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Identification and importance of headings and key words in research in the framework of geography methodology

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Abstract

Unity, aesthetics and impression constitute the basic qualities of the composition. The main issue emphasized in this study is to be or not to be able to have a vigorous connection between the topics chosen in geographical research, title, keywords and the text content. The purpose of the study was identified as the assertion or the formulation of the theoretic approach which is to be pursued to specify the chosen topic, the optimal title for the topic and the keywords stated conceptually within the text. This goal will be achieved by in-depth analysis of the issue within the concept of geography methodology. As long as the theoretic approach, asserted by the study, is adopted, the researcher will have a great support in determining the problem and the aim of the field of study more accurately, keeping away from unnecessary details and generalizations by the help of the pre-specified limits, carrying out systematical analyses and evaluations, coming up with a more accurate conclusion in a shorter time and finally putting forward a proposal for the solution of the problem. A small sampling group was formed by using the studies in the target population. Rather than using the samples regarded as ineffective, the effective samples which are the sound representatives of the target population were included in the sampling group. The data collected was discussed in two parts as any raw, semi-processed and fully processed factual data and the judgmental data consisting different opinions and attitudes. The sources of data are the scientists and the artists who have been dealing with geography, language and literature, factual and judgmental documents/ information. Most probably, the convenient identification of the key words and the title compatible with the unity of the study is one of the most important things when conducting an academic study. Each subject area is represented or explained by distinctive concepts of its own. So, the researcher should come up with the clear and explicit statements without addressing the interpretations which may lead the audience to misinterpret the key words, notions or facts in terms of meaning.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Identification and Purpose of Research Problem

One of the main problems identified in geography literature is related to incomplete associations between *text headings and key words* and *content* in addition to inconsistencies observed in “topic-purpose-result” relationship in some published work and scientific incompleteness and faults in methodological “topic-method-finding-evaluation” approaches and implementations. It is even possible to note that there is no specific consistency between the title and key words and content (Ayyıldız and Bozkurt, 2006: 49; Göçer, 2010: 180). The most common problem is the lack of identification of a suitable topic for the studies. This causes important hardships for the author in particular and the reader who aims to benefit from the work and for the classifications that will be undertaken in literature based on topic. Therefore, the main problem of the current study is the problem of “not being able to form healthy associations between the headers, key words and text content in some geography studies”. The purpose is to provide and formulate a theoretical approach that needs to be followed in the identification of the most suitable topic, header and key words by analyzing the problem in detail.

1.2. Importance of the Research

In case the theoretical approach proposed in the study is followed, support will be provided for the researcher in the phase of identification of a suitable header/title and key words to stay away from unnecessary details and generalizations with the help of identified limitations, to undertake correct analyses and assessments, to reach results in a shorter time and in a more correct manner and to develop proposals that will aid the solution of the problem.

1.3. Hypotheses of the Study

“Judgments that are accepted as true” are generally needed in scientific studies to be able to make generalizations, to explain the relationships among concepts and to implement some tests. These hypotheses are not expected to reflect the truth efficaciously however they are preferred to be testable and universal. The researcher can identify the basic tenets in his/her study by presenting personal preferences in some topics that can change according to personal views and beliefs and that are difficult or impossible to prove. These are generally related to various statistical values, research problem, theories, control variables, research methods and techniques. The important thing is theory’s power of prediction towards the absolute truth. Therefore, realistic and testable hypotheses along with logical abstractions will be of great benefit for the results and generalizations to be more real and useful.

Accordingly, correctly selected key words and title will help the author *to more clearly identify the problem, to be able to reach necessary resources, to undertake systematic resource analyses, to avoid unnecessary details and generalizations by limiting the topic, to identify the purposes, to comprehend the importance of the research, to define the theoretical framework, to form suitable hypotheses, to test these hypotheses with correct materials, under correct conditions and with the help of the most appropriate method, to obtain strong findings, to provide appropriate analyses and evaluations to reach results in a shorter time and in a more correct manner and to develop solutions for the problem.*

The correct header/title will help the reader *to reach the desired information/topic in a shorter time, to save time, to classify, list or save the study in terms of topics, to assess the text as a whole and analyze it, to obtain correct ideas and to use these ideas correctly.*

1.4. Limitations of the Study

The ideal was to study the topic with the title “*the selection of topics and titles and identification of key words in geography studies*”. However, the part regarding *the selection of topics* has a wide dimension for a methodological study and it requires a larger organization with more volume that takes differences among sub disciplines of geography into consideration. Moreover a study by Tunçel (2001) titled “Topic Selection in Geography Studies”

already exists and what is needed at this point is to provide a theoretical approach that will assist in overcoming the difficulties experienced in the identification of title/header and key words.

