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Discourse markers in EFL setting: Perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers

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Discourse markers are seen as one of the fundamental units in spoken discourse due to their frequent and multifunctional use by native speakers of English. Discourse markers also have significance in foreign language instruction. In this respect, this study explored the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers towards the use of discourse markers in terms of the pragmatic and pedagogic value and their representations in EFL classrooms. To this end, a questionnaire was administered to 104 EFL instructors working at seven different state universities in Turkey. The quantitative analyses of the data yielded that the teachers had positive perceptions towards discourse markers by finding them necessary for improving pragmatic competence of language learners. They also stated that discourse markers had teaching value so they highlighted them in their instruction. Moreover, the study also discussed the integration of discourse markers into language instruction. The study had some implications for further discussion over the issue of discourse markers in terms of investigating teacher talk, real classroom practices during language teaching instruction and teaching materials.

Key words: Discourse markers, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, spoken discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Discourse markers (henceforth DM) are important features of spoken language in terms of their frequency and multi-functionality in spoken discourse. They are commonly preferred discourse items used by particularly native speakers of English. Due to their significance as 'sharing devices and intimacy signals in our everyday talk' (Quirk et al., 1985, p.179), their pragmatic and indispensable value is salient in spoken discourse.

DMs are defined as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p.31). In other words, DMs are seen as textual and cohesive elements in discourse by depending on the previous or following units. Thus, connectivity is one of the fundamental features of DMs as they signal relationships between the utterances. Moreover, DMs can exist in several grammatical classes; verbs (*look, listen, see*), conjunctions (*and, but, nevertheless*) or non-finite clauses (*you know, i mean, to be honest*). Aijmer (2002) points out that they should be studied from functional and pragmatic perspective rather than grammatical classifications.

According to Louwerse and Mitchell (2003), DMs mostly occur in spoken rather than written discourse. For example, Carter and McCarthy (2006) list the most

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Table 1. 1A core functional paradigm of DMs in pedagogic discourse.

Interpersonal	Referential	Structural	Cognitive
Marking shared knowledge: *See, you see, you know, listen*	Cause: *Because, cos* Contrast: *But, and, yet, however, nevertheless*	Opening and closing of topics: *Now, OK/okay, right/alright, well, let's start, let's discuss, let me conclude the discussion*	Denoting thinking process: *Well, I think, I see, and*
Indicating attitudes: *well, really, I think, obviously, absolutely, basically, actually, exactly, sort of, kind of, like, to be frank, to be honest, just, oh*	Coordination: *And* Disjunction: *Or*	Sequence: *First, firstly, second, secondly, next, then, finally*	Reformulation/Self-correction: *I mean, that is, in other words, what I mean is, to put it in another way*
	Consequence: *So*	Topic shifts: *So, now, well, and what about, how about*	Elaboration: *Like, I mean*
Showing responses: *OK/okay, oh, right/alright, yeah, yes, I see, great, oh great, sure, yeah*	Digression: *Anyway*	Summarizing opinions: *So*	Hesitation: *Well, sort of*
	Comparison: *Likewise, similarly*	Continuation of topics: *Yeah, and, cos, so*	Assessment of the listener's knowledge about the utterances: *You know*

common DMs in everyday spoken language which are single words such as *anyway, cos, fine, good, great, like, now, okay, right, so, well* and phrasal and clausal items such as *you know, I mean, as I say, for a start, mind you*. Furthermore, DMs are also known as optional elements in spoken discourse. Their removal from the utterance may not change the grammaticality of the utterance. They do not influence the truth condition of the proposition (Schourup, 1999). In other words, they do not contribute to the content of the utterance. However, these criteria do not make them unnecessary elements in an utterance. They are peculiar as they "reflect choices of monitoring, organisation and management exercised by the speaker" (Carter and McCarthy, 2006, p. 208).

