

Title: Comparative Analysis of Lexical Complexity in English and Turkish Doctoral Dissertations

Abstract:

This study investigates the lexical complexity of doctoral dissertations written in English (UK) and Turkish (TR) to explore how academic language use varies across different linguistic backgrounds. Utilizing a robust corpus analysis, the research quantifies lexical diversity and complexity through various linguistic metrics, including Type/Token ratios, General Service List (GSL) and Academic Word List (AWL) coverage, and adherence to Zipf's Law. The analysis involved the compilation of extensive corpora comprising English and Turkish doctoral dissertations, totalling over 3 million and 2.3 million words respectively. Each corpus was dissected to identify unique word types, frequency of usage, and distribution across common and academic vocabulary lists. The Type/Token ratios, which reflect lexical diversity, were found to be remarkably similar across both corpora, hovering around 0.0133, suggesting a baseline uniformity in lexical diversity at the doctoral level. However, disparities emerged in the distribution and frequency of word usage as analyzed through Zipfian plots. The UK corpus displayed a smoother, more consistent distribution that adheres closely to Zipf's Law, indicative of higher lexical richness and variability. In contrast, the TR corpus showed a steeper decline in word frequency distribution, suggesting a reliance on a narrower set of frequently used terms, thereby implying less lexical diversity. These findings contribute to our understanding of how academic language is structured and utilized in different linguistic and cultural settings. They highlight the potential impacts of language-specific traits on academic discourse and provide a comparative framework that could influence future research in academic writing, linguistic diversity, and educational practices. This study not only bridges the gap in comparative linguistic research but also suggests implications for doctoral education and the development of academic language proficiency across diverse linguistic landscapes.

Keywords: Lexical Complexity, Doctoral Dissertations, Corpus Analysis, English, Turkish, Zipf's Law.