

DISCOURSE CONNECTORS

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

1. Function

Discourse connectors show how clauses and sentences are logically related.

They express relations such as:

- cause and result
- purpose
- contrast and concession
- sequence
- explanation and clarification

The events themselves do not change.

The speaker's organization of meaning changes.

2. Forms

In Turkish, discourse relations are expressed mainly through grammatical structures, not only through independent words.

Two core forms:

- Dependent clause builders (subordinating connectors)
- → formed with verb morphology (converbs, nominalizations)
- Independent connectors (sentence-level connectors)
- → free words placed between or at the beginning of sentences

Both types organize discourse, but they behave structurally differently.

3. Morphology

A) Dependent clause builders (core Turkish mechanism)

These connectors are formed by verbal morphology and create subordinate clauses.

Common patterns:

- Zarf-fiiller (Converbs)
 - -(y)Ip
 - -(y)ErEk
 - -IncA
 - -DIKtan sonra
- Nominalized clauses
 - -DIĞI için
 - -mEk için

The connector is part of the verb form, not a separate word.

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B) Independent connectors

These are free forms and do not change verb morphology.

Examples:

- ama
- bu yüzden
- yine de
- dolayısıyla
- ayrıca
- kısacası
- oysa

They connect sentences or clauses, not verb forms.

4. Structural Guide

A) Subordinating (dependent) connectors

Structure:

[Dependent clause + connector morphology] + main clause

The logical relation is encoded inside the verb form.

B) Coordinating / independent connectors

Structure:

Sentence + connector + sentence

The connector is external to the clause.

5. Usage

A) Cause → Result (Neutral result)

Used to explain why something happened.

The cause is embedded in a dependent clause.

B) Purpose

Used to express intended outcome.

Typically formed with nominalized clauses.

C) Sequence

In Turkish discourse, sequence is most naturally expressed through converbs, not simple time adverbs.

D) Contrast and Concession (Stance-sensitive)

Different connectors express different speaker attitudes:

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- neutral contrast
- strong opposition
- unexpected or concessive result

E) Result / Conclusion

Different connectors express different result types:

- neutral result
- formal / logical result
- summarizing result

Examples

Cause → Result (Neutral result)

Yağmur yağdığı için dışarı çıkmadık.

— Because it was raining, we didn't go out.

Çok çalıştığı için başarılı oldu.

— Because he worked a lot, he became successful.

Purpose

Erken kalkmak için uyudum.

— I slept early in order to wake up early.

Seni görmek için geldim.

— I came to see you.

Sequence

Kahve içtikten sonra işe başladık.

— After we had coffee, we started work.

Eve gelince beni ara.

— Call me when you arrive home.

Kapıyı kapatıp çıktı.

— He closed the door and left.

Contrast: ama (Neutral contrast)

Gelmek istedi, ama zamanı yoktu.

— He wanted to come, but he had no time.

Film güzeldi, ama çok uzundu.

— The movie was good, but it was very long.

Onu aradım, ama cevap vermedi.

— I called him, but he didn't answer.

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Concession: yine de (Unexpected result)

Çok yorgundu, yine de çalışmaya devam etti.
— He was very tired; still, he kept working.

Yağmur yağıyordu, yine de dışarı çıktılar.
— It was raining; nevertheless, they went out.

Her şeyi anlattım, yine de anlamadı.
— I explained everything; still, he didn't understand.

Result: bu yüzden (Neutral result)

Yağmur yağıyordu, bu yüzden dışarı çıkmadık.
— It was raining, so we didn't go out.

Geç kaldı, bu yüzden toplantıyı kaçırdı.
— He was late; therefore, he missed the meeting.

Çok hastaydı, bu yüzden okula gitmedi.
— He was very sick, so he didn't go to school.

Result: dolayısıyla (Formal / logical result)

Zamanımız çok azdı, dolayısıyla plan değişti.
— We had very little time; therefore, the plan changed.

Tüm veriler eksikti, dolayısıyla karar ertelendi.
— All the data was incomplete; therefore, the decision was postponed.

Bu bir riskli durumdu, dolayısıyla kabul edilmedi.
— This was a risky situation; therefore, it was not accepted.

Addition: ayrıca (Additional information)

Ali toplantıya geldi, ayrıca raporu da getirdi.
— Ali came to the meeting and also brought the report.

Bu konu zor, ayrıca zamanımız da az.
— This topic is difficult; moreover, we don't have much time.

Projeyi bitirdi, ayrıca sunumu da hazırladı.
— He finished the project and also prepared the presentation.

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Result: kısacası (Summarizing result)

Çok konuştuk, kısacası karar veremedik.

— We talked a lot; in short, we couldn't make a decision.

Her şeyi denedik, kısacası işe yaramadı.

— We tried everything; in short, it didn't work.

Contrast: oysa (Strong contrast / correction)

Herkes hazırды, oysa toplantı iptal edildi.

— Everyone was ready; however, the meeting was canceled.

Çok çalıştı, oysa sonuç beklediği gibi olmadı.

— He worked a lot; however, the result was not as expected.

Notes

- In Turkish, discourse relations are primarily grammatical, not lexical.
- Converbs and nominalized clauses form the backbone of discourse connection.
- Independent connectors mainly add tone and stance.
- Time adverbs alone (önce, sonra) do not create discourse structure.
- Morphological connectors (–DIKtan sonra, –IncA) establish true discourse relations.
- Connector choice reflects how strongly ideas are linked and how the speaker positions themselves toward the information.