texts and language preferences. Briefly, we can understand from the texts that how writers assume their readers and accordingly use a specific language specific to contexts (Hyland, (2011). Stating that writers from different disciplines assume their readers differently, and use different language rhetorics to verbalize temselves, their arguments, Hyland (2005:187) examplifies this case as follows that those writers from humanities and social sciences appear and involve more saliently in their texts than those writers from the science and the engineering fields. Similarly, Hyland and Jiang (2018) explored that even though writer from hard sciences are more formal in their academic writing, the same case is not valid for those from social sciences. For instance, academic writers such as biologists and electronic engineers generally feel themselves more explicitly in their texts and are eager to connect with the reader than applied linguists and sociologists do (2018:18).

Hyland (2005) claims that academic writing has recently shifted from its neutral form to a more subjective one, which involves writers' convincing effort and interaction with readers. Writers are no longer just writing to submit their findings and/or arguments, but to establish and improve social relations with readers. His claim is that academic writing achievement relies on the rhetorical decisions about interpersonal involvement. He suggests a model of metadiscoursal resources of academic interaction to show how writers use specific language for specific communities to make their presence and position felt by readers (Hyland, 2005:190). Two ways provide this interpersonal intrusion, each one has been called with several names for the same thing: the first is organizational (Hyland, 2001)/engagement (Hyland, 2005)/interactive resources (Thompson, 2001), and the second one is evaluative (Hyland, 2001)/stance (Hyland, 2005)/interactional resources (Thompson, 2001). Hereupon, the terms "interactive resources" and "interactional resources" are going to be used in this paper for these multi-named terms.

Interactive resources/textual markers are the means used by writers for managing the text fluency and information flow. As Hyland (2004) states, writers use interactive resources to organize discourse to perceive readers' knowledge and reflect their assessment for constraining or guiding them. In sum, the interactive resources have instrumental functions in the discourse. They carry out their functions through Transitions, Frame markers, Endophoric markers, Evidentials, Code glosses. On the other hand, interactional resources/interpersonal markers are the tools that the authors use to show their position, presence, and attitude in the interaction, the degree of consistency and closeness with the norms of the target audience, and level of relationship between writers and readers. These tools are Hedges, Boosters, Attitude markers, Engagement markers, and Self-mentions (Hyland, 2004). All these markers are shown in the table below adopted from Hyland (2004:139):

Table 1: A model of Metadiscourse Markers in Academic Tests

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive resources	Help to guide reader through the text	
Transitions	Express semantic relation between main clauses	In addition/but/thus/and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	Finally/to conclude/my purpose is to
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above/see Fig./in Section 2
Evidentials	Refer to source of information from other texts	According to X/(Y, 1990)/Z states
Code glosses	Help readers grasp meanings of ideational material	Namely/e.g./such as/in other words
Interactional resources	Involve the reader in the argument	
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to proposition	Might/perhaps/possible/about
Boosters	Emphasise force or writer's certainty in proposition	In fact definitely/it is clear that
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude proposition	Unfortunately/I to agree/surprisingly
Engagement markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	Consider/note that/you can see that
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to author(s)	I/we/my/our

According to Bax et al. (2019:80), in this scheme the interactive resources deal with organizing the text while interactional resources direct the social dimensions of the task and allow for commentary on the intended message by the writer. Although the table involves both categories, this study's focus is the boosters in the "interactional resources" category.

Çapar and Turan (2020:328) call the interactional resources as a "textual voice" for the writers which help them to express themselves, their attitude and establish connection with the readers. Writers can guide and/or lead their readers through their discourse via these markers. According to Hyland and Jiang (2018), the role of interactional markers is constructing a discourse according to the readers needs and easing the comprehension of the writers' interpretations and goals by readers.

"Boosters express certainty and emphasize the force of propositions." (Hyland, 2001a). When writers wish to strengthen the force and persuasiveness of their claims, arguments, and propositions, using boosters is a preferred practical way as these markers highlight the certainty of the expressions. Boosters help writers to state their certainty and presence in the text, and their connection with the reader (Hyland, 2005). Also, they allow writers to be more certain, and to avoid conflicting opinions in their expressions.