DMs are multi-functional and multi-categorical elements. Fung and Carter (2007) gather the functions of DMs in four categories: interpersonal, referential, structural and cognitive. As seen in Table 1, classifying a DM into only one functional category is difficult. Speakers may use these items for several purposes. For example, *you know* can be used not only for marking shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener but also for assessing the listener's knowledge about the utterances (Fung and Carter, 2007, p.418).

Due to their significance in native discourse, DMs have been of interest in second/foreign language teaching. They have been seen as necessary items in spoken discourse to promote communicative and pragmatic competence of the speakers (Hellermann and Vergun, 2007; Lam, 2009; Müller, 2005; O'Keeffe et al., 2007; Wierzbicka, 1991). Trillo (2002) states that pragmatic distance is not displayed to non-native speakers of English. According to Trillo (2002), pragmatic distance is defined as "the variants in the social, cognitive and contextual dimensions of linguistic communication that govern and systematize social relations in speech" (p. 771). Thus, the level of exposure of non-native speakers

to pragmatic items in discourse may limit their naturalness in the target language, especially in EFL setting. Non-native speakers also use DMs in their own language significantly, but they do not feel independent and confident when using DMs in the target language. This inability to use DMs in their spoken interaction may make the speakers "potentially disempowered and at risk of becoming a second-class participant' (O'Keeffe et al., 2007, p.39). Wierzbicka (1991) states, from a pedagogical perspective, failing to master the use of discourse particles may seriously impair the communicative competence of learners.

Furthermore, Trillo's comparative study (2002) investigates the use of pragmatic markers in speech of native and non-native speakers of English, in the case of children and adults. It concludes that if there is no consistent teaching of pragmatic markers in language instruction, the use of pragmatic markers becomes fossilized in quantity and the diversity. Similarly, Müller's studies (2004, 2005) point out that there are fewer and different functions of DMs used by German speakers of English when compared to the native data. Moreover, Fung and Carter's (2007) study compares a pedagogic sub-corpus of spoken British English and a corpus of classroom discussions in Hong Kong secondary schools. Thus, they find out that native speakers use DMs for a wider variety of pragmatic functions when compared to Hong Kong learners of English who used *yeah, really, say, sort of, I see, you see, well, right, actually* in relatively restricted sense.

How DMs should be taught or promoted in language classrooms have also been discussed and searched. In this sense, the role of teaching materials and the teacher in a language classroom are significant. Lam's (2009) study on investigating *well* in 15 textbooks concludes that none of the textbooks has a separate section to describe *well* for improving oral skills. This study reveals that

textbooks lack a detailed description and presentation of DMs as used in real-life contexts. Thus, "such textbooks are so detached from reality that they have ultimately lost their pedagogical value" (Lam, 2009, p.277). Sert and Seedhouse's (2011) review on conversation analysis also discusses the authenticity of dialogues in language teaching materials. They suggest that although each ordinary conversation may not always be the best material in teaching, the textbooks should be able to include naturally occurring talk with the examples of scripted conversations.

Hellermann and Vergun's (2007) study on the DMs *well, you know, like* which are not explicitly taught at beginning to adult learners of English also suggest some implications. They conclude that the teachers in language classrooms play a fundamental role in promoting DMs to language learners. They suggest that although the teachers do not need to spend a particular time on DMs, learners should be made aware of DMs and their pragmatic functions. Thus, it has been discussed that the DMs should be taught explicitly or implicitly in language classrooms by the teacher. Moreover, teacher talk during instruction may also be guiding while learners are not focusing on these items. In this sense, the attitudes of the teachers towards DMs need attention. Fung's (2011) study investigates the attitudes of 132 Hong Kong teachers working in secondary schools towards the use of DMs in their classrooms. This study reveals that although the teachers have a certain positive sense of DMs in terms of pragmatic and pedagogic value, they state that DMs are underrepresented in materials and instruction.

