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**A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF
INTERACTIVE MARKERS IN B1/B2
CEFR LEVEL IN ESSAYS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, many studies have focused on second language acquisition, on the maximum proficiency level reached by learners and on the application of strategies to achieve that level in all skills. However, there are few studies focused on the use and study of discourse markers in the different CEFR levels to improve students' discourse skills. That is why the main objective of this project is to identify differences in the use of English interactive markers in different CEFR levels. In addition, we set specific objectives for this study, which are as follows:

- To classify the use of interactive markers by EFL learners in B1 and B2 proficiency levels.
- To compare the frequencies in the different categories and propose some guidelines.

Some studies have focused on the analysis of discourse markers in professional and high proficiency essays. However, those focused on lower levels are scarce. Therefore, in order to carry out this contrastive analysis of discourse markers, also known as 'metadiscourse', and to contribute to that small amount of studies, a corpus of 44 essays dealing with various topics written by B1 and B2 level Spanish learners of English will be collected. All those students have Spanish as their first language. With the analysis of these tests, we will be able to analyse the use of these interactive markers, the strategies used by them and the weak points that need to be reinforced.

Essay writing is a task that is applied in many subjects and at all levels, since it helps not only to show the students' opinion on a specific topic, but also to practice argumentation and rhetorical skills, vocabulary, grammar, connectors, etc. The use of these discourse markers in these essays are fundamental, but not much is known about how they are taught at the different CEFR levels, so this will also be a point addressed in our project.

Students of English who have a B1/B2 level are in an intermediate phase between beginner and proficiency. Therefore, they are in a transitional phase of learning. Furthermore, regarding the role of English in Spain, it is a foreign language, which is studied in all educational centers on a compulsory basis. It is also taught in many academies and private training centers.

After carrying out the theoretical framework and the contrastive analysis, we will reach conclusions and establish future lines of research. So, the structure of the TFM is the following: We first focus on the theoretical framework surrounding foreign language acquisition, especially as it relates to written production and as established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. In addition, we will define the concept of 'metadiscourse' and elaborate on it and on the classification established by Hyland and other authors. We will also discuss how these markers are taught to learners. The following sections will then present the material and methodology used, followed by the results and discussion of the study and the conclusions.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter we will make an overview of theories and previous studies to contextualize second language acquisition, especially focused on the production of written texts, the level of English in Spain, we will approach the different levels and differences presented by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Then, we will define and classify by categories the metadiscourse considered for the analysis. We will also focus on the way in which discourse markers are taught to students of English and we will look at previous studies focused on the same.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition

This area of research studies and delves into the way in which people achieve proficiency in a language that is not their mother tongue. Consequently, when someone studies a new language in academies, becomes fluent in a foreign language in adulthood or a kid learns a new language while spending time in another country, we name it second language acquisition.

Throughout history, this field has been studied and treated from different points of view. Mainly, in the 1950s and 1960s, the focus was pedagogical, and the aim was to improve the didactics of languages. To do this, it was first necessary to investigate the way in which they are studied. Later, the focal point was put on the students, although the main problem of second language acquisition is that there is no single 'best' way of teaching foreign languages.

Even though the area of study is called SLA, apart from acquisition itself, we also know that second and foreign languages can also be learnt. According to Krashen's distinction, acquisition occurs when learners are presented the second language displays, and this usually takes place in a similar way to how kids learn their mother tongue. It is only the acquired language which is readily accessible for smooth and fluid interaction.

Conversely, learning involves a consistent effort of awareness, studying and focus on the rules and forms. Learning cannot turn into acquisition, since there are speakers who are proficient and they have never studied any rules before, but other people know all the rules,

but don't use them properly when concentrating on the point they want to make instead of the way they say it.

The types of language which can be learnt or acquired are also related to this learning/acquisition dichotomy. A person's mother tongue or first language (L1) is acquired and developed from the moment that we are born. A second language (L2) is a non-native language but has an official character within a country and therefore is used as a medium of education, administration or trade (as English in Scandinavian countries). A foreign language (FL) is a non-native language which is studied at school and which lacks the recognition of being a common communication medium.