1.5. Material and Method

Research model provides the arrangement of all conditions necessary for the suitability of purpose, collecting data technically and economically and interpreting the data in the most suitable manner. General review models are reviews conducted on the whole universe composed of various elements or on a group or sample from the universe in order to have a generalized idea about the universe. In the current research, “general review model” was used by including samples of academic work composed of abstracts, articles, sections of books and theses.

Data used in the current study are examined in two sections as “factual data” composed of various written, oral, visual and digital raw information obtained through document review technique and “judgmental data” formed of various views and evaluations.

The study was based on primary data resources. We made use of 5 academic publications specifically selected for this purpose. Secondary data resources were the reference information obtained as a result of scanning all the documents one by one that are related to prior studies about the theoretical framework and with academic value identified in the references.

2. Study Field and Theoretical Framework

Is selecting the research topic the same as identifying the title? Although there are no direct explanations about this, the answer to this question by the researchers is “no”. However, for the researcher stating “I have identified my topic of study”, the title is clear in actuality. Frequent changes are possible in the title as a result of background research and identification of the framework. Therefore, the basis of all writing is the topic that is discussed and written about. The topic can be selected from among specific main topics depending on the geography areas from all sections related to human beings and the environments they live in. However, limiting the main topics with some sub topics and creating a unique framework is necessary (Tunçel, 2001).

A scientific study starts with the selection of topics or the identification of the problem. The main problem faced here is the identification of the problem and the purpose and later the identification of the method (Figure 1a). However, lately the method is becoming more dominant over the identification of purpose and problem and researchers have started to identify the method first. Questions suitable to the method are asked in this case to identify the purpose and the problem and the answer to the question is shared (Figure 1b). The discrepancy which is seemingly correct is apparent here as well. The researcher tends to use the methods that he/she is good at and the identification of problem is based on reviewing the topics in which he/she has accumulation of knowledge and that situation directs the researcher to studies whose effects do not really contribute to science. However, the effects of selecting unique methodologies for studies are larger although their applicability is harder and more time consuming (Ceyhan, 2013: 41-42).

Identification of a suitable title and key words is as important as the selection of topic in geography studies. “The title is the name and label of the study and the most read section. It must be suitable to derive in-text or out-of-text key words in order to increase the ratio of citations. If possible, the title should not allow for waste of words such as “...studies/research/observations on...” and should be between 4-15 words. The title should not create ambiguity. Ambiguity can also be caused as a result of using abbreviations. Some journals accept scenes as titles as well. These types of titles can provide the message of the article as well as its hypothesis. Main title-sub titles organization and dangling titles can be accepted by journals however it should be remembered that these title types can be problematic. If requested by the publishing media, 3-10 key words should be added at the end of the short summary in order to facilitate easy retrieval of the article in reviews and its being indexed. Key words should be selected form terms that explains the content of the article, should be understandable and recyclable without repeating the words in the title (Ocak, 2012: 44-45). It is ideal to identify a suitable title during the first phases of the study. The title will enable focusing on the main topics of the project. The title also allows others to easily comprehend what is studied. It is important in identifying the purposes and in literature reviews (Demiryörek, 2012: 49). The title prevents the

author to stray from the topic and pulls him/her into the article. The uniqueness of the writing is possible with the title. The title is not the same as the topic. The topic is more expansive compared to the title. A well selected title also provides information about the content of the writing. When the title is appropriate to the idea that is studies, the writing will be more meaningful and effective. The title then should be short, striking and associated with the content. It should not be exaggerated or misleading (Babacan, 2007: 46). The title of the writing carries the traces of the ideas that will be exploited in it. It allows the writer to stay within the limits of the ideas and lets the reader to comprehend the ideas better. Therefore, the topic should be taken into account while selecting the title. When the title is suitable to the topic of the writing, the writing as a whole will be more effective and meaningful. However, title is not the same as the topic (Paçacıoğlu, u.d: 182).

