Addressing the Language Description Deficit

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Abstract

Well-described language features are key to successful teaching and learning, especially for achieving advanced levels of proficiency. Other measures, such as simply increasing the number of reading and listening passages in a language program alone are not enough to bring the student to a higher level in a given skill. In fact, even being present in the target culture does not suffice. Angelelli and Degueldre (2002) argue that at advanced levels, even spending time in a country where the language is spoken is not necessarily sufficient for learners: "They do not need just exposure; they need answers to questions and explanations that they can rarely get by simply being immersed in a language/culture." Less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) lack descriptions that have such answers and explanations (cf. Fotos, 2002). It is argued in this paper that corpus-linguistic analyses help to provide actual usage-based, rather than intuition-based, descriptions and explanations of language features. Such approach is illustrated through English and Turkish examples.

Keywords: linguistic corpus, corpus-based research and analysis, corpus linguistics, language teaching, language learning

Addressing the Language Description Deficit in LCTLs through Corpus Linguistics

Nation and Newton (2009) argue for a language program in which activities are divided into four strands for each of which a relatively equal amount of time is spent. These are 'meaning-focused input,' 'meaning-focused output,' language-focused learning,' and 'fluency development.' Of these, language-focused learning has to do with learning (as opposed to acquiring) of language elements, such as grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. Nation and Newton are not the only ones who argue for a deliberate focus on grammar, at least as one of the components of a language program. Other researchers also acknowledge that while communicative activities and fluency are important, they are not sufficient for language acquisition, and that explicit instruction is also an important piece of the language teaching puzzle (see for example, DeKeyser, 1998; Ellis, 1998; Muranoi, 2000; Spada, Lightbown, & White, 2005; Swain, 1998; among others). In fact, even being present in the target culture does not guarantee that the individual will achieve a high level of proficiency. Angelelli and Degueldre (2002) argue that at what they call the 'superior' or 'distinguished proficiency' level, "simply spending time abroad is not necessarily sufficient for their more specialized needs. [Learners] do not need just exposure; they need answers to questions and explanations that they can rarely get by simply being immersed in a language/culture" (Angelelli & Degueldre 2002).

One major difficulty in teaching language elements (specifically grammar, and vocabulary) in a less commonly taught language (LCTL) is that the descriptions of those elements are not thorough.[1] The descriptions lack breadth and depth; many linguistic elements (and cultural elements, for that matter) may be left out, and those that are described are often not described in

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[1] Examples and counterexamples are given below.

enough detail (cf. Hawkins, 1984). This leaves students and teachers alike with unanswered questions or with rules that do not apply to all uses of a given linguistic element. The reason behind this is most likely because grammar books are usually written by grammarians who are native speakers of the language and the description of grammar is based on their own native-speaker intuitions. The general assumption by many native speakers is that we know 'about' our languages when in fact our intuitions about, for example, two or more seemingly identical language structures may not be correct (Malmkjaer 2004; Wolfson 1989). Explanations based on our intuitions may leave many questions by students (especially at advanced levels) unanswered. Language is typically a subconscious process so while native speakers correctly choose between two or more seemingly identical structures, such as *I like to play soccer* and *I like playing soccer,* or modals, such as *should, ought to, have to,* and *must,* or words such as *uninterested* and *disinterested* and use them in proper contexts, they are not necessarily aware of the differences between them. Similarly, native speakers of English, for example, undoubtedly use correctly, and in proper contexts, the verbs *fix, mend,* and *repair* and yet they may not (and most likely do not) know at the conscious level the difference in meaning, or the distribution of their use. Moreover, even in situations where their intuitions are reliable, native speakers often cannot formulate the rule(s) regarding the language issue they are asked about (Haegeman and Guéron 1999). Put differently, native speakers know the language, but they may not know *about* the language. This is a major reason behind many language instructors' being in distressing or awkward situations in which students ask the difference between, for instance, two structures to which they do not have an answer that consistently applies to all uses of those structures, and usually respond with *"they are similar," "they are interchangeable," "they are based on personal preference,"* or simply *"I don't know."* Not finding answers to their questions is equally frustrating for language learners (cf. Byrnes, 2006).

It is important to know 'about' the language we are teaching because advanced proficiency requires speakers to know those subtleties of the language they are speaking. To give a few examples from Leaver and Shekhtman (2002), advanced speakers know precisely how to say what they want to say [appropriateness of expression]. They know the "rules" of the language. For example, they know the difference between *the Simple Past* and *the Present Perfect*, the difference between *mend, repair,* and *fix* [linguistic competence]. Their use of vocabulary is non-compensatory; if they mean "principle" they say so; they do not compensate it with, for example, "boss" [precision of lexicon]. They understand extended discourse with knowledge (and application of) various genres, are ready to participate in conversations, know when to start a conversation, or when to be silent. They know when and how to express their emotions [discourse, emotional, and social competence]. To sum up the list, advanced learners know when and where to say exactly what to whom.

It is argued here that in the effort to help learners achieve higher levels of proficiency, precise descriptions of grammar structures, lexicon, and sociolinguistic elements need to be available to both teachers and learners. It is also argued that in order to achieve this, descriptions should be data-driven and based on analyses of language elements in context, rather than being intuition-based, and that in the process, linguistic corpora should be utilized.

How to Describe Language Features

How do we come up with answers to the questions we have about language? How do we uncover patterns in speakers' choices? For example, why do native speakers of English prefer *should* over *ought to* in some contexts and *ought to* over *should* in others? What are the patterns for *fix, mend,* and *repair? Help* and *assist? Analogous* and *similar?* Such synonymous-looking lexical or lexico-grammatical pairs are abundant in languages. For example, what is the difference between *lazım* and *gerek,* both of

which roughly mean 'need(ed)' in Turkish? For example, *Git-mem gerek/lazım* 'I need to go' [lit. 'My going is needed.'] If they absolutely mean the same thing, what, then, is their distribution? Is one used with past events more often than not? Do men or women prefer one over the other? Is it generational? Do younger people use one of them more than the other? The meaning and the patterns of use of such word pairs, expressions, and grammar structures need to be discovered and described methodically and scientifically because descriptions based on only native speaker intuitions, even if they turn out to be correct, may leave out many aspects of those language elements.