As a result, the literature focusing on DMs in several aspects has been increasing and diversifying recently. Previous research has addressed several aspects of DMs such as DMs used by native speakers of English and their functions (Aijmer, 1987; Erman, 1987; Schiffrin, 1986; Schourup, 1999) and DMs in different languages rather than English (Bazzanella and Morra, 1990; Chen and He, 2001). Although the interest towards the pedagogical significance of DMs in ESL/EFL classrooms has been increasing (Fung and Carter, 2007; Lam, 2009; Müller, 2004; Trillo 2002), little attention has been given to the perceptions of teachers towards DMs (Fung, 2011). However, teachers' beliefs can provide insights into the pedagogic practice of DMs. While the performance of language learners in using DMs and their awareness has been studied mostly, awareness, experience and viewpoints of EFL teachers about DMs should also be studied. Therefore, the present research attempts to explore the issue in the Turkish context by investigating the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers towards the use of DMs in EFL classrooms. The questions guiding the research were as follows:

1. How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive DMs in terms of their pedagogic and pragmatic value?
2. What do Turkish EFL teachers think about how DMs should be represented in the classrooms?
3. How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive the current representation of DMs in language classrooms?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were selected via convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). They were 104 EFL instructors teaching students of different levels of language proficiency at English preparatory programs from seven different large state universities in four different cities of Turkey. Instructors were invited to fill in the online questionnaire by email. Thus, the teachers participated in the study on a voluntary basis. As for the demographics of teachers, 75% were females while 25% of the teachers were males. In terms of the qualifications, 79% of the teachers held a BA degree in English Language Teaching, 16 % of them a BA in English or American literature, 4% a BA in translating and interpreting, and only 1 % a BA in linguistics. 56% of the instructors held MA while 10 % held PhD degree in TEFL. As far as the years of experience in teaching are concerned, 34% of the respondents had 1-4 years, 23% of them had five to nine years and 43% of them had over 10 years of teaching experience. Regarding the teaching hours per week, 32% of them give English courses between 12-15 h weekly, 12 %, between 15-18 h; 56%, over 18 teaching h. Briefly, the participants were predominantly females, the graduates of English Language Teaching, qualified and mostly experienced teachers of English.

Data collection

The data for the research objectives were collected through an online questionnaire adapted from Fung (2011). Permission to use the instrument was granted by the corresponding author via e-mail. The questionnaire consists of 48 items including the linguistic, pedagogic, cultural and pragmatic aspects of the use of DMs. The questionnaire was adapted by the researcher along with the viewpoints of 5 experts with PhD holder in ELT. In line with their feedback, some of the statements were clarified while some were re-arranged according to Turkish EFL context. The questionnaire is a five-point Likert scale which is helpful in terms of revealing teachers' perceptions. Likert scales are used for measuring people's attitudes for social issues (Busch, 1993) and how respondents feel about a number of statements (Brown, 2001). The scales included have the continuum as as follows: 1: Strongly agree; 2: Agree; 3: Uncertain; 4: Disagree; 5: Strongly Disagree. Some of the statements in the questionnaire were positively worded while some were negatively worded to counter-check the reliability of the statements.

Data analysis

The study employed two methods of quantitative analysis on the questionnaire through SPSSv 15.0 for Windows: reliability analysis and (confirmatory) factor analysis. For the reliability analysis, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as 0.789 which displays that the questionnaire has moderately acceptable reliability. Moreover, an item-total correlation test was performed to check if any item in the set of tests is inconsistent with the averaged behaviour of the others, and thus can be discarded. This analysis displayed that no item had value smaller than .30, which displays that the list of the items or items were reliable.