Second language learners, by definition, have already acquired at least one language. The knowledge they already have might be beneficial for the learner as they already know how a language runs. However, it can make them be confused and make wrong predictions of how a L2 works and it can provoke mistakes.

Kids do not usually feel nervous or embarrassed when making mistakes in front of other people while speaking a foreign language, even though they are not proficient at all, but when they grow up they start feeling unconfident. That is why teenagers are usually permitted to not speak in class until they feel comfortable to do so. However, adults are sometimes obliged to speak in class to perform activities like interviews or daily life tasks.

The use of a modified input is something that is repeated in all learners. This adaptation is known as foreigner speech for second language learners and everyone who speaks with language beginners usually have an instinctive feeling of the adaptations necessary to make students comprehend. Over the years, many theories have been proposed to explain the process of learning for L2 learners, such as:

- **Behaviorism**, which reports the learning process based on emulation, training, repetition, and habit formation.
- **Innatism** by Chomsky, who built his theory on the assumption that inborn knowledge of the Universal Grammar (UG) principles enables children to pick up the language of their surroundings.

- **Krashen's Monitor Model** focuses on the treatment of classroom input that the learner receives, how it should be taught, and how the learner gets it.
- **Cognitivism**, which suggests that SLA must be considered as the construction of knowledge systems to which one can eventually automatically resort to speak and understand.
- **Connectionism**; learners construct their linguistic skills progressively through being exposed to hundreds of examples of the linguistic aspects which they ultimately develop.
- **Interactionism** by Hatch, Pica and Long who consider that SLA takes place through conventional interaction.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight the term 'Interlanguage', developed by Selinker (1972). When analyzing a learner's interlanguage, one can see in it characteristics of his or her mother tongue, of the language he or she is learning, and others that appear and are common to almost all interlanguages. In general, interlanguages are systematic, but since they also change as the learner's knowledge increases, they are considered dynamic.

This concept of interlanguage is based on the premise that at some point in L2 learning, a language system is created that is neither L1 nor L2. It is therefore another language, with its own language and grammar, created by the learner in order to give shape to the knowledge and concepts obtained during learning.

2.1.1 Second Language Acquisition in Written Production

After having distinguished between first language, second language and foreign language and the different theories that have been put forward to explain the learning of the second language, we proceed to delve into what this means for the production of written texts. The teaching and learning process of L1 or L2 in the field of text production is not the same, although they share many aspects, since the ultimate goal is the achievement of skills that allow a correct written communication in different contexts.

Writing has been present throughout the history of humanity, although it is true that it has evolved over the years, as technology and the Internet have led to the emergence of new written contexts such as sending emails, SMS, instant messages, etc. All these changes and

advances have become a challenge for writing teachers. Broadly speaking, the main task of writing teachers is to teach their students the different textual functions, the structures of the different types of texts and to promote creativity; although it is true that the task is much more complex.

As Kaplan and Norton (1996) state, in one of the studies they conducted with students who had different mother tongues, it could be observed that the production of written texts was deeply influenced by the writer's background, being reflected in these texts structures and marks of their first language. Therefore, another great challenge for writing teachers is the teaching of text production in a context in which there are students with different mother tongues.

Text production is an arduous task because it requires the mastery of multiple skills and knowledge and also involves different factors such as the writer's prior knowledge, culture, awareness of the rules and conventions of the task to be performed (Archibald & Jeffery, 2000).

It is essential for the progress and learning of writing to deepen language proficiency and focus on writing, and thus allow students to choose the vocabulary or grammatical structures they consider. According to a study conducted by Tsang and Wong (2000) on students learning writing, they noticed a significant improvement in the quality of their productions after grammar instruction. Also, the appropriateness of certain structures and specific vocabulary, the understanding of the context and culture of the target language, the different discourse genres and their structures, and also discourse markers should be deepened.