The most scientific way of uncovering patterns and coming up with explanations is to look at numerous instances of the 'problematic' language elements in context. To do this, however, we first need to find instances of the words, expressions, and structures that we want to know more about. The best way of doing this is to collect samples from naturally occurring written and spoken texts, and analyze those samples in order to uncover linguistic patterns. The effort to find samples is greatly facilitated when a linguistic corpus is used simply because an overwhelmingly large percentage of words, expressions, and many grammar structures have a very low frequency of occurrence in a naturally occurring discourse (Nation, 2001). For example, think about how many times you have encountered the word *vagaries.* The chances are you have seen it only a few times, if at all, or perhaps never. Yet, as a learner of English, when you see this word, you may want to know more about its meaning and use.[2] Now imagine how long it would take to manually (without the help of a linguistic corpus) find enough instances of its

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[2] Of course, learners of English are fortunate in that English is one of the lucky few languages that have been studied thoroughly. They can find answers to such questions much more easily than learners of other languages could to similar questions they might have

use in context. It would perhaps take days, if not weeks and months. Yet, it would take only a few seconds to do so with the help of a linguistic corpus.

A linguistic corpus is a collection of text samples compiled from various sources, and is basically a large collection of text often saved as a text-file. These texts are systematically selected to reflect the language use in society. A well-balanced corpus is like a microcosm of the language it represents. Doing research using a well-constructed linguistic corpus would almost be the same as doing research involving all speakers of a language (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998). Annotated, tagged, part-of-speech tagged, and lemmatized corpora would have every single word in the corpus 'tagged' (labeled), thus enabling the user to establish criteria while doing searches. That way, the user can specify the part of speech (verb or noun) of, for example, the word *record* instead of finding all instances of any part of speech (verb and noun). With a simple concordancer, finding words, expressions, and structures in a well-built corpus takes only a few seconds. A *concordancer* is software that produces a concordance. A Concordance shows the KWIC— Key Word In Context; it is a list of instances of a word in its immediate context. Concordance outputs make patterns more noticeable (see Figure 1). Concordancers typically provide users with the capability to determine how many words before and how many words after the word (or any other linguistic element being searched) they want to see. This provides control of the linguistic context and helps with the analysis of the language element being explored. Examples (e.g., *day by day* and *day after day)* of how linguistic context helps with the analysis are given below.

Fortunately for the language professionals, nowadays, major corpora come with built-in concordancers, ready to do searches. This eliminates (for the most part) the need to obtain a concordancer and to learn how to use it (granted that concordancers are already simple programs to use, relatively speaking). For example, ArabiCorpus, developed at Brigham Young Uni-

versity, and Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese are two examples of such corpora with built-in concordancers (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Suppose you are learning Arabic, and you want to see how التقدم 'progress' is used in context. Login to the Arabic corpus site at http://arabicorpus.byu.edu/ by either registering or simply by clicking "access as guest." Type the string التقدم 'progress,' or copy it from a source, and paste it in the "Arabic characters" search box. Then, choose 'noun' for "part of speech," and 'All Newspapers' from the "corpus" dropdown menu, and click "Submit." You will be given a summary of what you searched, what part of speech, and total number of occurrences, etc. Click on "citations" and you will see the word that you searched (التقدم 'progress') appearing in context (see Figure 2).

What can be searched using corpora? Some examples

Below are some examples that show how a linguistic corpus can help with the description of language features and reduce or eliminate intuition-based explanations.

The meaning and distribution of words (e.g., *fix*, *mend*, *repair*), grammar structures (*should* vs. *ought to*), phrases/idioms (e.g., *if need be*), discourse (e.g., anaphoric and cataphoric reference), registers (e.g., formality vs. informality), among others [3] (Biber et al., 1998), can be researched with the help of corpora. These are exactly the elements that are needed for a learner to reach advanced level proficiency (see the reference made to Leav-

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[3] Areas such as second language acquisition, and historical linguistics, also benefit from corpus research. However, these areas often require specialized corpora. For example, second language acquisition research would require corpora which are compiled using second-language-learner language, including grammar, spelling, and pronunciation errors, among others (see, for example, Borin and Class, 2002; Chipere, Malvern, and Richards, 2002; Nesselhauf, 2002; Tono, 2002, for such specialized corpora).

er and Shekhtman (2002) earlier). Below, I will give an example from Tsui (2004) of how a linguistic corpus can be used to help us discover the meaning and distribution of two seemingly identical expressions *day after day* and *day by day*.[4] Native speakers of English will use these expressions perfectly well, in proper contexts but they may not (and usually cannot) tell you why they picked one over the other in a given context. Their intuitions about the meaning and/or the distribution (when and where a given item is used) may or may not be accurate. A linguistic corpus search gives us a chance to either find out the reason behind those choices or confirm those intuitions. Using the limited, free version of Collins WordbanksOnline English corpus (see Figure 4), let us type the string *day+after+day* in the Search box and click the "Show Concs" button. We, then, get the following (limited number of) results in a new window (see Figure 5).

When we take a look at the immediate linguistic context (the words that come before and after the expression *day after day* in each line) in the concordance window, we see that *day after day* denotes negative experiences and used with words, such as *undermine, same old ways, problem, disloyalty, contend with, fed up,* and *unbearable* among others (see Figure 5). When we repeat the above steps for *day by day,* and look at the immediate linguistic context, we see that *day by day* denotes neutral or positive experiences and used with words and expressions, such as *improve, easy to follow, comfortably, enthusiastic, success, achievement, eager,* and *fresh,* etc. (see Figure 6).

Another example, this time from Turkish, relates to the demonstratives and their referents. Turkish has three basic demonstratives, namely *bu, şu,* and *o.* To native speakers, and grammar books (see, for example, Banguoğlu, 2004; Gencan,

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[4] These two expressions are from Tsui (2004), but the analyses of the expressions as presented here, including any errors they might contain, are mine.

2001, and Kornfilt, 1997, among others) the fundamental differ-
ence is that *bu*, like 'this' in English, is used to refer to entities
that are in very close proximity, *şu*, like 'that' in English, is used
to refer to entities that are farther away, and *o* is used to refer to
entities that are even farther than those referred to by *şu*. How-
ever, with *bu* and *o* both referring to what was mentioned earli-
er, it is not clear what the difference is (cf. Göksel & Kerslake,
2005). To many native speakers, they can be used interchangea-
bly. A closer examination, however, indicates that demonstra-
tives in Turkish follow a highly predictable pattern (Bolgün,
2004). *Bu*, almost always refers back to an NP used in either in
the same or the previous sentence or in the second preceding sen-
tence. Only in a very few instances, *bu* refers to NP antecedents
used in the third, fourth, or the fifth preceding sentences. In
some cases, as in the plural of *bu* (*bunlar*), *bu* refers to the totality
of things (to an overall idea) that were mentioned in the preced-
ing few sentences. In any case, *bu* always refers back; never for-
ward. For instance, in the example below, *bu* refers to the un-
derlined NPs in the preceding sentence:

Hayır, sadece <u>bir   yaşam sevgi-si-yle,   bir yaşam zevk-i</u>
no   only   one life   love-CM-WITH one life   pleasure
CM

<u>sorun-u-dur.</u>   **Bu,** çok   önemli   mi-dir?
problem-POSS-CMP this much important QT-CMP

< http://www.milliyet.com/2003/06/02/yazar/altan.html >

'No, (it is) only <u>a matter of love of life and a joy of life</u>. Is **this**
very important?'

