2026. Proceedings of the Workshop on Turkic and Languages in Contact with Turkic 10. 1–12.

The Role of the Turkish Modal Particle YA in Discourse Relations: An Experimental Study

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Abstract. This study examines how the Turkish modal particle YA functions as a common ground managing operator in the role of re-mentioning a proposition in varying discourse conditions (Karagjosova 2004). Although its German counterpart JA has received some attention (Döring and Repp 2019), due to its strict requirements on the interlocutors and its diverse range of functions, the modal particle YA has not yet been the main focus of any empirical studies (Özbek 2000; Dikmen et. al. 2023). Since previous research heavily relies on corpus data and informal judgments, this research, on the other hand, adopts an experimental approach to overcome challenges such as limited control over discourse context, proposition length, and thematic consistency in order to uncover YA. The experiment conducted tested the presence and absence of the modal particle to see whether its absence would degrade the coherence in varying discourse relations. The experiment involved a 2x2 factorial design with two discourse relations (BACKGROUND & REASON) and particle's presence (PRESENT & ABSENT) as factors. Over 100 participants rated the acceptability on a 1-7 Likert-type scale. The results revealed no significant difference in ratings across all conditions, suggesting that the absence of YA does not negatively affect the coherence, and its presence does not necessarily contribute to higher judgments. We have also analysed the response time data to see whether YA's absence affect them in any way. Again, the results did not reveal any significant difference. The study concludes that YA can appear in both background and causal contexts without significantly altering the coherence or the acceptability, suggesting flexibility in its role.

Keywords. discourse relation; modal particle; Turkish; common ground; presupposition

1. Introduction. Modal particles have long been recognized as subtle yet critical means by which speakers manage epistemic stance, presuppositions, and shared knowledge (Jacobs 1991; Repp 2013). In German, the particle JA (Döring and Repp 2019) reliably signals that a proposition p belongs to the interlocutors' common ground (CG), thereby facilitating attachment under BACKGROUND relations as outlined in Mann and Thompson (1988). In Turkish, the particle YA has been informally associated with 'addressee involvement' and 'shared knowledge'(1) and (2) (Özbek 2000; Altıparmak 2022), but its role as a CG-managing operator has not been experimentally tested although it has been mentioned as an ancillary complement of another particle *hani* as in (3). (Dikmen et.al. 2023). Using synthetically generated experimental data in the form of dialogues, we ask: Does Turkish YA preferentially enhance coherence in BACKGROUND relations, or does its presence (or absence) impact BACKGROUND and REASON relations equally?

(1) Hani görsel işitsel efekt-ler ol-ur ya
hani visual auditory effect-PL be-AOR.3SG ya (Modal Part.)
≈ 'You know, there are these audio-visual effects…' (Özbek 2000, p. 400)

(2) Hani bura-da vegan bir restoran var (ya)

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hani here-LOC vegan INDEF restaurant exist ya (Modal Part.)
≈ 'As we know, there is a vegan restaurant here.' (Dikmen et al. 2023, p. 237)

(3) Hani Etiler-de vegan bir restoran var (ya) orada yi-yebil-ir-iz
hani Etiler-LOC vegan INDEF restaurant exist ya there-LOC eat-ABIL-AOR-1PL
≈ 'There is a vegan restaurant in Etiler, remember? We can eat there.' (ibid. p.232)

We proceed as follows. Section 2 surveys prior literature on modal particles, at-issueness, CG management, the Rhetorical Structure Theory as well as what is known about German JA and Turkish YA. Section 3 presents hypotheses and the objectives of this study. Section 4 contains our experimental design: stimuli, procedure, statistical modelling as well as the acceptability and response-time results. We conclude the findings and the study in Section 5, and Section 6 discusses cross-linguistic implications and methodological considerations and Section 7 make suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background. This section gives a brief introduction to what the current phenomenon is (i.e., a modal particle in the role of reminding a proposition), how it has been framed in literature, what has been done to investigate it and what frameworks have been utilized to reveal the subtleties found in the current phenomenon. The section will respectively present (2.1) modal particles as common ground operators, (2.2) at issueness and coherence relations, (2.3) the Turkish modal particle YA, (2.4) its German counterpart, i.e. JA, (2.5) the Rhetorical Structure Theory. These subchapters are confined to current-research-related aspects of the topics. The literature review does not provide an exhaustive nor a complementary explanation to the existing literature.