2.2 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

As the Cambridge University Press & Assessment (<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/>, 07/07/2022) state:

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the

level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country.

As can be seen in Figure 1, CEFR organizes language proficiency into six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), in turn grouped into three categories (Basic, Independent and Proficient). Although it was launched in 2001, there have been changes and improvements over the years up to the present day. In its beginnings, it constituted a turning point in the context of foreign language learning and teaching.

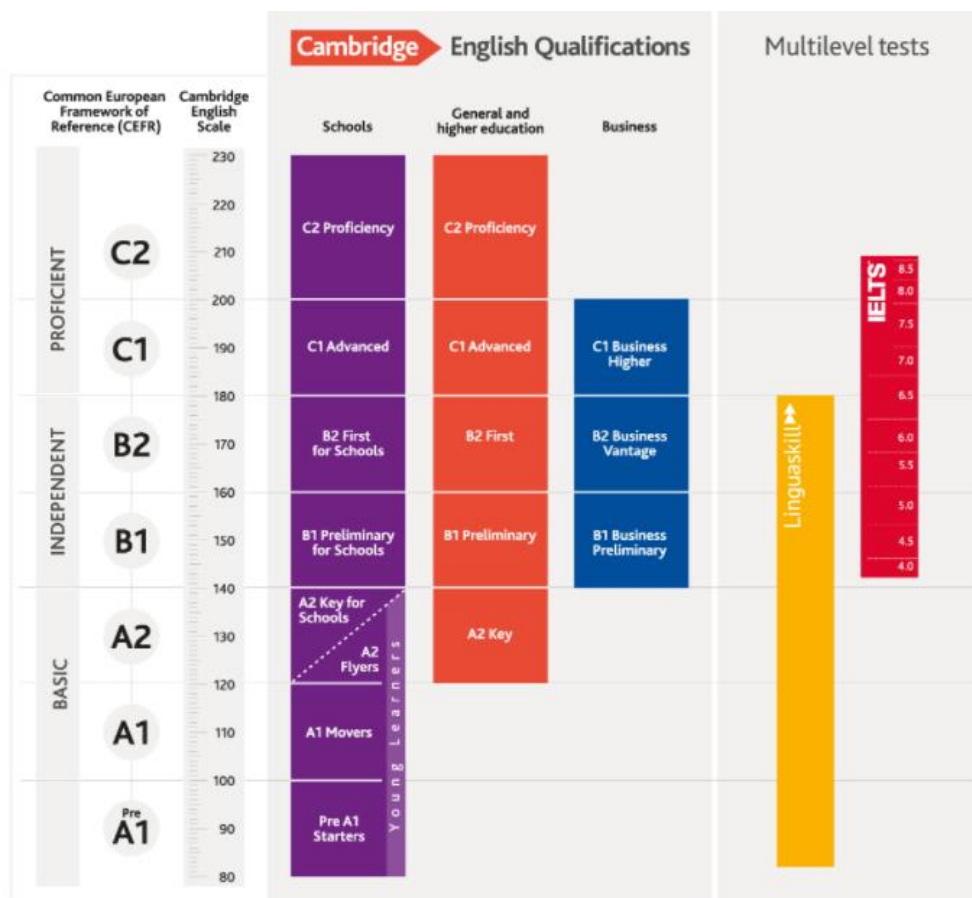


Figure 1. English exams on the CEFR. (<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/cefr/>)

The design of the CEFR (2001) was intended to unify the criteria around the planning of foreign language learning (objectives, contents), language certificates (contents, evaluation criteria), or autonomous learning (self-evaluation, selection of materials).

In 2020, a companion volume to the CEFR 2001 was published, which presented the descriptors and key concepts of the CEFR in a more accessible way. In addition, more information (see figure 2) was included and some concepts such as Pragmatic Competence,

i.e. with the correct use of the language, were deepened. In this sense, emphasis was placed on the concepts of Coherence and Cohesion, whose main features were linking elements, the use of paragraphs and the diversity of cohesive elements (discourse markers).