    Of the total 102 uses of *bu* that were found and analyzed,
73 (or 71.5%) are used anaphorically (see Figure 7), to refer back
to an antecedent (or antecedents). 29 (or 28.5%) of the total 102

are used in situations where the referent is contextually present, or as part of an adverbial phrase, as in *bu ara-da* [this gap/time-LOC] 'meanwhile'. Further, of the total 73 anaphoric uses of *bu*, 61 refer to antecedents present in the same or the previous sentence, five of them in the second preceding sentences, three of them in the third preceding sentences, two of them in the fifth preceding sentences, and two of them refer only to the totality of what was mentioned in the previous five or more sentences. Figure 8 summarizes this (see Figure 8).

Parallel to *bu*, *o* (traditionally translated as 'he,' 'she,' 'it,' or 'that') also has the anaphoric and situational uses. However, *o* differs from *bu* both in terms of number of uses and in terms of the nature of uses. There were 32 instances of *o* as opposed to 102 instances of *bu*. The numbers indicate that while there are a considerable number of uses of *o*, *bu* is favored in more instances than *o*. This could be because journalists[5] want to sound more accurate and talk or write about matters that are more tangible, clearer, closer in time, more 'still relevant' (rather than 'not-anymore relevant') situations unless they have to. *O* often pro-vides the opposite: the antecedents of *o* are often abstract, hypo-thetical, or farther away in time; the boundaries are less clear. The following example illustrates this:

Mezun ol-an   genç-ler Türkiye'de   iş   bulabilme
graduate be-NOM youth-PL Turkey-LOC job finding

konu-su-nda   hayli umutsuz. O   neden-le   'biz-i
topic-POSS-LOC quite hopeless that reason-WITH we-ACC

kaybed-iyor-sunuz' de-yip   yurtdışı-nda gelecek arı-yor-lar.
lose-PROG-2PL   say-ADV abroad-LOC future   search-
PROG-PL

< http://www.milliyet.com/2003/05/19/siyaset/asiy.html >
'The young (people) who are university graduates are fairly
hopeless in regards to finding jobs. **That** is why they say 'you
are losing us' and look for a future abroad.'

    In the above example, it is grammatically possible to use
bu (as in *bu nedenle* 'that is why') instead of *o*. However, that
choice (*bu*) would have given the impression that the idea pre-
sented in the first sentence of the example is that of the writer.
By choosing *o*, the writer chooses to somewhat distance himself
and to express the same idea from the 'young people's' perspec-
tive, bringing objectivity to his argument.
    Unlike *bu* and *o*, the demonstrative *şu* is used to refer
forward. With a total of only 9 instances, the number of uses of
şu is much less than both *bu* and *o*. In other words, out of a total
of 143 demonstratives, only nine (or 6.2%) of them are *şu* 'that'.
Of the nine instances of *şu*, four (or 44.4%) refer cataphorically
while five (or 55.5%) of them are situational uses. The following
illustrates the typical cataphoric use of *şu*:

Sanayi-de   ise   nitelikli insan güc-ü   el-de
industry-LOC though qualified human power-CM hand-LOC

ed-e-me-dik-ler-i   için diyalog
make-ABIL-NEG-NOM-PL-POSS for   dialog

kopukluğ-u-ndan   söz   ed-il-ir...
disconnection-CM-ABL mention do-PASS-AOR

Bekle-nil-en   şu-dur: Sanayi-nin   iste-yeceğ-i
expect-PASS-NOM that-CMP industry-GEN want-FUT.NOM-
POSS

tarz-da   insan yetiştir-mek.

style-LOC human train-INF

< http://www.milliyet.com/2003/05/19/siyaset/asiy.html >

'In the industry, though, since they are not able to attain quali-
fied human power, they talk of lack of dialogue... What is ex-
pected is **this**: Training the kind of people that the industry
would want.'

The translation of *şu* in the above example is given as
'this,' which is traditionally assigned to *bu*. However, this is on-
ly a matter of translation. What is important here is that *şu*
points forward to what is going to come next.
Another example of how corpus analysis helps to discov-
er patterns relates to the words for 'privacy' and 'private' in
Turkish. In their corpus-based study on the emergence of words
related to privacy in Finnish and Turkish, Kuha & Bolgün (2009)
show that while there are a number of Turkish words that can be
translated with 'private' or 'privacy' (see, for example, Akdik-
men, Uzbay, & Özgüven, 2006), there is a clear pattern with re-
gards to their distribution. Of the two most frequently used
words, *mahrem* 'private' is used in highly intimate situations and
for sexually-charged expressions, such as *mahrem yerler* 'private
parts,' referring to sexual organs, whereas *özel* 'private' is used
(often with *yaşam* 'life') in other contexts.
The majority of the instances of *özel* found in the corpus
center around the meanings of 'special', 'peculiar', 'specific',
'unique', and 'privileged'. Consider the following example from
METU Turkish Corpus (Say, Zeyrek, Oflazer, & Özge, 2002)[6]:

Eğer sıradan   bir   vatandaş-sa-nız, demokrasi-yle
If   ordinary   a   citizen-IF-2PL democracy-WITH

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[6] Hereafter, unless otherwise indicated, the examples were ob-
tained from METU Turkish Corpus (Say et al., 2002).

*ilgi-niz   ol-ma-z.   Eğer **özel**   bir vatandaş-sa-nız,*

concern-2PL be-NEG-AOR If   special a   citizen-IF-2PL

o zaman en   tehlikeli   iş-ler-e   de   giriş-se-niz

then   most dangerous job-PL-DAT also venture-IF-2PL

demokrasi sizin için çalış-ır.

democracy your for work-AOR

'If you are an ordinary citizen, you would have nothing to do with democracy. If you are a **special** citizen, then democracy works for you even if you undertake dangerous businesses.'