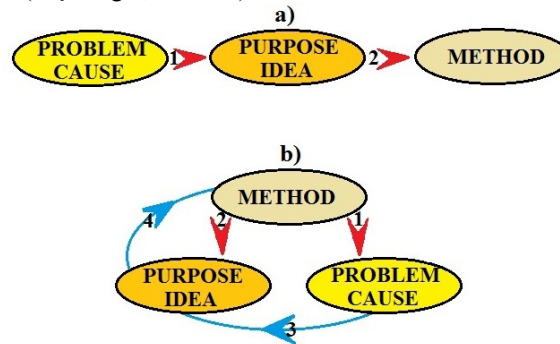


Fig. 1. Process of Topic Selection in Scientific Studies

According to Aktaş and Gündüz (2002: 69-70) the characteristics that should be included in a well selected title are as follows: Titles should be related and interesting. The reader first sees the title of the writing. Therefore interesting titles create an interest and willingness to read the writing. The title should be short and of essence. It should be best to refrain from using long titles in writings related to art and in writings not related to science. Long titles will lessen the impact of the writing. When the titles of fictional texts such as novels, stories, poetry and theater plays are examined, it will be seen that they are all composed of two or three words at the most. The titles should be meaningful, original and correct and should not present misleading information that can deceive the reader. The title should cover the topic wholly: the title should be related to the topic and consist of the content of the writing. The title should answer the questions of “who, what, how” and can formulate the content simply. The expressions with bias or partiality should be refrained from, news titles should not include comments and avoid being simple. Titles should be organized in positive statements. Negative statements will have less effect on the reader. It should be refrained from using titles that include negative wording such as “none and no”. Titles also should not include infinitives, abstractions and passive voice. Descriptive titles, titles designed to astonish and amaze the readers and alliterations will bring liveliness to the writing.

Title is sometimes selected after the writing is completed and sometimes it is selected before it is begun. Both have advantages. If the title is selected before starting the writing, the possibility of excursus will be less. But if it is selected after the writing is completed it will be possible to find an original title in the framework of the topic. What we suggest is the combination of the two; hence we select a title before beginning the writing in order not to stray away from the topic and we think of the title in order to make it more original and change it if necessary. Other than scientific writings, the title should not be long; it should not exceed three words. However, if the title is thought of in the form of an original sentence, the length can be arranged accordingly (Yıldız et.al. 2010: 271). A unique title that reflects and includes the research topic correctly should be selected. The title should not be formed in the format of a sub topic of a textbook. The title should be suitable to the developments in the related field and there should be a definitive relationship between the questions of interest and the title. For instance, in a study undertaken to identify the studies in the field of international marketing between 1995-2010 (Özkan Tektaş, 2010) the articles were first coded in 13 main themes and some points were taken into consideration to identify the topics under which the articles could be replaced. Topic headers covered by international marketing textbooks were taken as the basis in the

selection of titles. Later, each article was examined under one main heading and the studies that could be placed under more than one title were separately classified after being evaluated by two different academicians. Also the key words were taken into consideration while classifying the studies and classification was based on dependent variables.

Arıcı and Ungan's (2008: 320 and 322) study in which they evaluated primary school second levels students' writing focused on evaluation of the writing based on stylistic parts, language and expression and grammar and punctuation. When the distribution of errors made in writing by participating students were considered it was seen that the least number of error (19,6 %) was undertaken while forming the title of the writing. Examination of errors in titles showed that students did not fully know the elements to consider while selecting titles and had inexperience in the area in addition to forgetting to select a title for their writing.

How should the titles of scientific research texts be selected? The titles in these texts should be selected according to the topic and the main idea. The title should be interesting. It cannot be denied that the title is like a key. Hence, the readers should not be given the wrong keys. Situations such as the length of the titles and their being closed and open are also important. Although we may not know the nuances of each word, we should have an idea about the associations and affects the words will create on the reader. It is not such an easy task to select a title for texts. Sometimes identification of the title can take longer than writing the text itself. Therefore, some authors identify the title after they write the text and others select it before they start the writing. Since an article is planned beforehand, the title can be pre-selected but an essay can expand outside the limits of the author's prior plans. Hence some titles can be identified later (Gencal, 19.11.2011).

Each discipline is explained or described with unique terms. The researcher should be able to provide clear explanations on possibly ambiguous concepts to prevent misunderstandings and wrong comments. In addition to this, there is no need for explaining all the concepts mentioned in the research. The definitions should be given in functional terms as opposed to conceptual terms.