Through boosters, writers can submit their works with more self-reliance (Hyland, 2005). According to Kondowe (2014:218), when writers are sure about their claims, or if their statements include true and universally proven ideas, they should use overt boosters. He (2014:216) classifies boosters into three categories: modal auxilaries, adjectives-adverbs, and solidarity features.

Table 2: A Model of Booster Markers in Academic Tests

Category	Type	Resources
Boosters	Type 1:High commitment modals	Must.Should.Have to.Need to
	Type 2:Adjective and adverbs	Certainly.definitely.obviously.
	Type 3: Solidarty features	It is a well-known.It is a fact.We all know

The first one is consist of modals with higher degree of commitment such as must, should, have to, and need to. The second category deals with adjectives and adverbs such as certain/ly, definite/ly, and obvious/ly which are used for showing confidence. Lastly, phrases like "it is well-known, it is a fact, as we all know" compose the third category as solidarity features. In this study, in addition to these three categories, I also searched and formed "verbs" category. The "verbs" category is divided into two sub-categories: a) cognitive verbs such as "believe*, know*, recognize*, think*, …" b) introductory verbs such as "demonstrate*, find*, prove*, show*, …". The asterisk means these verbs are searched in all their forms like bare, past participle, progressive tense forms, third-person singular form in present tense, etc.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study basically intended to compare two corpora in terms of interactional/ interpersonal metadiscourse markers. The main focus was on boosters among interactional metadiscourse markers. As a scheme, I used Hyland (2004:139) categorisation on the basis and Kondowe's (2014:217) categorization of boosters in specific. The former is comprehensive, clear, recent, simple (Abdi, 2011), and widely used while the latter is more exhaustive than the first in terms of boosters. Thus, a combination of both would work best for this study. Additionally, I attached one more category as "verbs" which I divided into two subcategories: introductory verbs and cognitive verbs.

The database of corpora consisted of the articles of native Writers (NWs) and non-native Writers (NNWs). As a geNWe, I determined on English Language Teaching (ELT). Therefore, to examine how NWs and NNWs used boosters in their articles, 100 articles (50 from NW and 50 from NNW) were chosen according the following factors:

a) from the field of ELT,

b) from refereed international journals published both online and as hard copy,

c) from 2021 to backwards, but not more than 5 years.

AntConc software (Anthony, 2014), a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis, was used for the quantitative analysis. To operate this software, the articles were converted into text format. On the other hand, I took into account the boosters list from the most common metadiscourse words and phrases list in academic writing by Hyland (2005). However, this list is not absolute but can be extendable according to the needs of the context.

It should be kept in mind that the context also needs to be taken into account to ensure that the words and/or phrases are used as the discourse markers. Therefore, after detecting the frequencies of boosters via AntConc software, the boosters were analyzed manually in terms of meaning and function for uttermore comprehension. The words and/or phrases in the