It is clear that by *özel bir vatandaş,* what is meant is 'a privileged citizen' and not 'a private citizen'. This is made clear by the adjective *sıradan* 'ordinary' that is used in the first sentence. The second sentence contrasts such a citizen (an ordinary one) with a non-ordinary one. In the example below, *özel* indicates that noun phrase it modifies is a 'non-government' entity.

*Hangisi   zor,   kamu   görev-i mi, **özel**   sektör mü?*

Which one   difficult   government   job-CM
           Q   private   sector Q

'Which one is more difficult: government job, (or) **private** sector?'

In 10.7% of the instances, *özel* simply indicates that the noun phrase it modifies belongs to the person; it means *personal*. There is nothing necessarily private about it. For example:

*Bu   da   Cumhurbaşkanı-nın **özel**   merak-ı-nı*

this also president-GEN   personal curiosity-POSS-ACC

gider-mek   için   yap-tığ-ı   gezinti-ler-in   ince-leme

quench-INF for   do-PTCL-POSS tour-PL-GEN survey

olarak   nitelendir-il-me-si-dir.
as   characterize-PASS-NML-POSS-COP
'And this is characterizing the trips that the president
takes as being only a means to satisfy his **personal** curios-
ity as (official) survey.'

In 1.6% of the instances, *özel* is simply a last name, a
company name, or part of a book title.

Of the remaining 48 instances (or 16.0%) of *özel* (to mean
'private'), 27 (or 56.2%) collocate with *yaşam, yaşantı,* or *hayat* all
of which mean 'life'.

Meanwhile, all instances of *mahrem* and *mahremiyet* mean
'private' or 'privacy' in the most intimate way. It seems that al-
though *özel* has taken over a number of borrowings (such as *hu-
susi* 'special') to a large extent, there are some areas where *özel*
does not quite express the intended meaning. Even when *özel* is
used with *yaşam* 'life', it often means 'non-job related life' and
not 'private life' in its strictest sense of 'no access' to that life
characterized as *özel*. For example:

Fakat   Cumhurbaşkanı da   benim gibi bir insan.
however president   also me   like a   person
Konuşmayı sev-en   bir insan. Duy-duğ-u-m-a
talk-ACC   like-PTCL a   person hear-PTCL-POSS-1SG-
DAT
göre   özel   yaşam-ı-nda   çok   hoşsohbet-miş.
according private life-POSS-LOC very sociable-PAST
'However, the president, too, is a human being too; just
like me. A human being that likes to talk. As far as I have
heard, he is very sociable in his **private/personal** life.'

Similarly, the following contrasts 'private/personal life' with 'job
life':

*Şekerim, insan **özel**   yaşam-ı-yla   iş-i-ni*
honey   person private life-POSS-WITH job-POSS-ACC

ayır-malı.   Ne   ev-e   taşı-malı-sın,
separate-OBLIG neither home-DAT carry-OBLIG-2SG
ne de ev-in-i   iş-in-e.
nor also home-POSS-ACC job-POSS-DAT
'Honey, one should separate one's **personal/private** life
from one's job. You should not bring your job home;
neither should you bring your home to your job.'

Mahrem, on the other hand, is stricter in that, access or
penetration to that characterized by *mahrem* constitutes a bigger
violation of the norm. This is not surprising since *mahrem* shares
the same root with the words that mean 'forbidden,' 'prohi-
bited,' 'unlawful,' 'sacred,' and 'sin,' among others (Ba'albaki,
1996; Cowan, 1994). Compare the two examples above with the
following two examples:

Vücud-u-nu   şehvet düşkünlüğ-ü-yle   öylesine
body-POSS-ACC lust   addiction-POSS-WITH such
*kötü-ye   kullan-mış-tı   ki,   **mahrem** yer-ler-i*
bad-DAT use-PPTCL-PAST CONJ private   part-
PL-POSS
başka kadın-lar-ın-ki   gibi doğa-nın
other woman-PL-GEN-REL   as nature-GEN
belirle-diğ-i   yerde   değildi   ve sanki
determine-PTCL-POSS place-LOC not-PAST and as if
yüz-ü-ne   vur-muş-tu
face-POSS-DAT reflect-PPTCL-PAST
'She had used her body with lust so badly that her **pri-
vate** areas were not where nature intended for them to
be, like in other women, and it is as if (her lust) was re-
flected in her face.'
In the example above, what is meant by private areas are
clearly sexual organs. In such a context, *mahrem* is picked over
özel. Similarly, in the example below, the context is lovemaking
and the adjective used in this context is *mahrem*.

Para-sı-nı   *ver-ip sokak-lar-dan sahip-siz beden-
ler*
money-POSS-ACC give   street-PL-ABL owner-less
body-PL
topla-mak, onlar-la   bu boş ev-in   mağara
collect-INF they-WITH   this empty house-GEN cave
kovuk-lar-ı-na   benze-yen   sessiz oda-lar-ı-nda
hole-PL-CM-DAT resemble-PTCL quiet room-PL-POSS-
LOC
mahrem *oyun-lar oyna-mak bir mucize gibi*
private   game-PL play-INF a   miracle as
*gel-iyor-du   ban-a; orospu-lar-la   yaşa-dığ-
ım*
come-PROG-PAST I-DAT prostitute-PL-WITH live-
PTCL-1SG
her   parçala-n-mış   sevişme-den   sonra büyük
every break-PASS-PTCL lovemaking-ABL after   big
bir huzur ve   ferahlık   duy-uyor-du-m.
a   peace and contentment feel-PROG-PAST-1SG
'Paying for and collecting ownerless bodies from the
streets and playing **private** games with them in this
house's rooms that looked like hollows of caves seemed
like a miracle to me; I was feeling a sense of peace and
contentment after every shattered lovemaking that I had
with prostitutes.'

The high number of instances of *özel* being used with
'life' could be due to the lack of a Turkish noun that means *pri-
vacy. Mahremiyet,* the Arabic borrowing meaning 'privacy', does
not always satisfy the current need since it refers to a specialized
form of privacy. It appears that the recent *özel yaşam* and the
older *mahremiyet* are both needed to compensate for *privacy.* For
example, *özel yaşam* 'private life' is too general in the context be-
low and cannot substitute for *mahremiyet* 'privacy'. Consider:

> *Verimliliğ-i*   *önemse-yen kimi şirket-ler-in*
> productivity-ACC   value-PTCL some   com-pany-PL-GEN
> *ofisleri*   *adeta   kusursuz-du.   Ama hiçbir-i-nde*
> office-PL-POSS almost flawless-PASTbut   none-POSS-LOC
> *çalışan-lar-ın*   **mahremiyet-i-ne**   *önem*
>   *ver-en*
> employee-PL-GEN privacy-POSS-DAT   importan-cegive-PTCL
> *bir   tasarım yoktu.*
> a   design   nonexistent-PAST
> 'The offices of some companies that value productivity were almost flawless. However, in none of them was there a design that values the employees' **privacy**.'