The main theoretical support for this study is the element of "identification of the suitable title and key words for the topics in geography studies". As a matter of fact, one of the most important things that can be done for an academic research is to identify key words and title suitable for the integrity of the whole study. The title should reflect the main theme of the writing; should attract the interest of the reader and be effective. The reader should be able to more or less comprehend what the writing is about by looking at the title itself. Of course the titles can be long or short. However it is definite that long titles are not that effective on readers.

The text that will be prepared for the presentation/publication of a scientific study (oral or written expression) is a composition and the form and art of combining into a unity the information, feeling and ideas of a specific topic in an organized, balanced, compatible and effective manner (Turkish Language Association (TDK) 1, 14.11.2012). Therefore, *integrity, aesthetic and effect are the characteristics of a composition that cannot be ignored* (Beyreli et al., 2005: 37).

It can be said that the title can be short or long but the most important characteristic of the title is its shortness, clarity and meaningfulness. When the association between the title with the main theme can be comprehended by the reader without seeing the title as redundant expressions, the work will be more meaningful for the reader. In order for the researchers to develop the skill of identifying appropriate titles for their writings, they should focus on this area.

3. Findings and Discussion:

The title that will be identified for reporting scientific research will both determine the limitations of the study and bring some principles. When there are changes in the limitations of the study and its principles, the titles should also change accordingly. In this manner, the author will be aware of the fact that he/she has to follow the limitations all the time along with the new principles introduced with the title. Therefore, it is necessary to protect the limits and principles in the report in the stage between the start of the scientific research until its conclusion, therefore the title should be well selected. Otherwise time may be wasted by continually returning to the beginning stage.

If the topic covers a specific time period about the past or the future, the period also needs to be included in the title. Such as geological periods, ancient ages or a time period in a more recent past or in the future. Similarly if the

topic includes a specific spatial unit and does not cover anything outside these limits, the mentioned space should also be included in the title. Such as in the world, Asia continent, Middle East Area, Turkey, Anatolia, Black Sea Region, Western Black Sea Sub-Region, Zonguldak Provincial, Devrek District, Eğerci Sub-District, Pelitli Village and Hatipler Neighborhood, etc. However sometimes no mention of the date or period will be necessary when they are already known depending on the characteristics of the selected discipline or the topic. But if the study is based on a specific space, it should be included in the title. For instance, a title starting “In Turkey in 1923 and following periods.....” Can be presented in the following manner as well: “In Republican Period Turkey....”. Even though historical period and spatial elements in the title are related to different discipline areas, different topics, different methods and different models, they attract the interest of the authors and the readers in terms interdisciplinary communication and exchange of information since it is a study regarding the same period and space by providing a basis for reaching wider audiences.

The backbone of the title in scientific reports is the theory. The theory can be the topic, the main theme of the writing or the problem that needs to be solved and it should be clearly expressed. While some researchers prefer a simple title composed of the theory in the titles of their research reports, some of them use longer titles with the addition of words that are more than necessary. What is important here is not the length of the title; the important thing is the compatibility of the title with the content, its focus on the topic and the method and its effect on the reader. Hence, the title is as important for the author as it is for the reader. The reader should be able to find the theoretical approach he/she is looking for in the title and among the existing key words. Otherwise, the reader will only waste his/her time by first investigating the writing that is of no interest to him/her superficially at first and later in detail.

Some studies attract attention with their methods, implementations and analysis techniques instead of their theories. In the titles of these types of research, either the method is really interesting or it is tried to bring into prominence. The theory of the research may be selected from a very general topic. For example, according to the interest the individuals have for the topic, the study titled “*Administrative Geography Analysis of Legislation #6360 regarding the changes and amendments in some laws and statutory decrees related to metropolitan Municipalities in Turkey*” will have different interest points. However, the readers who are aware of the news regarding the metropolitan municipalities, the development in the legislation #6360 and the public opinion, who are interested in the topic and who actively study the field will be more affected by the “*administrative geography analysis*” section in the study. The topic is already studied in different dimensions by different disciplines. However, the dimension of administrative geography will be a matter of interest in the mentioned study. Therefore it is not problematic to focus on the method in geography studies. But Ceyhan (2013: 42) suggested not using the method in titles.