Coherence and cohesion	
C2	Can create coherent and cohesive text making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of cohesive devices.
C1	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured language, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. Can produce well-organised, coherent text, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns.
B2	Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas.
	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.
	Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices. Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs.
B1	Can introduce a counter-argument in a simple discursive text (e.g. with "however").
	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points. Can form longer sentences and link them together using a limited number of cohesive devices, e.g. in a story.
	Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text.
A2	Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points.
	Can link groups of words/signs with simple connectors (e.g. "and", "but" and "because").
A1	Can link words/signs or groups of words/signs with very basic linear connectors (e.g. "and" or "then").
Pre-A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>

Figure 2. Coherence and Cohesion.

Taken from: <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4> page 141

The descriptors mentioned in the sections on levels B1 and B2 are the ones that will be considered when analyzing and subsequently discussing the corpus available to us and whose results will serve as a reference to propose improvement guidelines for students and thus enhance their discursive skills.

2.3 Metadiscourse

This section is divided into some subsections. First, we define the concept of 'metadiscourse' and classify the interactive and interactional markers. Then, we focus on how these discourse markers are taught.

2.3.1 Definition and Classification of Markers

The concept of metadiscourse, defined by Hyland (2004:109) as "those aspects of the text which explicitly refer to the organization of the discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader" has been used as a reference for numerous studies. This interest in doing studies is due to the importance they have in the different discursive genres. However, there is not much research on second language use, even though it is of great importance for both L2 instructors and learners.

For our study, we rely on the definition of metadiscourse proposed by Hyland (2004), and adapted by Carrió Pastor (2021). In Table 1, discourse markers refer to the language used for the organization of the text.

Interactive Markers		
Logical Markers	Additive	In addition, Furthermore, Moreover, Similarly, Also, Further, So, Additionally, Likewise, And, Thereafter, as well, As well as.
	Contrastive	In contrast, But, Yet, Rather, Nevertheless, Instead, Still, However, Alternatively, Conversely, By contrast, Though, Needless to say, Otherwise, Despite this fact.
	Consecutive	Thus, Therefore, As a result, Consequently, Then, Hence, As such, Accordingly, So, Next, Following, For * reason, In turn, So that.
Frame Markers	Sequencers	Finally, First, Second, Next, To begin with, On the one hand, On the other hand, Previously, Third.
	Topicalisers	In terms of, With regard to, Regarding, In regard to, With respect to
	Discourse labels	Overall, In summary, In sum, In conclusion, In short, In closing, In all, Thus far , In brief, Briefly, Conclude.

	Announcers	Aim to, Will, Seek to, Show.
Evidentials	Personal	Following, According to X, As X argued, in X's study, Approach, Previous work, Analysis, Consequence
	Impersonal	Earlier, Previously, Previous, Past research, Research, Model, prior.
Endophoric	Anaphoric	the hypothesis X, Above, Earlier, Previously, Aforementioned, Foregoing, Section X, Table X, Figure X, Before, So far, Paper, Effect.
	Cataphoric	Next, Following, As follows, Below, Section X, Table X, Figure X, Hereinafter, In fig.
Code Glosses	Reformulation	Rather, That is, In other words, i.e, Specifically, In particular, Namely, Simply put, Stated differently, Put differently, Finally, In sum, To conclude, (), " ", [], This means *, ;, - -.
	Exemplification	e.g., Such as, For example, For instance, Example, As in.

Table 1. Classification of interactive markers based on Hyland (2004)

For this study we focus mainly on one of the functions of discourse markers that is connected to the fluency and cohesion of the text, that is, those markers that help the reader to understand the relationship between ideas. For example, code glosses to give examples or frame markers to change ideas within the same text.