In the above example, the issue under discussion is not employees' private lives; for example, what they do in their own time. Rather, it is the way the workplace is set up and how, perhaps, the employees are exposed to other people's gaze in that setup.

In another corpus-based study, Bolgün (2005) shows that definiteness, specificity, and referentiality cannot explain the meaning and function of the Turkish accusative case, a topic of interest in linguistic literature on Turkish for some 340 years (Seaman 1670), if not more. The direct object (DO) in Turkish has four distinct types. These are illustrated in boldface in the following four examples (taken from Taylan and Zimmer 1994).[7]

> (a) Ali her   gün **gazete-yi**   oku-yor.
>   Ali every day **newspaper-ACC** read-PROG

---

[7] Boldfacing is added; the gloss of the first example is slightly modified from the original, and glosses have been added to ex-amples (b), (c), and (d)

'Ali reads <u>the newspaper</u> everyday.'

(b) Ali her   gün **bir gazete-yi**   oku-yor.
    Ali every day **one newspaper-ACC** read-PROG

'Ali reads <u>a newspaper</u> everyday.'

(c) Ali her   gün **bir gazete**   oku-yor.
    Ali every day **one newspaper** read-PROG

'Ali reads <u>a newspaper</u> everyday.'

(d) Ali her   gün **gazete**   oku-yor.
    Ali every day **newspaper** read-PROG

'Ali reads <u>a newspaper/newspapers</u> everyday.'

The boldfaced nouns in the above examples share a common feature: they all occupy the unmarked DO position, immediately before the verb. What is different about these DOs is that (a) has the accusative (ACC) marker $-(y)I$[8], (b) has the ACC marker and is preceded by bir[9] 'one,' (c) is also preceded by bir 'one' but does not have the ACC marker, and (d) is in its so-called *bare* form; it neither has the ACC marker nor is it preceded by bir 'one.'

---

[8] The accusative case marker $-(y)I$, can be $-(y)ı$, $-(y)i$, $-(y)u$, or $(y)ü$ per Turkish vowel harmony rules. The buffer 'y' is used if the noun that the accusative marker is attached to ends in a vowel.
[9] Taylan and Zimmer (1994) use the term 'indefinite article' to refer to bir 'one.' However, there is no consensus on this. For example, while Kornfilt (1997), Lewis (2000), Swift (1963), Taylan and Zimmer (1994), and Tura (1973) treat it as such in certain uses, others do not.

Given these different ways of expressing the (seemingly) same idea, the question arises as to what the difference is. Because Turkish does not have any morphological determiners or a definite article, such as *the* in English (e.g., Erguvanlı, 1984; Kornfilt, 1997; Underhill, 1976), the accusative case, one of the six cases in Turkish, has traditionally been characterized (generally speaking) either as corresponding to the definite article in English (e.g., Ergin, 1962; Erguvanlı, 1984; Erguvanlı-Taylan, 1987; Lewis, 2000; Sebüktekin, 1971), as indicating referentiality (e.g., Dede 1986), or as indicating specificity (e.g., Aissen, 2003; Enç, 1991; Erguvanlı, 1984; Kornfilt, 1997; Swift, 1963). While these characterizations are correct to a certain extent, Bolgün (2005) shows, providing examples found in METU Turkish Corpus (Say et al., 2002), and examples collected from the online version of a Turkish newspaper, that traditional notions of 'definiteness,' 'referentiality' and 'specificity,' which are very commonly thought of as being indicated by the accusative case marking, cannot fully account for its meaning and function.[10]

The boldfaced noun in (1), with the ACC marker but no preceding *bir* 'one,' is generally considered to be definite, in the sense that the hearer knows or can identify the *gazete* 'newspaper' being mentioned. However, consider the following example, taken from the aforementioned corpus:

Artık **üniversite-yi** <u>bitir</u>-mek ve aynı kariyer-de
anymore **university-ACC** finish-INF and same career-LOC

ilerle-mek çalışma yaşam-ı açı-sı-ndan
progress-INF work life-POSS viewpoint-POSS-ABL

---

[10] Due to the page limit, counterexamples to only 'definiteness' and 'specificity' will be shown

garantili   bir yol   değil.
guaranteed one way not

< http://www.milliyet.com/2003/05/19/siyaset/asiy.ht
ml >

'It is not guaranteed for one's professional life that
one can just graduate from the university and progress
in the same field that one studied.'

In the example above, *üniversite* 'university' has the
ACC. However, unlike what is claimed in some grammar
books, it is not definite. What is referred to with the use of this
noun that has the ACC is not a particular university that both
the speaker and listener can identify. It is used generically.
DOs, with or without the ACC marker, but preceded by
bir 'one' (see examples (a) and (b) above) are explained by appeal-
ing to the notion of 'specificity,' in the sense that a specific noun
will have 'a certain' reading. Therefore, DOs bearing ACC (as in
(b), for example) are considered specific, whereas DOs not bear-
ing ACC (as in (c), for example) are considered nonspecific (Enç
1991). However, there are numerous examples that challenge
this account. Consider the one below.

Kilise-den   çok   **bir ev-i**   andır-an
eski
church-ABL many **one house-ACC** resemble-PTCL
old

yapı-nın   bahçe-si-nde   biz biz-e-ydi-k
işte.
structure-GEN garden-POSS-ABL we we-DAT-
PAST-1PL here

> 'There we were, by ourselves in the garden of the old structure that resembled <u>a house</u> rather than a church.'

In the example above, the noun *ev* 'house' has both the ACC and is preceded by *bir* 'one' and should be considered specific by some accounts; the noun *ev* 'house' should have 'a certain' reading. However, ACC-bearing *bir ev* 'one house' does not refer to any particular house that the speaker (or the hearer) knows, and cannot be said to be specific in that sense. The speaker is simply stating that the structure, the garden of which they happen to be in, resembles a house (any house, in fact) rather than a church (any church). He is comparing the structure with two entities ('a house' and 'a church'), and argues that it resembles a house more than a church.