Factor analysis was done to identify the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Factor analysis is conducted to "reduce the number of variables submitted to the analysis to a few values that

Table 2. Factor 1: Pragmatic value of DMs.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor loadings
1. DMs can oil the wheels of communication.	1.55	.83	.750
2. Knowledge of DMs helps processing information in listening.	1.75	.82	.746
3. DMs can display the speakers' attitude.	1.69	.78	.686
7. The sequence of the speakers' mental thoughts can be displayed clearly through DMs.	1.93	.77	.539
12. Showing responses with DMs can yield a softening and facilitative effect.	1.71	.71	.513
26. Students can benefit in public examinations, especially in listening comprehension, if they know what DMs are.	1.86	.76	.636
28. Students can follow a university lecture better in the future, especially those conducted by native speakers, if they know the meanings DMs point to.	1.72	.71	.657
29. Students can understand native speakers better in their future workplace if they know what DMs are.	1.73	.81	.716

will still contain most of the information found in the original variables" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.233). After the first Component Factor Analysis, item 9 was excluded from the analysis as its factor load of .22 was below 0.40, the accepted value for correlation between the factor and item. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measure of sampling adequacy was .686, above the recommended value of .6 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (p = 0,000 / χ^2= 2464.716; p<0.01).

The results of the factor analysis revealed that seven factor loadings were rotated through the responses of the teachers. Appendix A shows the factor loading matrix including the factor loadings of all variables on each factor. The factor loading matrix displays similarities with Fung's (2011) results. Similar items were mostly represented under the same factor. Some of the factors were named similarly with Fung's (2011) study while some were re-named according to the adapted versions of the items. Each factor is presented with the relevant items in the corresponding tables.

RESULTS

RQ1. How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive DMs in terms of their pedagogic and pragmatic value?

Factor 1, 2 and 3 display how Turkish EFL teachers perceive DMs in terms of pedagogic and pragmatic value. The items under Factor 1, named as *the pragmatic value of DMs*, investigate the attitudes of the teachers towards the DMs in terms of their communicative and pragmatic competence aspect, stated in Table 2.

These items correspond with the multi-functionality of DMs in spoken discourse; such as turn-taking, responding, listening and cognitive processing in interactional exchanges. Moreover, the items (26, 28, 29) clearly display that how knowledge of DMs help and facilitate language learners in real life; such as in future workplaces, in future exams which include testing listening proficiency and following a university lecture. The results of the means (1.55-1.93) and the small mag-nitude of the standard deviations (0.71-0.83) indicate that the teachers have considerably positive perceptions

about the pragmatic value of DMs.

Furthermore, Factor 2, in Table 3, deals with mainly the optionality and non-truth conditionality characteristic of DMs in spoken discourse. These items question whether DMs are optional and influence the truth conditions of the utterances or not.

There are different viewpoints about the dispensable value of DMs. As items 4, 5 and 8 reflect, the teachers accept that DMs are useful and necessary devices to assist listeners to comprehend the conversation, to have coherence and to relate the ideas in talk. On the other hand, they also accept the subsidiary role of DMs in spoken discourse. Since the results of the items 6, 10, 13 and 14 indicate, they have a tendency to accept that the conversation can still be understood by means of other linguistic clues such as grammar and vocabulary without DMs. Moreover, item 19 also reflects that the teachers accept that the use of DMs by the students in spoken language is fairly less when compared to the use of discourse connectives (namely conjunctions) in their written discourse.

Factor 3 in Table 4 presents the items related to the pedagogic value of DMs in terms of their significance to teach and learn during language teaching and learning process. Particularly, according to the items 23, 24 and 25 (mean: 4.19-4.25), the teachers in the study accept that DMs have teaching value. They disagree that DMs are small, redundant and meaningless words.

Moreover, they agree that linguistic awareness about DMs should be developed (item 20) and the language learners should have proficiency of DMs to improve their speaking and listening skills (items 22 and 27). These results imply that the teachers have positive attitudes towards teaching DMs in language classrooms. However, they have uncertain attitudes towards whether to leave the idea of learning DMs in the future on their own to the students (item 38, mean: 3.28). They are also not clear about the level that the students should be able to speak DMs as native speakers do.