Although in our study we only focus on the analysis of interactive markers, it is worth mentioning interactional markers (see below Table 2), which Hyland (2005) defines as markers that show the writer's attitude towards readers in order to construct the text.

Interactional Markers											
Attitude Markers	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Attitude-Nouns</td> <td>Key, Support, Importance, Limitation, Insight, Contribution, Complexity, Value, Paradox, Caution, Consistency, Hurdle, Significance, Validity, Absence, Credibility, Dilemma, Discovery, Failure, Shortcomings, Strengths, Wealth, Drawback, Panacea, Problem</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attitude Verbs</td> <td>Support, Extend, Contribute, Fail, Deserve, Ensure, Expand, Ignore, Neglect, Overemphasize, Broaden, Lack, Overlook, Respond</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attitude Adjectives</td> <td>Important, Significant, Critical, Interesting, Difficult, Key, Consistent, Well+adjective, Necessary, Robust, Unique, Valuable, Complex, Major, Best, Better, Comprehensive, Effective, Main, Useful, Easier, Problematic, Relevant, Surprising, Fine-grained, The first (the definite article is optional), Good, Reasonable, Contrary to, Broad, Confident, Desirable, Generalizable, Great, Limited, Primary, Serious, Short of, Suggestive, Tremendous, True, Worthwhile, Acceptable, Central, core, Hard, Inconsistent, In-depth, Influential, Intriguing, Meaningful, New, Notable, Promising, Underdeveloped, Valid, Worth, Adequate, Crucial, Dangerous, Embryonic, Essential, Exorbitant, Fundamental, Hopeful, Inconclusive, Marginal, Missing, Narrow, Noteworthy, Obvious, Opaque, Paradoxical, Poor, Ripe, Satisfactory, Skewed, Stricter, Sufficient, Underspecified, Unexplored, Unfortunate, Vexing, Wise, Only</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attitude Adverbs</td> <td>Specifically, Only, Importantly, Interestingly, Usefully, Unfortunately, Surprisingly, Reliably, Paradoxically, Critically, Conclusively, Broadly, Positively</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attitude Phrases</td> <td>Go beyond, Merit (attention)</td> </tr> </table>	Attitude-Nouns	Key, Support, Importance, Limitation, Insight, Contribution, Complexity, Value, Paradox, Caution, Consistency, Hurdle, Significance, Validity, Absence, Credibility, Dilemma, Discovery, Failure, Shortcomings, Strengths, Wealth, Drawback, Panacea, Problem	Attitude Verbs	Support, Extend, Contribute, Fail, Deserve, Ensure, Expand, Ignore, Neglect, Overemphasize, Broaden, Lack, Overlook, Respond	Attitude Adjectives	Important, Significant, Critical, Interesting, Difficult, Key, Consistent, Well+adjective, Necessary, Robust, Unique, Valuable, Complex, Major, Best, Better, Comprehensive, Effective, Main, Useful, Easier, Problematic, Relevant, Surprising, Fine-grained, The first (the definite article is optional), Good, Reasonable, Contrary to, Broad, Confident, Desirable, Generalizable, Great, Limited, Primary, Serious, Short of, Suggestive, Tremendous, True, Worthwhile, Acceptable, Central, core, Hard, Inconsistent, In-depth, Influential, Intriguing, Meaningful, New, Notable, Promising, Underdeveloped, Valid, Worth, Adequate, Crucial, Dangerous, Embryonic, Essential, Exorbitant, Fundamental, Hopeful, Inconclusive, Marginal, Missing, Narrow, Noteworthy, Obvious, Opaque, Paradoxical, Poor, Ripe, Satisfactory, Skewed, Stricter, Sufficient, Underspecified, Unexplored, Unfortunate, Vexing, Wise, Only	Attitude Adverbs	Specifically, Only, Importantly, Interestingly, Usefully, Unfortunately, Surprisingly, Reliably, Paradoxically, Critically, Conclusively, Broadly, Positively	Attitude Phrases	Go beyond, Merit (attention)
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	Attitude Adverbs	Specifically, Only, Importantly, Interestingly, Usefully, Unfortunately, Surprisingly, Reliably, Paradoxically, Critically, Conclusively, Broadly, Positively									
	Attitude Phrases	Go beyond, Merit (attention)									
Boosters	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Booster Noun</td> <td>Evidence, Fact, Majority, Assertion, Conclusion</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Booster Verb</td> <td>Show, Determine, Demonstrate, Reveal, Highlight, Confirm, Emphasise, Assert, Hold, Underscore, Stress, Establish, Prove, Know</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Booster Adjectives</td> <td>Significant, Extraordinary, Extensively, considerable, Clear, Vast, Evident, thrilling, Paramount, Utmost</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Booster Adverbs</td> <td>So, Majority, Constantly, Clearly, Significantly, Generally, Largely, Particularly, Indeed, Widely, Highly, Primarily, Consistently, Strongly,</td> </tr> </table>	Booster Noun	Evidence, Fact, Majority, Assertion, Conclusion	Booster Verb	Show, Determine, Demonstrate, Reveal, Highlight, Confirm, Emphasise, Assert, Hold, Underscore, Stress, Establish, Prove, Know	Booster Adjectives	Significant, Extraordinary, Extensively, considerable, Clear, Vast, Evident, thrilling, Paramount, Utmost	Booster Adverbs	So, Majority, Constantly, Clearly, Significantly, Generally, Largely, Particularly, Indeed, Widely, Highly, Primarily, Consistently, Strongly,		
	Booster Noun	Evidence, Fact, Majority, Assertion, Conclusion									
	Booster Verb	Show, Determine, Demonstrate, Reveal, Highlight, Confirm, Emphasise, Assert, Hold, Underscore, Stress, Establish, Prove, Know									
	Booster Adjectives	Significant, Extraordinary, Extensively, considerable, Clear, Vast, Evident, thrilling, Paramount, Utmost									
Booster Adverbs	So, Majority, Constantly, Clearly, Significantly, Generally, Largely, Particularly, Indeed, Widely, Highly, Primarily, Consistently, Strongly,										