Conclusions

Achieving higher levels of language proficiency (especially, accuracy) necessitate, at least partially, knowledge of subtle distinctions between the seemingly identical structures and vocabulary in the target language. Only a handful of languages, other than English, can claim that they have a significant number of resources that provide data-driven descriptions of those language structures and vocabulary. Most languages, in general, and LCTLs, in specific, arguably lack such descriptions (cf. Fotos, 2002). Instead, descriptions of language elements are largely intuition-based and fail to capture all their possible uses and various nuances of their meaning.

Yet, languages are abundant with features that are seemingly (and deceptively) synonymous. For example, what is the difference between *gerilim* and *gerginlik,* both of which mean 'tension' in Turkish? What about the difference between these three structures: *-mektense, -mek yerine,* and *–eceği+PE+(n)e* all of which roughly mean *rather than* in Turkish? If language programs are to help students attain high levels of proficiency, then

these and language elements like these need to be better described and explained without relying on (only) intuition. Rather these language elements need to be described by data and facts obtained from naturally-occurring discourse. Corpus-based research makes this possible by helping researchers analyze naturally-occurring language output efficiently. Language teaching- and reference-materials developed using the above approach with the help of linguistic corpora and concordancers virtually eliminate guess-work and explanations that are based on unreliable native-speaker intuitions.

Corpus-analytic approach to language elements and materials prepared as a result of such an approach does not and should not necessarily require any (substantial) change in the language teaching methods or techniques employed in class. Rather, accurate descriptions enhance the quality of language instruction and language learning by providing both teachers and learners with accurate answers to their questions. This is in fact what is missing from the language programs and is in itself very valuable.

That said, there have been attempts to introduce novice practices to classroom teaching based on corpus-linguistic research. For example, Johns (1994) developed the Data-Driven Learning (DDL) method, in which the learner essentially assumes the role of a researcher, accessing language elements in a language corpus via a concordancer, looking for patterns and meaning(s) of those elements. This method can lead to student autonomy, and should be encouraged to a certain extent and with advanced speakers. However, DDL is not sustainable in many language-learning situations where students are busy with other courses and obligations; they cannot be expected to find patterns and make generalizations regarding every language issue they encounter. In fact, even teachers may find it hard to allocate enough time for a corpus analysis, or find it very difficult to get into the corpus-linguistic analysis mentality (cf. Mauranen, 2002). Corpus-based analyses lead to data-driven and accurate descriptions but the process of analyzing language elements can

be very time-consuming and is not suitable for extensive use in classrooms. A better approach would be for language profession-als, (e.g., materials developers, including reference-books writers) and to some extent the teachers to do the bulk of the research and analysis of a given language issue and perhaps involve stu-dents afterwards through, for instance, cloze tests based on sen-tences obtained from the linguistic corpus. For example, instead of claiming that there is no difference, the difference between *day after day* and *day by day* can be explained using some of the sen-tences collected from the corpus. After the explanation and sample sentences, a cloze-test can be prepared by simply deleting the expressions (*day after day* and *day by day*) being taught from those sentences, asking the students to decide whether the miss-ing words should be *day after day* or *day by day* in those contexts, and to state why they made those choices thereby raising their consciousness regarding those expressions.

Similarly, reference-book explanation of the Turkish de-monstratives could include statistical information regarding their frequency of use and distribution, and naturally occurring exam-ples to illustrate those uses could be incorporated.

The words for privacy can be shown using examples pulled out of the corpus, and crucial point that separates the multiple words that translate into the English 'private' or 'priva-cy' can be stated. This would answer students' questions in a much better way than dictionaries would because in all the avail-able dictionaries, various words in Turkish are translated with 'private' or 'privacy.'

The use of accusative does not need to be wrongly equated with concepts such as definiteness, specificity, or refe-rentiality. When students find examples that counter teachers' explanations that involve these (or similar) concepts, it is very frustrating for them, especially when they hear something like, "In this context, we just say it this way." Instead, students could be told that while the accusative in Turkish and the definite ar-ticle in English often overlap, they are not identical in meaning

and function. In Turkish, the function of the accusative is indi-
viduation, the presentation of the entity denoted by the direct
object noun as complete, and separate from all others that may
be around it.

Alternatively, (with advanced-level students) for some of
the examples above[11], the teacher can find the instances of the
'problematic' language elements (such as *day after day* or *day by
day*), and then ask the advanced-level students to 'discover' the
differences between them (cf. Ellis, 2002), thereby doing some of
the time-consuming work for them.

One final word is that, if a linguistic corpus does not al-
ready exist for a LCTL, because the initial investment (in time,
energy, and manpower) is significant, building one should be
supported at least at the institutional level. Institutions with sim-
ilar language programs can cooperate and speed up the process of
building linguistic corpora to be used by all that are teaching or

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[11] Except the ones, as with the accusative in Turkish, which
(may) require expertise in topics, such as definiteness, specificity,
and referentiality.

learning that language. The building of a corpus should include a built-in concordancer to make it user-friendly and to increase the chances of its use by language professionals.

Figure 1. This sample concordance shows the word 'facilitate' in context. Each line may have come from a different part of the corpus used and is not necessarily related to the next line.

Figure 2. ArabiCorpus (http://arabicorpus.byu.edu/) is a linguistic corpus developed at Brigham Young University. Arabic learners as well as other language professionals teaching Arabic or developing Arabic materials can use this corpus in their effort to come up with descriptions of language elements.