2.1. MODAL PARTICLES AS COMMON GROUND OPERATORS. Modal particles (MPs) like German JA/DOCH and Turkish YA are pragmatically rich markers that modify an utterance's truth-conditional content by signaling the speaker's assumptions about shared knowledge (4). (Jacobs 1991; Repp 2013).

(4) Peter hat ja seine Geburtstags-feier ab-gesag-t.
Peter has.3SG JA his birthday-party PRF-cancel-PTCP
Da könn-en wir am Sonntag ein-en Ausflug mach-en.
then can-1PL we at.the Sunday a-ACC trip make-INF
'As you know, Peter has cancelled his birthday party. So we can go on a trip on Sunday.' (Döring and Repp 2020, p. 18)

Repp (2013) defines common-ground-managing operators, including modal particles, which serve to indicate the status of a proposition p with respect to the common ground. Specifically, these operators signal; whether p is already part of the common ground, or whether it is new, the interlocutors' stance toward p (e.g., whether it's expected, obvious, or surprising), and how the speaker intends the common ground to develop—whether to add p, remove it, or challenge it.

According to Repp (2013), modal particles, JA, DOCH, EBEN, HALT, WOHL, SCHON as in German, signal whether p is known or expected, thus helping to integrate or re-activate p in the discourse. For instance, JA often indicates that p is known, cancelling the presupposition that p is new—as in reminding the addressee of something already in the common ground, facilitating coherent discourse transitions (5).

(5) Wir sind ja doch alte Bekannte.
we are PART PART old acquaintances
Roughly: 'We are old acquaintances, you must agree, mustn't you, because you know it as well as I do.' (Repp 2013, p.15)

2.2. AT-ISSUENESS AND COHERENCE RELATIONS. Koev (2018) proposes a three-part distinction of at-issueness: Q-at-issue (questions), P-at-issue (propositions), and C-at-issue (clauses attaching to the discourse via coherence relations). C-at-issue material (6) is "a freshly uttered segment [that] can attach to [an existing discourse] by some appropriate coherence relation" (ibid. p.3).

(6) Koev's comparison to highlight C at issueness
John took a train from Paris to Istanbul. He has family there. (Hobbs 1979, p.67)
John took a train from Paris to Istanbul. #He likes spinach. (Kehler 2002, p.2)

According to this perspective, discourse expands by inserting new segments through coherence relations, and only structurally accessible content remains available for further continuations; therefore, C-at-issue is anything that may coherently connect to earlier content. Depending on their embedding, identical ideas may have different C-at-issueness because different coherence relations influence that availability. C-at-issueness, in contrast to P-at-issueness, is based on the potential for cogent continuation rather than on being publicly suggested or rejected. Given the specific ways that YA-marked segments license attachments, a further, unique variation of C-at-issue material is revealed when the Turkish discourse marker YA is analyzed using Rhetorical Structure Theory as in (7).

(7) A: Köprülerdeki hız sınırı değiştirilecek.
bridge.PLU.LOC.REL speed limit change.PASS.FUT
"The speed limit on the bridges will be changed."
B: Son zamanlarda çok kaza ol-du (ya).
Last time.PLU.LOC many accidents happen.PST MP
'There have been many accidents lately (as you know).'

In the BACKGROUND condition, the clause appears as:

2.3. TURKISH MODAL PARTICLE YA. Turkish literature on MPs—YA, YANI, IŞTE, ŞEY—has largely been corpus-based or descriptive (Özbek 2000; Ruhi 2013; Altıparmak 2022). Özbek (2000) groups YA among interactional markers indicating "you know" or "as you should know," but does not analyze it in terms of CG-management. Ruhi (2013) and Altıparmak (2022) examine other MPs (ŞEY, YANI, IŞTE) for hesitation, filler, or elaboration functions; they do not explicitly address YA. Kuruoğlu (2018) surveyed secondary-school Turkish children's speech but omits YA.