Table 3. Factor 2: Dispensable value of DMs.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor loadings
4. DMs are not very useful devices to guide listeners to understand the conversation.	4.01	1.14	-.702
5. DMs do not necessarily help to orientate the listener to the overall idea structure and sequence in talk.	3.91	.99	-.514
6. It is an effective listening strategy for listeners to focus closely on the key words in talk without referring to DMs.	2.89	1.11	.464
8. Without DMs the conversation would become bitty and incoherent.	2.11	.94	.449
10. I can still understand the conversation using other linguistic clues rather than referring to the DMs.	2.50	.98	.630
11. DMs do not necessarily help to signal relationships between ideas in talk.	3.77	.88	-.505
13. Without DMs the conversation is still coherent and interpretable.	3.20	.98	.620
14. DMs appear to be redundant in the conversation.	3.23	.96	.623
19. Students have traditionally been taught to speak in written language form (e.g. using conjunctions in their writing) and they seldom display DMs in their speech.	2.01	.91	.441

Table 4. Factor 3: Pedagogic value of DMs.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor loadings
20. It is necessary to create and develop linguistic awareness of DMs and promote proficiency in the actual use of them.	1.73	.79	.712
21. There is no need to promote spontaneous understanding of DMs as a fluency device in spoken language.	3.84	1.00	-.495
22. Students should be helped to exploit DMs to improve their speaking and listening skills.	1.83	.78	.728
23. DMs are only small words in conversation and it is not worth the time to teach them.	4.19	1.04	-.502
24. DMs do not carry specific meaning and there is not much teaching value.	4.28	.87	-.732
25. DMs are redundant and sub-standard features in speech and there is not much teaching value.	4.25	.80	-.692
27. It is important for students to learn to incorporate DMs in their speech which is an essential skill for the oral English exams in the future.	1.86	.90	.454
38. Students should decide for themselves to choose whether to learn to speak with DMs in the future when other interaction opportunities arise.	3.28	1.13	.542
39. My students do not need to speak with DMs as frequently as most native speakers do, but only need to progress to a speaking proficiency level capable of fulfilling their communicative purpose.	3.06	1.19	.415

RQ2. What do Turkish EFL teachers think about how DMs should be represented in the classrooms?

Factor 4, in Table 5, presents the items including the issues regarding the attitudes of the teachers towards the use of DMs by native speakers of English and its reflection in language classrooms. Although the teachers agree that DMs to be taught as how native speakers use (item 30, mean: 1.83), they are not certain that being competent speakers of language mean speaking like its natives. The teachers are also unsure about that their students will be able to use DMs as native speakers do (item 40, mean: 3.45). Moreover, items 42 and 46 (mean:

3.10-3.04) reveal that there is not a clear consensus among the teachers on the issue which of DMs should be a model; American or British way.

Furthermore, Factor 5 which has loadings from the items 43-47 reflects the opinions about which norms of DMs should be accepted by Turkish non-native speakers of English. According to the results of the items 45-47, the teachers mostly agree that different varieties of DMs should be recognized and accepted rather than sticking only to the native speaker norm of using DMs. The findings suggest that there should be acceptance of the local usages of DMs. The teachers also agree that exposing students to different varieties of DMs may be

Table 5. Factor 4: Identification with the native speaker norm.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor loadings
30. Students should be taught how native speakers use DMs and follow their way of using them.	1.83	.89	.545
31. Students should be taught to speak like a native in order to become competent speakers.	2.69	1.20	.762
40. It is realistic to require my students to use DMs like native speakers of English.	3.45	1.17	.746
41. The American way of using DMs should serve as a model for my students.	3.22	.99	.681
42. The British way of using DMs should serve as a model for my students.	3.10	1.02	.653
46. It is justifiable to require my students to use DMs like native speakers of English.	3.04	1.10	.738