Figure 3. Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (http://score.crpp.nie.edu.sg/cgi-bin/lcmc/conc.pl) is developed at Lancaster University. This is screen shot of a concordance of a Chinese word (in red) with linguistic context before and after it.

```
         when the conflict ends, [p] iv help to facilitate inter-regional trade by relaxing
         in 'appropriate lending vehicles" would facilitate the provision of syndicated lending
          and the involvement of young people to facilitate the spread of eco-design and the training
   the same way as the supervisor. S/he helped facilitate communication between all the participants
        of the Board of Tourism: to promote and facilitate the efficient development of the island's
        relationship between generations, [p] to facilitate exchange of experience and practice across
  other showing an unobstructed second hand to facilitate pulse readings. Whilst attracting some
  of the country, the basic infrastructure to facilitate investment was nonexistent for example,
      in the occupied-territories, in order to facilitate the operation of the Community's programme
        at the invitation of Yugoslavia to help facilitate dialogue between all parties and contribute
    the matter," said Ronald, 'I've decided to facilitate my elderly partners" retirement by making a
     This information ought to stimulate and facilitate regional and inter-regional networking for
 style of worship was, therefore, believed to facilitate the conversion from one outlook to another.
   the floor of a special assembly, designed to facilitate the peace process rather than to run the
that we should be decommissioning vessels to facilitate additional fishing opportunities around the
          the commission considered necessary to facilitate the structural change.    [p] The
  of more than 2,200. It continues to trade to facilitate the survival of the company as a going
     source, butyl will be all you will need to facilitate the creation of a pond. It is supplied in
          the names of the shades be printed to facilitate ordering. (All the lipstick shades were
             but it is useful to have on hand to facilitate your obligatory physician's consultation.
  analysis was nothing if not wide-ranging. To facilitate the government's restoration of the farming
        t produce an erection at all. But she can facilitate the man's sensual/sexual awareness by
     the political and economic decisions which facilitate or stifle the use of the new knowledge. [p]
       Outcome [p] The mother's ability either to facilitate or to undermine the infant's development
          and to design previewing enactments to facilitate the optimal infant development. As noted,
     and suspend normal boundaries in order to facilitate short-term coping and adaptation. The
    bias rather than an inhibitor of action may facilitate a family's thinking about a formidable
         hope. It is essential to keep in mind and facilitate for families these positive opportunities.
    consultant involved in such interactions all facilitate a functional joining process and
  equating chronicity and dying as failure, we facilitate family acceptance and mastery of those
            and political clout, each of which can facilitate or hinder efforts to undo racial
          Fang Lizhi to leave China, it's tried to facilitate an agreement on Cambodia, it's backed the
   new resolution also demands that all sides facilitate mercy flights of severely wounded children
           pass and ticket for the Bateau Mouche facilitate your exploration of the city during leisure
        rates. The Scoring Form is designed to facilitate complete and accurate scoring as well as to
     in a series of legislative attempts to facilitate a road grab on federal land. This summer,
       is to [ZFO] is to like [MO2] Yeah. [MO1] facilitate situations as [ZGY] [MO2] Your job is to
      [FO2] [ZF1] wh wh [ZFO] whilst I do think I facilitate quite a bit in terms of how I structure the
      my perspective is [tc text=pause] to help facilitate erm the utilization of the model where
      would you like to do? But if you actually facilitate that [FOX] Mm [FOX] you know if you [FOX]
```

Figure 4. Screen shot from the Collins Wordbank*Online* English corpus (http://www.collins.co.uk/corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx).

```
is don't do it! Tight hair styles worn day after day undermine the strength of the roots and lead
   We'll be there with you every day -- day after day, month after month. [p] In fact, right now
        precipitous mountains every day, day after day. This is a man who can ride an utter abortion
   If you think in the same old ways, day after day, year after year, not only will your mind get
 the Nigel Dempster column, but worse: day after day it was full of insufferably dull stories about
 of Britain displays, so on most evenings, after day flying had ceased, we were able to see what
   hard and well, and went away again, day after day, year after year. He was a man of culture, of
   training was non-stop and continued day after day.  [o] She told me, `It would have been
      the Sacred Title, hour after hour, day after day. To him religion was like business: you made
chair. `But I must admit that spending day after day in the salvage yard is cruel and inhuman.
           in. Just a way of going along, day after day, not making any decisions at all. A way of
 that I let the household chores slide day after day until I was living in a slum. And how slowly
 of problems that came across his desk, day after day, Paul VI could be forgiven for thinking that
  not travelling, his first wife worked day after day in the university library systematically
was among those who tirelessly vaulted day after day over the improvised `horse" while three of
   supporting the tax cuts but arguing, day after day, against economic measures that make those
experienced National Health sandwiches day after day can appreciate the culinary relief which these
campaign [/h] [b] Penny Wark [/b] [p]  DAY after day Ray Wyre witnessed the same sickening
          [p] But swimming with dolphins day after day made her skin red raw. And you try smiling
      their small victory in the study. Day after day he would chip away at Mr. Dambar's resistance
 motions, the same ones she performed day after day fixing meals, there was something as benign,
 as she prays, an odd clicking noise, day after day after day. And we are grateful to her for
          between cycle day 8 and day 12. (After day 16, the couple can relax and enjoy themselves
      I imagined me making this journey day after day and year after year, and my hair starting to
   news.   It's going to go on, he said, day after day just like this.  Clearly, despite the
 struggle most Muscovites contend with day after day as they search for a way to center their
   sit in a candy factory all day long, day after day, and dip candy. [p] Simon: Maybe this can't be
 working, you know, 18 and 20 hour days day after day and they didn't see their children.  And these
    road on the edge of a garbage dump, day after day, night after night.  Captain Carrickson, a U.
 all-time Stork favorite they'll wear day after day. USA. [c] colours, sizes, code and price [/c]
      siege right now, forced to respond day after day to an unending series of well-funded,
     [p] Keep Kids Happy for Hours! [p] Day after day, you child will love matching these magnetic-
      siege right now, forced to respond day after day to an unending series of well-funded,
 just got so fed up going in day after day after day and nothing appearing and I was sort of
     It's a question I've asked myself day after day Am I the Same Girl? It's nineteen minutes
   what that's like.  [tc text=laughs] Day after day opening the mailers [M01] Must be terrible.
 Don't think that you can come here w day after day and play in the anointing and then go home
   t want to get so used to you coming day after day that we begin to revert to our old ways and
in front of the mirror in the evenings day after day after day but we never did get in with this
   school age [F01] Mhm [F02] day after day after day after day they met at the corner here and sat
```