Thus, while YA is informally associated with "addressee involvement," no experimental study to date has tested whether YA specifically facilitates a certain discourse relation's coherence by reminding the listener of shared information (Karagjosova 2004). The problems corpus approaches face are two-fold: (i) priming authentic and specific discourse relational contexts is difficult since YA often occurs in conversational, spontaneous talks (Özbek 2000, p.395), and (ii) controlling confounding factors (e.g., utterance length, thematic context) requires labor-intensive manual annotation. As a result, there is not yet a significant amount of research on the Turkish modal particle YA. Its German counterpart has been the subject of several studies and experimental examination, but the research is limited by narrow corpus-based analysis and inadequately designed experiments.

2.4. GERMAN MODAL PARTICLE JA. Döring and Repp (2019) conducted a two-phase investigation. First, a corpus analysis of a subcorpus (three speeches; 27 000 tokens) drawn from a subcorpus of Helmut Kohl's parliamentary addresses (1996–1999) annotated for Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST)-based relations. They manually distinguished JA vs. DOCH occurrences (364 DOCH, 112 JA) and found that BACKGROUND+JA (9) occurred 5.82× more often than baseline expectations, while JUSTIFICATION+JA (10) was not overrepresented. In a

second phase, a forced-choice experiment presented participants with brief German sentences, pitting JA, DOCH, and SCHON (another MP) against one another in BACKGROUND vs. JUSTIFICATION scenarios. Results confirmed that JA is strongly preferred in BACKGROUND conditions (Döring and Repp 2019).

(8) Für Anwohner im näher-en Umkreis von Windkraft-anlagen
for residents in.the.DAT near-DAT vicinity of wind-power-plants
könnt-e auch der Geräusch-pegel ein Problem werd-en
can-SBJV.3SG also the.NOM.M noise-level a.NOM problem become-INF
'For people living near wind farms the noise could also become a problem.'

(9) Background
Die Motor-en in den Anlagen sind _ riesig und verursach-en
the motor-PL in the.DAT.PL plants are.3PL MP enormous and cause-3PL
entsprechend Lärm
correspondingly noise
'The generators in the turbines are enormous and accordingly cause noise.'

(10) Justify
Das könn-en wir _ nicht einfach als lächerlich ab-tun
that can-1PL we MP not simply as ridiculous PRT-dismiss-INF
'We can't just dismiss this as absurd.'

These findings suggest that JA actively signals CG membership, particularly in non-causal attachments, and that experimental paradigms can complement corpus methods, illuminating how MPs function under precise discourse manipulations. However, this study had its own drawbacks. First, the corpus data was imbalanced, and it was taken from a subcorpus of a subcorpus of corpus of parliamentary speeches. Despite that, there were occurrences where JA appears in less-preferred discourse relations. Yet, what the role of JA was in such relations was not clearly elaborated on. Moreover, the forced-choice experimental design was done on an excel sheet where participants were able to see all the materials at the same time and change their mind if they wanted to. Overall, although the experimental work on JA could give us some insight into its subtleties, the method used was not without its flaws.

2.5. RHETORICAL STRUCTURE THEORY. Although there have been many discourse analysis theories (e.g., Grosz and Sidner 1986; Hobbs 2010), Döring and Repp utilized the Rhetorical Structure Theory. We have followed them for comparability. The Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) is another model used to analyze text organization. It was initially developed for short texts in the 1980s by Mann and Thompson. Compared to some other approaches, RST was proposed to offer both a hierarchical and a functional approach to text analysis and was proposed after an initial analysis of over 400 texts ranging from personal letters and newsletter articles to advertisements and travel brochures (Mann and Thompson 1986, 1988). RST was founded on some common discourse assumptions: first, texts are not just strings of clauses, and next relations between portions of a text (also called text spans) reflect writer's options for text organization. Based on them, RST builds a hierarchical structure of a text in which each span has a function in the overall discourse (ibid.).