		Actually, Mostly, Especially, Entirely, Essentially, Dramatically, Substantially, Always, Exceptionally, Well within, so much
	Booster Phrases	Fully, In fact, For the most part, Of course, To a large extent, In effect
Engagement Markers		
	Personal References	me, We, Our, You, Us, One, You know
	Questions	you know?
	Imperatives	Consider, Assume, Note that, Cf., Suppose, Notice
	Directives	Should, Need to, Must
Hedges		
	Hedges Nouns	probability, prediction, Hypothesis, Likelihood, Argument, Possibility, View, Idea, Assumption, Notion, Conceptualization, Perspective, Tendency, Implication, Proposition, Belief, Expectation, Feasibility, Interpretation
	Hedges Verbs	Appear to, Seem, Suggest, Expect, Predict, Propose, Consider, Tend to, Believe, See, Interpret, Imply, Argue, Hypothesize, Think, Point to, Feel, Anticipate, Regard, Theorize, Assume, Speculate, attempt, Want, Posit, Indicate
	Hedges Modal Verbs	May, Would, Can, Might, Could, Should, can't
	Hedges Adverbs	Relatively, Potentially, Often, Perhaps, Not necessarily, Usually, Commonly, Quite, Nearly, Partially, Almost, Theoretically, Probably, Roughly, Approximately, Basically, Maybe, Normally, Partly, Presumably, Tentatively, Sometimes, Slightly, Cautiously, Unlikely, virtually, Just, Ostensibly, Typically, About, Somewhat, Marginally, Positively, Plausibly
	Hedges Adjectives	Likely, Apparent, Presumed, Probable, Hypothesized, Common, Indicative, Typical, Feasible, Proposed, Unclear, Prone to, Substantial, Potential, Possible, Some, any, Certain
	Hedges Phrases	In general, In part, At least, To our knowledge, A priori, In theory, To my knowledge, In broad terms, in our judgement, In my judgement, To some extent, Like, kind of
Self-mentions		