Table 6. Factor 5: Acceptance of the local usage.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Loadings
43. It can be regarded as a wrong usage when Turkish learners use DMs differently from native speakers.	2.74	1.16	-.646
44. We should respect and accept a Turkish style of using DMs.	3.09	1.14	.683
45. We should help students to recognize and accept different national and regional use of DMs.	2.29	.99	.706
47. It is necessary to expose students to different varieties of using DMs for purpose of comprehension, though not of production.	2.27	1.03	.513
48. It is not necessary to stick to the native speaker norm of using DMs because English language teaching should seek relevance to local culture while trying to enable global transaction.	2.60	1.15	-.413

Table 7. Factor 6: How DMs should be highlighted in EFL classrooms.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Loadings
32. It is an appropriate time to highlight DMs in spoken text at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.	2.26	.95	.458
33. It is an appropriate time to highlight DMs in spoken text at upper-intermediate and advanced levels.	2.94	1.29	.445
34. It is too ambitious to expect students to learn DMs for both listening and speaking purposes at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.	3.50	1.08	.700
35. At pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, we should prioritize teaching DMs mainly for listening purpose.	2.73	.90	.479
36. DMs as a linguistic device for both listening and speaking purposes should be introduced at the same time at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.	2.35	.89	-.490
37. DMs as an aspect of speaking skill should be delayed until awareness of DMs as a listening skill has been grasped.	3.18	1.13	.654

necessary to improve their comprehension skills. However, regarding the acceptance of Turkish style of using DMs, they are uncertain about it as it is reflected in items 43 and 44 (Table 6).

Regarding the issue of how and when DMs should be highlighted in EFL classrooms, Factor 6 (items 32-37) displays the opinions about the proficiency levels and receptive or productive skills. According to the results of the item 32, the teachers agree that pre-intermediate and intermediate levels are appropriate time to highlight DMs in spoken text when compared to upper-intermediate and advanced levels (item 33, mean: 2.94). On the other hand, they were nearly moderate about expecting students at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels to learn DMs for both listening and speaking purposes (Table 7).

Moreover, the results of the items 35 and 37 reveal that they were also uncertain about prioritizing DMs for receptive purposes at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. The results of the item 36 are consistent with the ones of 34, 35 and 37 by reflecting that the teachers agree on the promotion of DMs for both receptive and productive purposes from the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.

Table 8. Factor 7: Representation of DMs in EFL classrooms.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor loadings
15. DMs have been presented as a listening skill in most listening materials I am using.	2.49	1.10	.701
16. DMs have been presented as a speaking skill in most oral materials I am using.	2.22	.92	.718
17. I always highlight DMs in oral lessons. (not necessarily separate oral lessons but also oral sections in my courses)	2.13	.90	.708
18. I always highlight DMs in listening lessons. (not necessarily separate listening lessons but also listening sections in my courses)	2.27	.94	.657

Table 9. Summary of the perceptions of EFL teachers towards DMs with seven factors.

	Min	Max	Mean	S.Dev.
Factor 1: Pragmatic value of DMs	1,00	3,88	1.74	.50
Factor 2: Dispensable value of DMs	2,11	4,11	2.26	.41
Factor 3: Pedagogic value of DMs	2,00	4,00	2.12	.34
Factor 4: Identification with the native speaker norm	1,17	5,00	2.89	.76
Factor 5: Acceptance of the local usage	1,60	3,80	2.85	.51
Factor 6: How DMs should be highlighted in EFL classrooms	1,00	3,83	3.04	.51
Factor 7: Representation of DMs in EFL Classrooms	1,00	4,50	2.28	.74

RQ3. How do Turkish EFL teachers perceive the current representation of DMs in language classrooms?

Factor 7 investigates whether the teachers and the course materials present DMs in EFL classrooms. The results indicate that the teachers accept the represent-tation of DMs in the oral materials during speaking and listening skill activities. The teachers also accept that they highlight DMs in speaking and listening activities (items 17 and 18, mean: 2.13 and 2.17) (Table 8).