In RST, there are two types of hierarchical relations. The more common one is the nuclear-satellite relation in which one text span is more central to the writer's purposes, and the other is there to support the nuclear text span. In the absence of the supporting unit (the satellite), the meaning will not be significantly affected. Yet, if there is an equilibrium between the spans, i.e., if there is no nuclear-satellite relation, then there is a multinuclear relation. The example in (12) below exemplifies a multinuclear relation and in (13) a nuclear-satellite relation:

(12) [Animals heal,] [but trees compartmentalize.] (Mann and Thompson 1988, p.278)

(13) [To see which Syncom diskette will replace the ones you're using now,] [send for our free "Flexi-Finder" selection guide and the name of the supplier nearest you.] (ibid. p.276)

The example in (12) focuses on two different groups presented in two separate units of which neither is prioritized. If you belong to one, you are not part of the other; moreover, whichever group you belong to, you perform the action given in its predicate; “but” emphasizes the contrast between them. The units are in a multinuclear relation, i.e., the contrast relation. In (13), the unit on the right is the nucleus. The preceding unit is in a PURPOSE relation with the nucleus, i.e., it demonstrates the purpose of the action to be performed in the nucleus, hence, a nuclear-satellite relation.

Another aspect of RST is the Right Frontier Constraint, which means that newly introduced segments must anchor to the rightmost available nodes via coherent rhetorical relations. However, these newly introduced nodes can occupy the nuclear position, meaning the more central role in the discourse. In the scope of our study here, while BACKGROUND relations typically supply circumstantial, contextual information (SATELLITE) to a central proposition (NUCLEUS), REASON/JUSTIFICATION relations (also being SATELLITE) provide causal rationale (Mann and Thompson 1986) to nuclear units.

3. Hypotheses and Objectives. We employed as many control mechanisms as possible in order to isolate the role of the Turkish modal particle YA since in natural conversation, many factors beyond a single lexical item contribute to how listeners infer coherence. Therefore, we have constructed every utterance so that they differ only in the presence or absence of YA, ensuring in their respected discourse relations so that any observed effects on coherence cannot be attributed to other factors.

The first goal of the study was to establish an experimental foundation for investigating the discourse-pragmatic function of YA. We asked whether YA systematically guides participants’ interpretations toward one discourse relation over another—specifically, whether it favors causal (i.e., reason) readings rather than background contexts. This inquiry is inspired by the German modal particle JA, which, according to Döring and Repp (2019), licenses causal justification readings. By comparing YA with its German counterpart, we can determine whether they share functional parallels despite their typological differences. A secondary aim is to validate the use of Likert-scale acceptability judgments in probing fine-grained discourse-pragmatic effects.

Two core research questions guided our design. First, we investigated how the absence or presence of YA would affect acceptability ratings for sentences intended to convey either REASON or BACKGROUND relations. We predicted that, without YA, sentences joined with a BACKGROUND relation would receive lower acceptability ratings than REASON-relation sentences, because BACKGROUND contexts lacked any overt coherence cue as well as not inherently connected to each other with a strong relation like CAUSE-RESULT. However, when YA was inserted, it should provide sufficient pragmatic support to elevate BACKGROUND ratings to the level of REASON relations, resulting in no significant difference between them.

Second, as a post-hoc hypothesis, we examined processing times under the hypothesis that participants would take longer to read BACKGROUND-relation sentences when YA was absent, reflecting the additional inferential work required to recover coherence. Importantly, we framed this hypothesis on the condition that acceptability ratings showed that participants assigned similar coherence—even without YA—then any longer reading times for BACKGROUND relations must indicate that they constructed the intended relation only at additional cognitive cost.