concordance lines were checked one by one to assure whether their functions as metadiscourse interactional boosters or not. The ones unconforming the definitions above were subtracted. See the Appendix for the last version of my focus scheme basically adopted from Hyland (2004:139), additionally from Kondowe's categorization of boosters (2014:217), and also from the writer himself some minor adjustments.
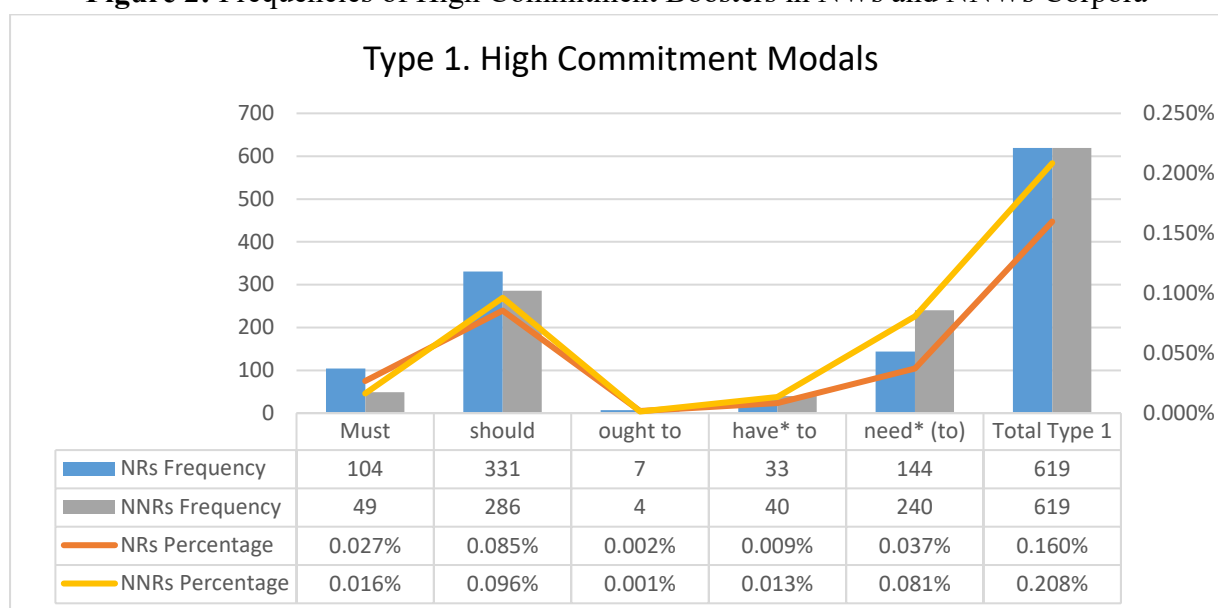
3. FINDINGS

The corpora are consisted of 100 articles, one half is from NNWs articles and the other from NWs articles. As it is seen from Figure 1, Non-native corpus has 297001 word tokens, and 11496 word types while the native corpus has 387418 word tokens and 15708 word types. Both in terms of tokens and types, native corpus has more than non-native one.

Figure 1. Comparison of Corpora Sizes
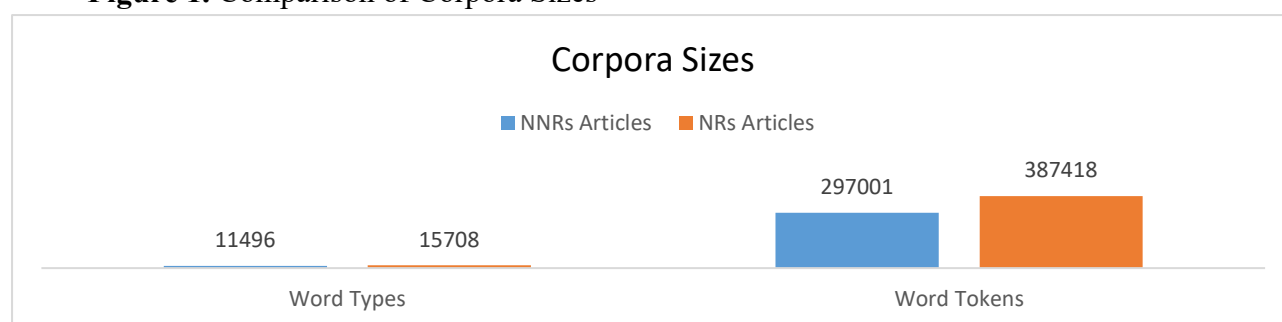

3.1. Comparision of Type 1 Boosters (Modals)

Type 1 is composed of high commitment modal auxilaries like must, should, ought to, have to, and need (to). The corpus of NNWs has 619 modal usages (see Figure 2), and the corpus of NWs has interestingly and synchronically the same number in total (see Figure 3). However, the percentages are different; while in the former corpus, "must" is used at the rate of 0,016%, it is 0,027% fort he latter corpus. Also, according to the findings, NNWs mostly prefer "should" to support the commitment of their statements with 0,096%. NWs used "should with 0.085%, slightly lower than the NNWs. Both groups underused "ought to", NNWs with 0,001% and NWs with 0,002%. "have to" is preferred with 0,013% by NNWs, and with 0,009% by NWs.