As an overall evaluation of the factors specified, Table 9 displays the summary of the seven factors with their overall mean and standard deviations. Table 9 shows that Turkish EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards the pragmatic competence, dispensable value of DMs and pedagogic value of DMs. However, there are relatively neutral attitudes regarding the norm of DMs to be taught or used and how DMs should be included in language classrooms. Moreover, the highest standard deviations in Factor 4 (SD: 0.76) and 6 (SD: 0.74) show the diverse opinions regarding the representation of DMs in classrooms and the norm issue of DMs to be used or learned.

DISCUSSION

Data analysis of the questionnaire displays a detailed identification of the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers towards DMs in several aspects. In terms of the pragmatic value of DMs in discourse, the findings suggest that the teachers agree on the contribution of DMs to communicative and pragmatic competence of their students. Moreover, the findings reveal that DMs are found significant in language classrooms, e.g. for comprehension of the lectures. In this sense, Chaudron and Richards (1986) report that overusing micro-markers (*so, actually, well, right*) may be distracting within the overall coherence of the lecture while macro-markers (*to begin with, this meant that* and *in this way*) increase the level of comprehension of lectures. However, the teachers agree on the contribution of DMs to future interactions as well. The positive perceptions of the teachers are in consistent with the results of Fung (2011) and several studies which discussed the pragmatic value of DMs in spoken discourse such as Fung and Carter (2007), Lam (2009) and Trillo (2002).

Furthermore, the results indicate that there are inconsistent views on the issue of dispensable value of DMs in conversation. Although the teachers accept that DMs contribute a lot to overall conversation, they are uncertain about the dispensable component of DMs. The teachers also accept that students use discourse connectives in written discourse compared to the use of DMs in spoken language. Yet, DMs have a characteristic of orality. Louwerse and Mitchell's (2003) research supports this characteristic of DMs by concluding that the DMs in spoken discourse are 10 times more than that in written discourse. Moreover, the studies about the use of DMs in non-native spoken discourse (Aşık and Cephe, 2013; Buysse 2010; Müller, 2005; Fung and Carter, 2007) reveal that the types of the DMs used by non-

native language learners are mostly textual featured DMs probably because of a kind of transfer from their experiences in written English discourse. For instance, Buysse (2010) reports that when compared with their native speaker peers foreign language learners use hardly interpersonal DMs such as *you know, like, kind of/sort of* and *I mean*. The reasons can be various in this respect, such as students' engagement mostly to the language of the written texts in English rather than spoken interactions in classrooms or lack of activities to raise awareness on the use of DMs.

In terms of the pedagogic value of DMs, there is a strong consensus stated by the teachers. The perceptions of the teachers towards both the pragmatic and pedagogic value of DMs are consistent. However, the teachers reflect a kind of ambivalent certainty of their implementation in the classroom. They are unsure about the implementation of DMs in teaching in terms of the model, local usage, levels of proficiency and receptive or productive skills. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a need to raise awareness of the EFL teachers about how DMs should be taught in language classrooms. Literature on DMs reports several implications. The pedagogical implications may be summarised as implicit or explicit teaching, inductive or deductive method, noticing application or output-based application (Jones, 2011). Jones's (2011) study points out that both noticing (language awareness) and output-based application (presentation and practice) have clear influence on teaching DMs. Similarly, Wichmann and Chane (2009) also support the idea that learners' awareness towards these pragmatic items should be increased as the learners may not understand the real functions of DMs in spoken interaction.

The findings also raise these questions: Should the native speaker model be the ideal one for language learners? or Can a non-native speaker become a native speaker?. In this aspect, the results are in consistent with Lee (2005) and Andreou and Galamantos (2009). They claim that during language teaching, it is necessary to be realistic about the expectations. They suggest that the learners should be treated as what they are rather than potential native speakers. Moreover, Fung and Carter (2007) suggest that in teaching DMs to non-native speakers, the aim should be to help them be competent speakers in the target language, feel secure in it similar to the easiness in their native language. Moreover, House's (2013) study points out that ELF (English as a lingua franca) users use DMs (*yes/yeah, so* and *okay*) effectively and differently from native speakers by re-interpreting them both for their own and their interlocutors.