To summarize in formal terms, our study tested the following predictions: Hypothesis 1 proposed that, in the absence of YA, BACKGROUND-relation sentences would be rated as significantly less acceptable than REASON-relation sentences, whereas with YA present, acceptability ratings for the two relation types would not differ; Hypothesis 2, which we endorsed conditionally—namely, only after Hypothesis 1 was not supported—posited that participants would require significantly longer reading times to process BACKGROUND-relation sentences without YA than to process REASON-relation sentences without YA, even if their acceptability ratings are comparable.

By integrating both acceptability judgments and reading measures, and by embedding a conditional rationale for our second prediction, this design allowed us to examine not only whether YA had an influence on coherence interpretations but also how much processing effort was needed to achieve those interpretations in its absence. The results would indirectly reveal how efficient the experimental design was.

4. Experimental Methodology

4.1. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN. To examine the discourse-pragmatic function of the Turkish modal particle YA, we adopted a within-subjects 2x2 factorial design crossing RELATION (BACKGROUND vs. REASON) with PARTICLE PRESENCE (ABSENT vs. PRESENT). Each participant encountered twelve critical dialogues, three repetitions of each of the four conditions, and thirty-six standardized fillers (1:3 ratio). In addition, the experiment had 5 attention items which were simple arithmetic questions such as five minus two, and 5 practice items which were presented in a practice round right before the main experiment began, making in total 58 trials to give judgments to per list. Both critical items and fillers (as well as the practice items) appeared in dialogue format, with Speaker A always producing the nucleus utterance and Speaker B the satellite which contains the factor RELATION. After reading each exchange, participants judged the naturalness of B's response on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = completely unnatural 'hiç doğal değil'; 7 = completely natural 'gayet doğal').

Critical and filler trials were distributed across four pseudo-randomized, counterbalanced lists derived from a Latin-square design, ensuring that each participant saw every critical item in exactly one condition of the set it belongs to, and that order and repetition effects were minimized. The standardized fillers were crafted to span the entire scale and thereby guard against scale-use distortions.

4.2 EXPERIMENTAL FACTORS AND CRITICAL STIMULI. Every critical dialogue comprises two turns. In the first turn (A), a proposition (the nucleus) is introduced. In the second turn (B), a satellite clause either provides a reason or supplies background information, and either includes the particle YA or is identical except for its absence. No overt case-marking or evidential morphology[1] appears in these clauses, ensuring that any effects on acceptability or processing derive from the presence or absence of YA and the relation type alone. For example, one nucleus utterance reads:

(14) A: Köprülerdeki hız sınırı değiştirilecek.
bridge.PLU.LOC.REL speed limit change.PASS.FUT
("The speed limit on the bridges will be changed.")

In the REASON condition, the satellite clause is:

(15) B1: Son zamanlarda çok kaza ol-du (ya).
Last time.PLU.LOC many accidents happen.PST MP
'There have been many accidents lately (as you know).'

[1] One single set was found to mistakenly contain the evidential marker -mış while the remaining 11 sets did not.

In the BACKGROUND condition, the clause appears as:

(16) B2: Haberlerde iki gün-dür söyl-üyor-lar (ya)
news.PLU.LOC two day.COP say.PROG.3.PL MP
'They've been reporting it in the news for two days (as you know).'

All dialogues are presented in standard Turkish orthography; English translations are provided here solely for illustrative purposes. Table 1 illustrates how a single nucleus item combines with each satellite variant to yield the four conditions.

Table 1. The Distribution of the conditions under the factors.

Relation	**Presence**	**A (Nucleus)**	**B (Satellite)**
Reason	Absent	A: Köprülerdeki hız sınırı değiştirilecek.	B1: Son zamanlarda çok kaza oldu.
Reason	Present		B1: Son zamanlarda çok kaza oldu ya.
Background	Absent		B2: Haberlerde iki gündür söylüyorlar.
Background	Present		B2: Haberlerde iki gündür söylüyorlar ya.