Figure 2: Frequencies of High Commitment Boosters in NWs and NNWs Corpora

Type 1. High Commitment Modals

	Must	should	ought to	have* to	need* (to)	Total Type 1
NRs Frequency	104	331	7	33	144	619
NNRs Frequency	49	286	4	40	240	619
NRs Percentage	0.027%	0.085%	0.002%	0.009%	0.037%	0.160%
NNRs Percentage	0.016%	0.096%	0.001%	0.013%	0.081%	0.208%

The frequency of "need (to)" is most clear numerical distinction in modals between two corpora. NNWs use "need (to)" nearly two times more frequent than NWs in terms of percentages. NNWs used this modal with 0,081% while NWs used it with 0,037%. In total, modal auxilaries as High Commitment Boosters were prefered by NNWs with 0,208% while this ratio is 0,160% for NWs.

3.2. Comparision of Type 2 Boosters (Adjestives and Adverbs)

In terms of adjestives and adverbs as boosters, the corpora groups have similar percentages favoring NWs. While NNWs have a ratio of 0,080% (Figure 4), NWs scored as 0,108% (Figure 5). "actually, always, clearly, evident, in deed, obvious, never, really, in fact" are the most frequently used adjectives and adverbs as boosters in two corpora.

Figure 3: Frequencies of Adjectives and Adverbs as Boosters in NWs and NNWs Corpora
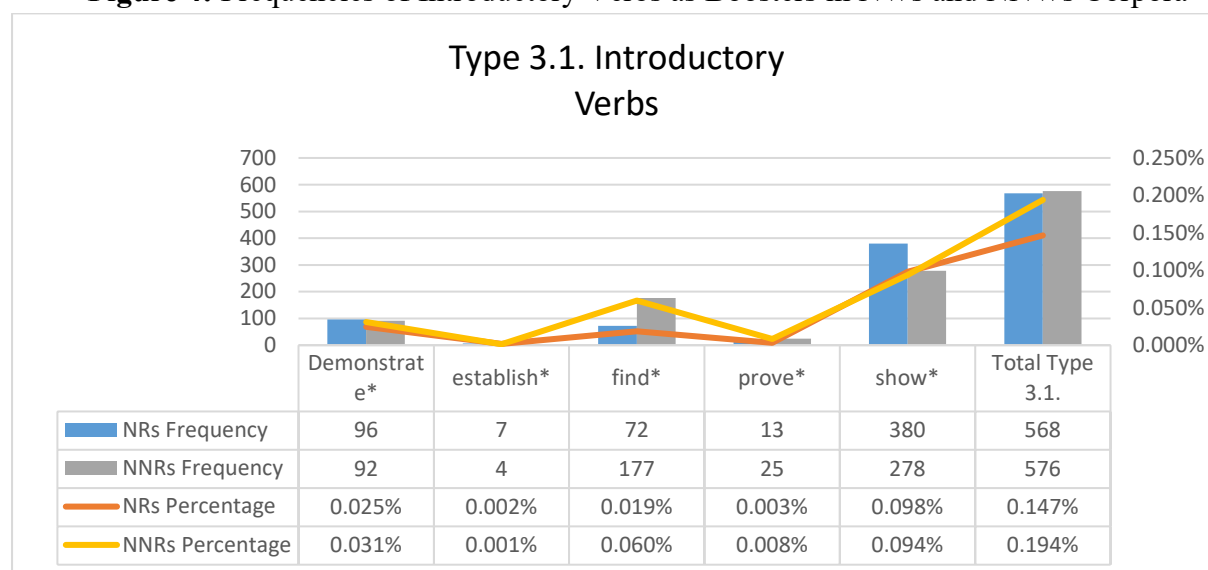