In the identification of the title in geography studies such as “Identification of Administrative Areas in Turkey and Their Problems: Sumbas Sample” and “Theoretical Approaches in Identifying Provincial Administration Borders and Valid Implementations in Turkey”, explanations are provided based on analysis or evaluations related to theory and/ or method or model and analogies from the general to specific are given to obtain results about the general situation or to explain the universe by using the sample. Conformation models are the minimized or maximized sample of the system that they represent and they are in perfect harmony with it. Simulation models represent one characteristic with another and more easily comprehended character.

When the important elements are identified for the title and key words separately and placed on the formula (Figure 2) the title will take the most suitable shape. There may be changes in the order of the units that make up of the formula. For instance, “time” may be placed at the end in parenthesis as it is the common application. The research topic may not include a specific “time” or “space”. “Method” may not be included in the title or it may have a wide use that cannot be included in the title. Sometimes the topic does not require a “model” or is not studies by following a specific “model”. However, “theory/topic” should be included in the most appropriate and simple manner (Figure 2).

If we are to try a title using the pattern: Time “*a period between 1984-2012*”; space “*Turkey*”, topic “*metropolitan municipality system*” problem “*arrangements and problems*”, method “*administrative geography analysis*” model “*Hatay Metropolitan Municipality*”. The title will be shaped in the following manner: “*Administrative Geography Analysis of the Arrangements and Problems in the Metropolitan Municipality System of Turkey during 1984-2012 period: Hatay Metropolitan Municipality*”.

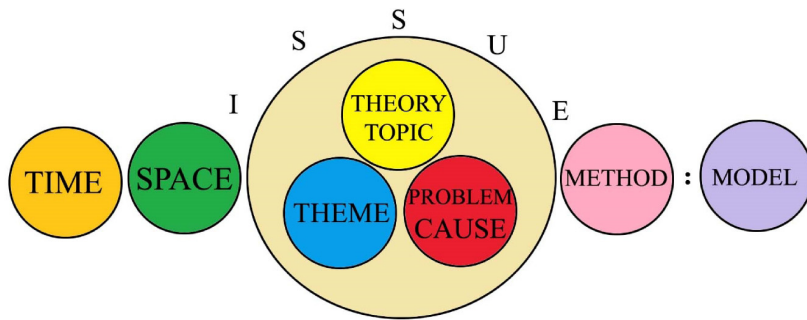


Fig. 2. Pattern for Creation of Titles for Scientific Research Texts (Formula).

Metropolitan municipality system was first used in Turkey in 1984 and recent changes and arrangements were undertaken in 2012. Therefore, limits regarding the time are already included in the topic itself. Also the provincial administrative area of Hatay Metropolitan Municipality is in Turkey. The studies regarding the Metropolitan Municipality are undertaken in the framework of administrative geography field of the human and economic geography science. Therefore, if desired, the title can be shortened. Time, space, time-space, method, time-method, space, method, time-space-method, model or all of these can be removed. The resulting title will include the theory (*Arrangements and Problems in Metropolitan Municipality System*)

Findings obtained from the academic studies included in the sample of the research, analysis and evaluation of the findings:

Population, Settlement and Economic Activities in Devrek (*Firat University Social Sciences Institute, Human and Economic Geography Department, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Elazığ, 2001*). The title is simple and structural with a wide use. There are also other examples implemented on other spatial areas such as "Human and Economic Geography of Devrek District". "Devrek District Geography" could have been a better title. As a matter of fact, all geographical characteristics of Devrek district are studied regionally. The study was undertaken holistically along with the research topics and methods included in "The physical, human and economic geography of Devrek district" in the framework regional (local) geography of geography department. However, the key words are composed of the words in the title itself such as "Devrek, population, settlement, economic activities". The other key words such as "neighborhood, mining and forestry" are suitable since they present the regional characteristics and attract the attention of other researchers and disciplines.

Transhumance Activities in Kadirli District (*Firat University Journal of Social Sciences, 20/1: 29-54, With Üçeçam Karagel D.. 2010*). The title of the article was composed of the space and theory of the research. The topic of study is a rural activity with social, cultural and economic dimensions. These types of human activities are among the concepts that change over time although not in short periods. Therefore they should be regarded together with the time concept. But since the article covers a large period of time which has been the scene for settlements, time concept was not included in the title as well. Key words composed of "Kadirli, transhumance, settlements" are already included in the title. Therefore, a successful selection of key words was not undertaken. Instead of these key words, many other concepts provided in detail in the text such as "Çukurova, Mediterranean climate, Toroslar, transhumance tourism, summer transhumance activities" could have been selected in order to attract the attention of other researchers.