By combining acceptability judgments with this tightly controlled manipulation of Relation and Particle Presence, our design allows us to assess not only whether YA biases discourse-relation interpretation but also how its absence may affect scale judgments when satellite clauses are presented in dialogue.

4.3. PROCEDURES. All stimuli were carefully crafted original items, generated via introspection by several native speakers of Turkish—some with linguistic training—and vetted to ensure that they contained no political, religious, offensive, or otherwise sensitive material. Stimuli appeared one at a time on an electronic display via a mobile-friendly interface built in PsychoPy and deployed on Pavlovia. Participants were asked only to judge how natural each stimulus sounded on a 1–7 Likert scale. They were instructed with the question "How natural does the sentence below sound to you?" (adapted from Featherston 2007). No special expertise was needed beyond being a native Turkish speaker. Once their sociolinguistic background was recorded, participants completed a practice trial; after the practice round, the main experiment commenced. Before beginning, participants provided explicit consent for us to record basic sociological information (gender, age, hometown/region of upbringing, and bi-/multilingual status) to examine potential sociological influences on their ratings. No other demographic details were collected, and no identifying information was requested. Participants remained anonymous from start to finish.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and individuals could withdraw at any moment. Although the study was not fully unsupervised, researchers were on site (for instance, in classroom settings) to answer questions and ensure that participants were appropriately engaged. The design allowed multiple participants, such as a classroom group, to take part simultaneously. Each session took approximately 10 minutes.

The study protocol received ethical approval from the Research Committee of the University of Tübingen (Germany). The entire data wrangling and statistical analysis were conducted in R (version 4.2.3; R Core Team 2022).

4.4. PARTICIPANTS. Participants were university students and staff members, all native speakers of Turkish over 18 years old. No physical or medical requirements were imposed. The experiment was conducted in classrooms, and participation was voluntary. Data were collected between 30 October 2024 and 4 November 2025.

Participants were assigned to four counterbalanced lists. Initially, 32, 35, 32, and 31 participants were tested in Lists 1–4, respectively, yielding a total tested sample of 130 participants. We screened for true native proficiency by excluding anyone who had not been

exposed to Turkish as their first language before age six (Hull and Vaid 2007). Additional exclusion criteria targeted data quality. Outliers were flagged when a participant's standardized filler-item scores lay more than two standard deviations from the group mean. Furthermore, any participant who missed more than one of the five embedded attention checks was removed from the dataset. Concretely, 6, 4, 4, and 2 participants in Lists 1–4, respectively, were excluded for failing at least four out of five attention items, and 1 participant each in Lists 1, 3, and 4 (and none in List 2) was excluded as a statistical outlier. After applying these criteria, 25, 31, 27, and 28 participants remained in Lists 1–4, respectively. In total, data from 111 participants were retained and entered into the analyses.

4.5. TOOLS & FLOW. All the stimuli were carefully crafted, and were original creations, generated via introspection by several native Turkish speakers—some with linguistic training—and were vetted to ensure they contained no political, religious, offensive, or otherwise sensitive material. Participants took part using a mobile-friendly interface built in PsychoPy and deployed on Pavlovia. We screened for true native proficiency by excluding anyone who had not been exposed to Turkish as their first language before age six (Hull and Vaid 2007). Outliers were flagged when a participant's standardized filler-item scores lay more than two standard deviations from the group mean. Additionally, any participant who missed more than one of the five embedded attention checks was removed from the dataset. The entire data wrangling and the analysis were conducted in R Programming (version 4.2.3; R Core Team 2022).

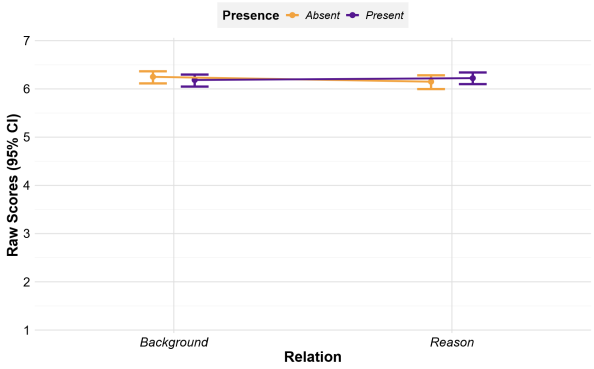

Figure 1. Raw scored means for test items.