Type 2. Adjestives and Adverbs
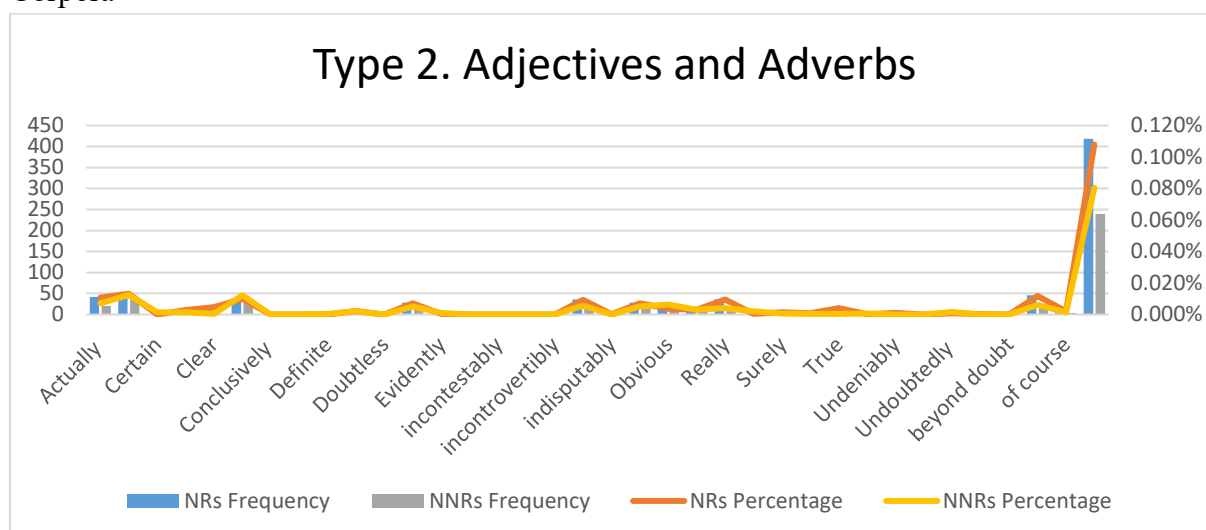
Even though the total ratios of Type 2 boosters in two corpora are in general close to each other, specifically there are some differences. For instance, NNWs used "in fact" as 0,006% while the same adverb is used as 0,012%.

3.3.   Comparision of Verbs Type 3.1. (introductory verbs)
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In Type 3, two sub-categories are defined; introductory verbs and cognitve verbs. For the first category, both groups have nearby ratios in total. NNWs used "introductory verbs" as boosters with 0,194% (Figure 7) while NWs used these verbs with 0,147%.