Administrative Geography Analysis of the Provincial Management Areas in Eastern Anatolian Region during the Historical Process (*Firat University, Eastern Anatolian Research and Implementation Center (DAUM), Journal of Eastern Anatolian Region Research (6/1): 41-62, 2010*). Administrative geography analysis method was emphasized in the content of the article. The framework of the topic was designed in the format of "historical development of administrative areas regionally". Therefore, a holistic title composed of 12 words that uses time-space-theory-method together was used. This type of long titles with more than 10 words may cause difficulties in comprehension as well as creating redundancy in the use of the key words. Therefore, the words used in the title such as "Eastern Anatolian Region, provincial management area, administrative geography" were repeated as key words. Our

suggestion for the title is “Geography Analysis of Administrative Areas in Eastern Anatolia during the Historical Process” (time-space-theory-method).

The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Regional Development and the Sample of Bucak (*Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Journal of Social Sciences Institute, Year: 1, (1):39-50, Dalğar H., Tunç H. and Kaya M., 2009*). The topic of the research is “the functional characteristics of higher education institutions”. The topic under this main heading “the effects of higher education institutions to the environment” was reduced to “roles of higher education institutions in terms of social, cultural and economic development of settlements”. Since the theoretical limits of the study were rather large in this manner, a model was selected to explain the theory through the model: Bucak sample. However, it is not clear what the model represents in Turkish language. Since Bucak has two different meanings there is the ambiguity in meaning. Does Bucak here mean sub-district or the administrative division? Or the district of Burdur? Or something else maybe? In order to clear this point, it is necessary to reach the article, to spend some effort on it and to examine the study in detail. The answer is found: Bucak, the district of Burdur. The key words of the article are “Bucak, regional development, multiplier, higher education institutions”. The only thing that is different in the key words form the title is “multiplier” and it is necessary to read the full article to understand it. For the author researching the topic of “Bucak (sub districts) as the planning unit in regional development planning”, this and similar studies will cause a waste of time and effort in this process. The article titled “The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Regional Development and the Sample of Bucak” is rather useful for the researchers who study regional planning, education, higher education institutions and Bucak (Burdur) district in terms of its topic, framework, purpose, method, findings and analysis. However, there is a need for revision in the title and our suggestion is: “Roles of Higher Education Institutions in functional development of settlements: Bucak (Burdur) District Centre. It can be shortened even more: “The Effect of Higher Education Institutions in the Functional Development of Settlements: Bucak City (2008-2009)”. Of course it is not possible to change the title of the article now however; the comments may be useful for future studies.

The Effect of Topography on Air Pollution: Sample of Zonguldak (*Ankara University, Turkey Geography Research and Implementation Center (TÜCAUM), VII. Geography Symposium (18-19 October) Book of Abstracts, p.123-131, Menteşe S., Tağıl Ş., Ankara, 2012*). The topic of the article is “the effect of topographic conditions on air pollution”. The topic was examined through the model of “Zonguldak city”. In order to benefit from the article as a reference, it is necessary to specify the research area as Zonguldak, the topic as “air pollution”, “the effects of topographic conditions” and specific key words such as “effects of topographic conditions on air pollution”. However, a striking result that does not correspond with the title was obtained that showed that air pollution in Zonguldak was not dependent on topographic conditions. If the main actor of air pollution in Zonguldak is not topographic conditions, why was this study undertaken? If the purpose is to present the factors that cause air pollution and the title is to show the effects of topography on air pollution; the model needs to be changed. For instance, “*Geographical research on air pollution in Zonguldak*”. The results of a study with such a title cannot be predicted. Results can be evaluated with the geographical analysis of the findings. The study can result in a conclusion of whether or not air pollution in Zonguldak depends on topographic conditions.

4. Result

As author Refik Halit Karay mentioned, it is a skill and accomplishment to find a title for the study. It is the quality and the virtue of this skill to implement and finalize the necessities, responsibilities and principles that the title requires. “*Marifet makaleye başlık koymakta değil, koyduğu prensibe uymaktadır /The skill is not selecting a title for the article but to follow the principle it states*” Refik Halit Karay (Turkish Language Association (TDK2)).

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