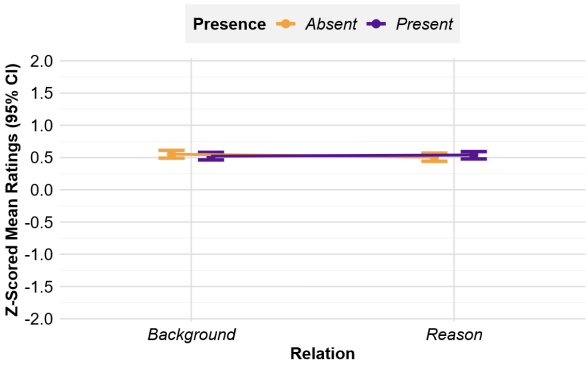

Figure 2. Z-scored means for test items.

4.6. RESULTS. In our analysis of native-speaker acceptability judgments, all ratings were first standardized (z-scored) and then subjected to linear mixed-effects regression modelling in R using the lmerTest package (Kuznetsova et al. 2017). We employed maximal fixed-effects structures with sum-contrast coding for our two predictors—RELATION (BACKGROUND = +0.5; REASON = –0.5) and PRESENCE (PRESENT = +0.5; ABSENT = –0.5)—and determined the optimal random-effects structure by comparing models via maximum-likelihood tests (Barr et al. 2013). Random intercepts and slopes for both lexical items and participants were retained whenever they significantly improved the model fit, as assessed by likelihood-ratio tests. Model estimates, t-values (using Satterthwaite's approximation), and p-values were obtained from lmerTest's summary output.

Figure 1 displays mean acceptability ratings (with 95 % confidence intervals) for each of the four conditions: BACKGROUND:ABSENT (m = 6. 250, se ≈ 1. 066), BACKGROUND:PRESENT (m = 6. 18541, se ≈ 1. 163), REASON:ABSENT (m = 6. 150, se ≈ 1. 299), and REASON:PRESENT (M = 6. 223, SE ≈ 1. 111).

The mixed-effects analysis revealed no significant main effects of RELATION (t = –0.062, p = 0.951) or PRESENCE (t = 0.043, p = 0.966), nor a significant interaction between them (t = 1.077, p = 0.287). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported: acceptability ratings did not differ reliably between BACKGROUND and REASON contexts, nor was this pattern modulated by the

presence or absence of the critical element. The regression model has found the best model as z-score ~ (presence | item) + (presence | subject). Figure 2 shows the z-scored ratings of the raw scores that illustrate the ceiling effect.

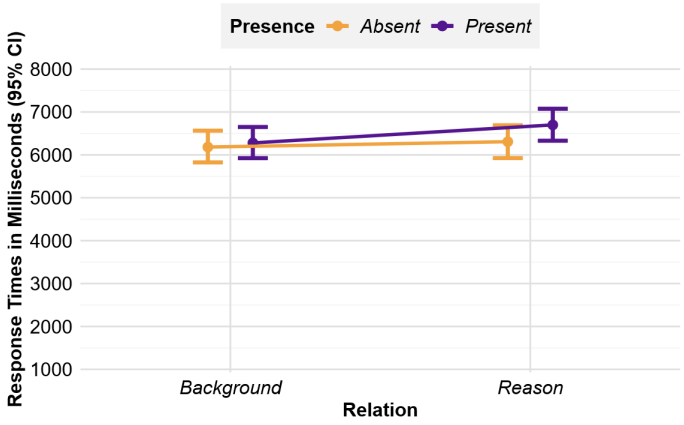

Figure 3. Response times means for test items.