Figure 4: Frequencies of Introductory Verbs as Boosters in NWs and NNWs Corpora
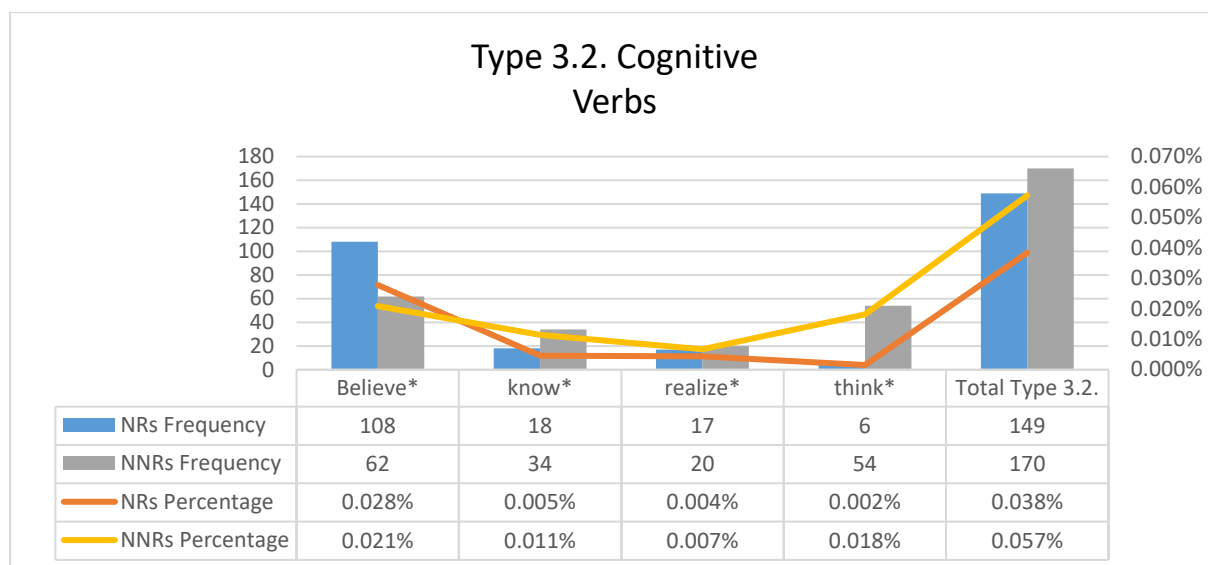

Type 3.1. Introductory Verbs

	Demonstrate*	establish*	find*	prove*	show*	Total Type 3.1.
NRs Frequency	96	7	72	13	380	568
NNRs Frequency	92	4	177	25	278	576
NRs Percentage	0.025%	0.002%	0.019%	0.003%	0.098%	0.147%
NNRs Percentage	0.031%	0.001%	0.060%	0.008%	0.094%	0.194%

Peculiarly, the most evident distinction between verbs ratios belongs to "find"; it is 0,060% in NNWs while it is 0,019% in NWs. Also, NNWs overused "prove" (0,008%) than NWs did (0,003%).

3.3.2.   Comparision of Type 3.2.(cognitive verbs)

The second category for Type 3 is the "cognitive verbs" which writers use as boosters. In this category, NNWs leave behind NWs except "believe".

Figure 5: Frequencies of Cognitive Verbs as Boosters in NWs and NNWs Corpora
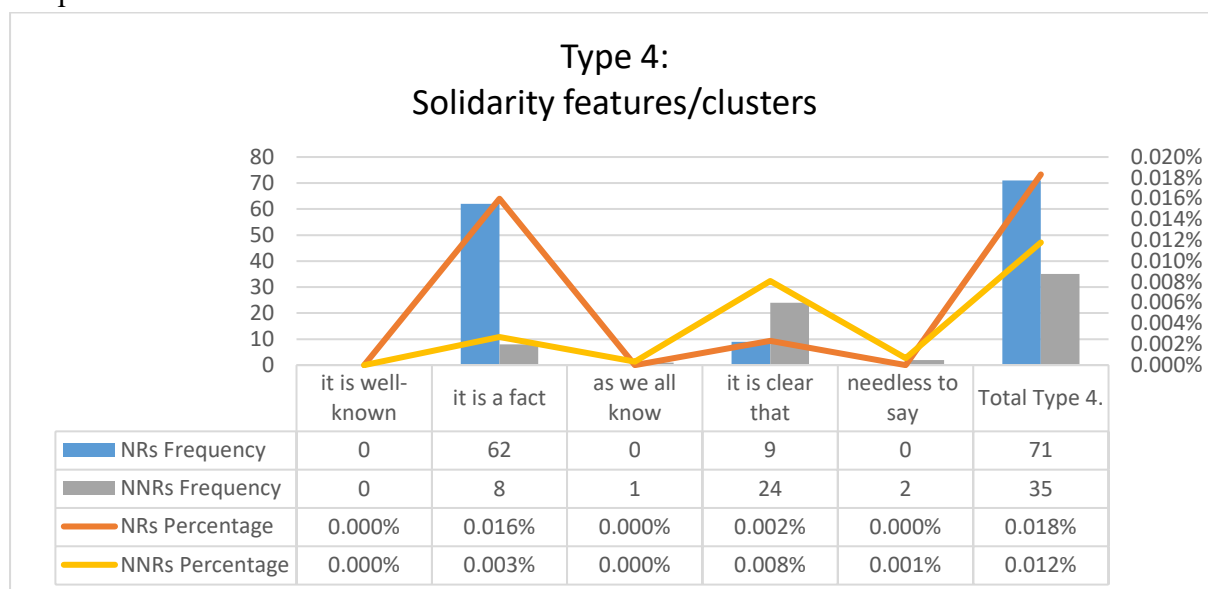
Type 3.2. Cognitive Verbs