Furthermore, the results show that there is a consistency between the perceived value of DMs and the actual representation by the teachers. The teachers accept that DMs are represented in language classrooms in course-books and their classrooms. However, in Fung's (2011)

study, there is a large gap between two in Hong-Kong context. Thus, in Turkish EFL context, the findings yield that the teachers are aware of the significant values of DMs and they accept that they highlight them in speaking and listening classes. This result is hopeful in terms of the use of DMs in EFL classrooms. But it should also be noted that the results can be peculiar to the context of the study, which is university context. Moreover, these four items and the study itself cannot signify alone that DMs are represented in EFL classrooms by the teachers and course materials. Since this kind of investigation is not the main focus in the scope of the study, the findings can be interpreted as only guiding, rather than concrete outputs.

Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers towards the use of DMs in the EFL classrooms. Particularly, the research objectives were to search how Turkish EFL teachers perceive DMs in terms of its pedagogic, pragmatic value of DMs and their current representations in classrooms and to find out their opinions about how DMs should represented in the classrooms. With the help of a questionnaire adapted from Fung (2011), the study collected the data from 104 Turkish EFL instructors. The findings revealed seven particular components: pragmatic value of DMs; dispensable value of DMs; pedagogic value of DMs; identification with the native speaker norm; acceptance of the local usage; representation of DMs in EFL Classrooms and how DMs should be highlighted in EFL classrooms.

The findings revealed that Turkish EFL instructors had positive perceptions about the pragmatic and pedagogic value of DMs. They also accepted that DMs were represented in classrooms by themselves and materials. It is really hopeful that the suggestion and implications postulated by the researchers in the field are also supported by Turkish EFL teachers in terms of the pragmatic and pedagogic value of DMs. However, the study also concluded that the issue of norm of DMs, whether local usage, American or British usage or other regional usages should be promoted, and how and when DMs should be included in the curriculum, remained ambivalent.

Lastly, representation of DMs in the classroom was not the direct main focus of this study. But it is hoped that this study may contribute to the field by providing perceptions of Turkish EFL teachers, which can be guiding for future research. Further research can be done regarding the aspects which are investigating teachers' knowledge of DMs, actual classroom practices, teacher talk, methodologies on how DMs should be included and their representation in coursebooks. It should be noted that this study has some limitations. The discussion of the conclusions drawn from the findings were restricted due

to the lack of replication in other EFL contexts. This study is limited in terms of its sampling, which is a university context. Thus, apart from this academic context, the perceptions of the teachers working at high schools or other institutions need to be studied.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix A. Factor Loadings of the Questionnaire.

Variant	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV	Factor V	Factor VI	Factor VII
Item 1	,750						
Item 2	,746						
Item 3	,686						
Item 7	,539						
Item 12	,513						
Item 26	,636						
Item 28	,657						
Item 29	,716						
Item 4		,702					
Item 5		,514					
Item 6		,464					
Item 8		,449					
Item 10		,630					
Item 11		, 505					
Item 13		,620					
Item 14		,623					
Item 19		,441					
Item 20			,712				
Item 21			,495				
Item 22			,728				
Item 23			,502				
Item 24			,732				
Item 25			,692				
Item 27			,454				
Item 38			,542				
Item 39			,415				
Item 30				,545			
Item 31				,762			
Item 40				,746			
Item 41				,681			
Item 42				,653			
Item 46				,738			
Item 43					,646		
Item 44					,683		
Item 45					,706		
Item 47					,513		
Item 48					,413		
Item 15						,701	
Item 16						,718	
Item 17						,708	
Item 18						,657	
Item 32							,458
Item 33							,445
Item 34							,700
Item 35							,479
Item 36							,490
Item 37							,654

Total Variance: 69,212; KMO: ,686; App. Chi-Square : 2464,716; Sig.: 0.00; N: 104.