To assess processing difficulty, we conducted a parallel analysis on response times (RTs). Individual RTs were first standardized within participants, and extreme values (±2 SD) were removed (nine observations, 0.6 % of the data), yielding a final N = 1,504 observations. Using the same fixed- and random-effects specifications as for the rating models, we again evaluated significance via t-values and associated p-values from **lmerTest**. Figure 3 depicts mean raw RTs (with 95 % confidence intervals): BACKGROUND:ABSENT (m = 6182 ms), BACKGROUND:PRESENT (m = 6278 ms), REASON:ABSENT (m = 6307 ms), and REASON:PRESENT (m = 6698 ms). The RT analysis likewise yielded non-significant effects for RELATION ($t = 0.758$, $p = 0.453$), PRESENCE ($t = 0.921$, $p = 0.362$), and their interaction ($t = 0.408$, $p = 0.685$). Consequently, Hypothesis 2 was not supported: there was no reliable slowdown in processing when participants encountered BACKGROUND:ABSENT items compared to REASON:ABSENT items. The regression model revealed no factor as significant either in the fixed or in the random effects: rt ~ (1 | subject) + (1 | item).

5. Conclusion. Our experimental investigation has shown that Turkish YA does **not** preferentially favor BACKGROUND over REASON relations in terms of acceptability or processing ease. These findings contrast with German JA (Döring and Repp 2019) and suggest cross-linguistic diversity in how MPs manage CG. More broadly, they illustrate the necessity—and adequacy—of synthetic data for exploring MP functions that are difficult to prime in corpora. However, it should be noted that the two studies followed different techniques of research. Döring and Repp (2019) utilized a three-forced choice experiment after an initial analysis of a corpora. We have used a Likert-type scale (1-7). Forced choice experiments yield to larger effect sizes, which helps see a difference between the factors as they force the participants to pick one factor over the other. Likert scales, on the other hand, allow participants to evaluate each factor within itself, yielding smaller effect sizes. And therefore, scales might not be the ideal technique to show the difference. However, similarly forced choice experiments might not be the ideal way-to-go when it comes to explaining why the discrepancies and nuances arise and what they tell us.

6. Discussion. Our experiment demonstrates that, unlike German JA—which strongly prefers BACKGROUND attachments (Döring and Repp 2019)—Turkish YA does not preferentially enhance BACKGROUND coherence. Even when YA is absent, Turkish speakers do not rate BACKGROUND items as significantly less acceptable than REASON items. Moreover, no processing-time penalty arises when reconstructing coherence in BACKGROUND:ABSENT.

This cross-linguistic contrast suggests that YA'S CG-management function may be less relation-specific. One explanation is that Turkish discourse norms permit greater implicit inference of BACKGROUND context without explicit particles; YA'S role may be more general ("as you know") rather than strictly "recall p" under BACKGROUND. Indeed, Özbek (2000) and Altıparmak (2022) describe YA as marking "addressee involvement," "rehydrating" shared propositions, and functioning as a focus marker, topic initiator, or emphatic marker—functions that do not necessarily tie YA to one particular coherence relation.

7. Directions for Future Research. The first step in future research should be to improve the experimental design in order to more clearly separate YA'S discourse-functional contribution. To enable a more thorough mapping of commonground marking in Turkish, the scope should also be expanded to include other Turkish modal particles like YANI, IŞTE, and ŞEY under carefully regulated BACKGROUND and REASON circumstances. In addition, cross-linguistic parallel controlled paradigms, such as Russian (ŽE) and German (JA & DOCH), may aid in differentiating language-specific realizations from universal discourse-management techniques. Finally, a closer examination of the relationship between context and particle use is warranted. By embedding YA in semantically incongruent environments (like purely causal or elaborative contexts) and gathering acceptability judgements, pragmatic constraints and the significance of context–particle congruency would be clarified.

The study concludes by emphasizing the value of experimental pragmatics in revealing the nuanced discourse roles of modal particles, particularly Turkish YA, whose interpretation and distribution are closely linked to interactive common-ground dynamics (Özbek 2000; Altıparmak 2022).

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