	Believe*	know*	realize*	think*	Total Type 3.2.
NRs Frequency	108	18	17	6	149
NNRs Frequency	62	34	20	54	170
NRs Percentage	0.028%	0.005%	0.004%	0.002%	0.038%
NNRs Percentage	0.021%	0.011%	0.007%	0.018%	0.057%

"know, realize, think" are overused by NNWs while just "believe" is overshoot by NWs. In total, NNWs have the proportion of 0,057% while NWs have 0,038%.

3.4.   Comparision of Type 4 (Solidarity Features/Clusters)

The last group is Type 4 which includes "Solidarity Features/Clusters" as boosters. In this category, NWs (Figure 11: 0,018%) beat NNWs (Figure 10: 0,012%)in terms of using the expressions like "it is well-known, it is a fact, as we all know, it is clear that, needless to say".

Figure 6: Frequencies of Solidarity Features/Clusters as Boosters in NWs and NNWs Corpora

Type 4: Solidarity features/clusters

	it is well-known	it is a fact	as we all know	it is clear that	needless to say	Total Type 4.
NRs Frequency	0	62	0	9	0	71
NNRs Frequency	0	8	1	24	2	35
NRs Percentage	0.000%	0.016%	0.000%	0.002%	0.000%	0.018%
NNRs Percentage	0.000%	0.003%	0.000%	0.008%	0.001%	0.012%

"it is clear that" is the mostly used one in NNWs texts (0,008%) and "it is a fact" follows it with 0,003%. On the other hand, NWs overused "it is a fact" with 0,016%. There is not a significant difference for other expressions.

3.5.   Comparision of Grand Total Ratio of Boosters

The two corpora have a close ratio of boosters in general: NNWs with 0,552%, and NWs with 0,471%, in favour of NNWs. Non-native writers overused type 1 (modals), and type 3 (verbs: in both sub-categories).