Figure 5. Screen shot from the Collins Wordbank*Online* English corpus, showing the results for *day after day* (http://www.collins.co.uk/corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx). The number of output is limited to 40 lines in the Demo version of the corpus.

```
by giving up smoking, your health is improving day by day, so why not take it one step further
attention to the stomach, in an easy-to-follow day-by-day plan that will appeal to women and men
   Tramway, Glasgow, Fri 15-Sat 16 May. [p] [h] DAY BY DAY DIARY [/h] This section lists all
then she paced sleeping only for brief spans. Day by day, he had watched the shadows under her
in the meantime Captain Yusuf Azambai sensed, day by day, a fellow-feeling among the Afghans
thousands of others, and is still quoted in the day by day guides in popular Chinese almanacs of
    self which is readily accessible and in use day by day. We are fully aware of the memories,
edition of his book contained an appendix with a day-by-day account of all the events surrounding
   Watching the cage, he recalled that Emrys was day by day facing that danger in the mine and that
   ticking away metonymically. Hour after hour, day by day, the crowd came to sit and stare at the
them lost again, but more comfortably. Slowly, day by day, they worked their way more or less
her ministry only in dreams. She practised it 'day by day with real people. [142] Joni was
tense: 'I always feel comfortable in company," 'Day by day, I feel more enthusiastic about or 'I
        to illness and disease increases steadily day by day now just take a deep breath and relax
you put it in your stomach or in the waste bin day by day you are enjoying a new eating habit you
   success and achievement.' Creativity Script Day by day, you begin to notice that part of your
can concentrate on other aspects of your life. Day by day, you find it much easier to cope you
in yourself this inner trust never leaves you day by day it gets stronger and stronger and with
found maturity you feel proud of yourself as, day by day, you realize you no longer have
worth while cultivating a liking for your job. Day by day you will go to it eager, fresh and
said Santhosham, 'make enough rupees to live, day by day, selling prawns to dealers.' I loved
   writing, recounting the events of a journey day by day. The author tells us what happened, he
with riots, where Labour had been opposed. [p] Day by day, Labour show themselves in their real
    like a tree. Wisdom and conviction seeped in day by day and when he managed the Merseyside club
for hundreds of years were damaged imperceptibly day by day. 'We've had a robust response from
two great videos from BBC Video. Wimbledon '90 Day By Day and The Best Of Wimbledon - The Young
   touched the nation, and the record of events, day by day, watching the police work, made for a
You have been involved in operational decisions day by day, month by month. You have evaded your
    one, is to build a complete picture of the day-by-day functioning of the landforms on every
Godspeed.' LAST WEEK The Biltmore Baghdad Day by day the crude calendar scratched on the
we had a very definite harmony. I just took life day by day, and I lived our marriage as a love
a song Black Panther leaders quoted admiringly. Day by day, to paraphrase 'The Internationale,"
to the board as the names are added. Here is a day-by-day example of what you might do with
Johnson and White House advisers literally on a day-by-day basis picking bombing targets--I mean,
their cartridge of what amount has been played day by day. The ultimate control is the one we
the Dalai Lama says. [p] DALAI LAMA: Now, even day by day, the Chinese population transfer,
a wall and they're built up across the wall to day by day. [tc text=pause] Now let's think of
of us that followed it and read the er hearings day by day a tremendous number of words quarter of
own out here [M01] Right [F01] I've had to learn day by day on my own and [ZF1] I [ZF0] I it's been
   you don't know. So I mean you're doing things day by day really and working that way and it was
```

Figure 6. Screen shot from the Collins Wordbank*Online* English corpus, showing the results for *day by day* (http://www.collins.co.uk/corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx).

Figure 7. This figure shows the number of instances of *bu* refer-
ring anaphorically or referring to a referent that is contextually
present as wells as other uses in which *bu* is not used referential-
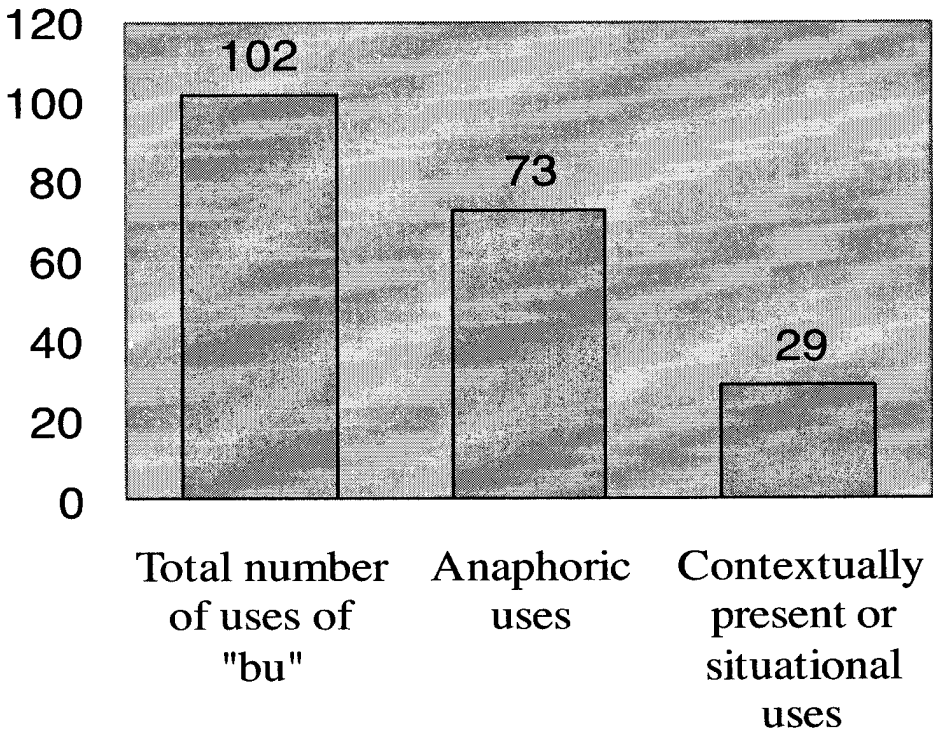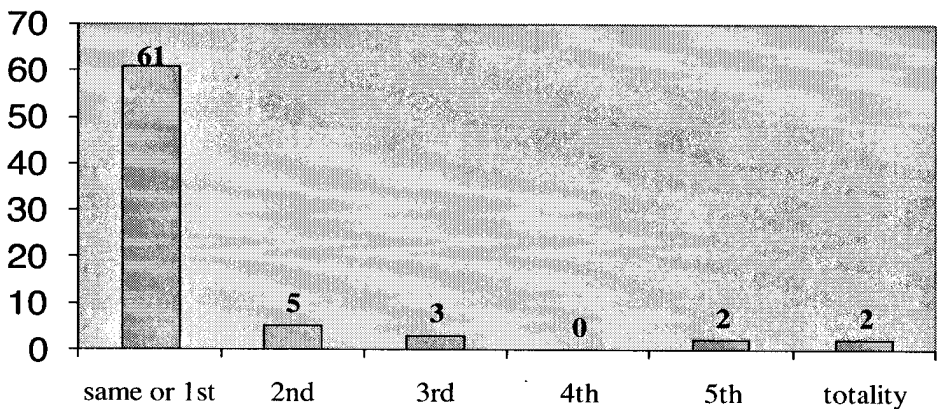ly.

Figure 8. The figure below shows that in 61 instances, the referent that *bu* refers to is found either in the same sentence or the sentence right before that. Only a very few instances, the referent is found farther away.

The distance (*measured by the number of sentences*) between the antecedent and "bu"

61	5	3	0	2	2
same or 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	totality

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