Figure 7: Comparision of Grand Total Ratios of Boosters in NWs and NNWs Corpora
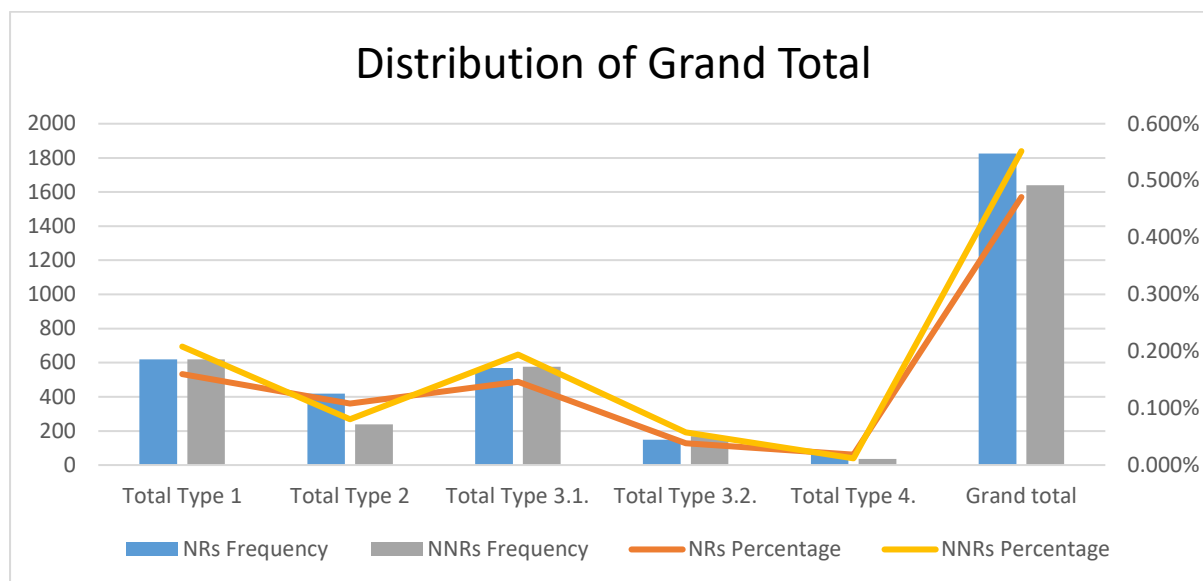
On the other hand, non-native writers underused type 2 (adjectives and adverbs) and type 4 (solidarity features/clusters). This may result from the reason that NNWs can master English language better in terms of modals and verbs than adjectives, adverbs and solidarity features/clusters becasue modals and verbs are the basic features used more commonly of a language. This may cater for easier learning of them. On the other hand, it is natural and understandable that natives of a language are better than non-natives for adjecetives, adverbs and solidarity features/clusters because these features are not as common as modals and verbs. Non-natives may not master a language in terms of adjectives, adverbs and solidarity features/clusters as natives are. They may have difficulty learning and using them in contrast to what they do for the modals and verbs. Presumably, that is why non-natives (here, Turkish writers) prefer to use them less frequently than native writers do.

4. CONCLUSION

In this comperative study, I tried to find differences between non-native writers texts and native writers texts with regards to booster as interactional metadiscourse markers. Boosters are examined under 4 types: modal auxilaries, adjectives-adverbs, verbs, solidarity features/clusters. The third category "verbs" is divided into two sub-categories: introductory verbs and cognitive verbs. All four types are examined and compared with one another. In each category, words are searched one by one through a software program (Antconc). The boosters are detected by reading all the concordance lines to determine whether they are used as a booster or not as one word may have different roles in the same context.

Figure 8: Comparision of Grand Total Ratios of Boosters by Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator

Log-likelihood Ratio Calculator				
	Non-native		**Native**	
Corpus Size 1	297001		Corpus Size 2	387418
Word	**Freq. in Corpus Non-native**	**Freq. in Corpus Native**	**Log-likelihood**	**Sig.**
Type 1	619	619	21,80	0,000 *** +
Type 2	239	418	13,39	0,000 *** -
Type 3.1.	576	568	22,32	0,000 *** +
Type 3.2.	170	149	12,58	0,000 *** +
Type 4	35	71	4,77	0,029 * -

As shown in Figure 13, non-native writers overused modals and verbs (introductory and cognitve) more than native writers. On the other side, non-native writers underused adjectives-adverbs and solidarity features/clusters than native writers. As stated above, it is related to, in my judgement, non-natives' proficiency level in contrast to natives. Non-natives may have the command of target language in terms of modals and verbs, but not feel as comfortable as natives for using adjectives-adverbs, and solidarity features/clusters.

Also, when the total ratios of boosters in two corpora are examined(0,552% by NNWs, and 0,471% by NWs), non-natives slightly get ahead of natives in the sense of using boosters. These differences may result from writers'culture. As stated before, Çapar and Turan (2020) highlighted that each culture has its norms. Thus, Turkish writers may prefer to be more certain and build a more credible presentation of their identity and work (Hyland, 2002) in their claims than non-natives.

On the other hand, it can be said that both non-native writers and native writers, in the grand scheme of things, similarly avoid overusing boosters in their texts. This result supports the literature as Kondowe (2014) states that writers intentionally avoid overusing boosters to reduce the risk of readers' opposition and not to have personal responsibility for their arguments.

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