	Personal references - exclusive pronouns	We, Our
	Self-citations	I, My, This paper, The author, The research team, Author

Table 2. Classification of interactional markers based on Hyland (2004)

2.3.3 Teaching Metadiscourse Markers

Written production in any language requires basic knowledge beyond specific vocabulary or grammatical structures, but also needs practice and instruction to produce a high level of proficiency. Even writing in the mother tongue, practice goes far beyond a transcription of speech. Therefore, among many other concepts, the study of discourse markers by language learners is essential.

According to Hyland (2004), linguists who study the productions of view are shifting their focus to a more interpersonal approach, where texts not only serve to convey information but also to connect and facilitate the understanding of the receiver. The coherence and cohesion of a text are essential for the structure and comprehension of a text, as well as the use of correct grammatical structures, vocabulary and taking into account the target audience. In this sense, metadiscourse encompasses all these elements.

Metadiscourse refers to "linguistic material in texts, written or spoken, that adds nothing to the propositional content, but is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the given information" (Crismore, Markkanen, & Steffensen, 1993, p. 40). Although there are not many studies on the use, benefits and importance of discourse markers in L2 written texts, different linguists have focused on studying this branch.

Martinez (2004) analyzed discourse markers in expository writing of Spanish university students, Chen (2006) studied the use of conjunctive adverbials in Taiwanese advanced EFL learners, among other authors such as Fung (2011) or Dastjerdi, H. V., & Shirzad, M. (2010), who based their study on the impact of explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers on EFL learners' writing performance.

3. METHODS

3.1 Material

The corpus we have worked with was provided by María Belén Díez Bedmar, Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Jaén. Díez Bedmar compiled this corpus for a research project entitled “Making the CEFR/CV more user-friendly: fine-tuning descriptors with Learner Corpus Research (LCR) results (FINEDESC)” (PID2020-117041GA-I00).

The corpus is made up of essays written by Spanish students who took the CertAcles English exam in 6 different University Language Centers. The total number of texts was written by students from both bilingual and monolingual centers. The levels covered in the project led by Díez Bedmar are B1, B2 and C1. However, for our project we will only consider B1 and B2 level texts from monolingual regions.

The instructions of the exam are that each student must write two types of texts of the level he/she is taking the exam for, i.e. level B1 is 130 words for each text (260 words in total) and 150 words for level B2 (300 words in total). As for the type of text, the main ones that appear in CertAcles are descriptive, narrative, argumentative and e-mails.

For this study, we collected 22 texts of level B1 with a total of 3574 words and 22 texts of level B2 with 4857 words. From each level we have chosen one text, i.e. from B1 level we have chosen the option in which students had to write a blog post about their dream job. On the other hand, from level B2 we have chosen the essays of option 1, in which the students wrote an article about healthy lifestyle for a magazine.

3.2 Method

Once the corpus was compiled, we proceeded to identify and label the discourse markers in the corpus using METOOL, developed by María Luisa Carrió-Pastor, a professor at the Polytechnic University of Valencia, who identified the need to create a tool to meet the challenge of identifying the markers in a text. The design of METOOL has been carried out together with the University of Wolverhampton.

With this study we intend to explain the use or disuse of certain discourse markers such as interactive markers. In order to analyze them within the selected corpus, METOOL is essential, since in addition to identification, it allows us to observe certain collocations in context, different patterns of use or the functions they play within the text (Carrió-Pastor 2014, 2015, 2017).

Below we insert different images extracted from the application, as is the case of the tool interface (Figure 3). In it we can observe the necessary aspects for the development of our analysis: the configuration, carried out by the administrators of the tool and without the possibility of modification, the insertion of the corpus, carried out by the tutor of this work, and the annotation and analysis of the corpus.

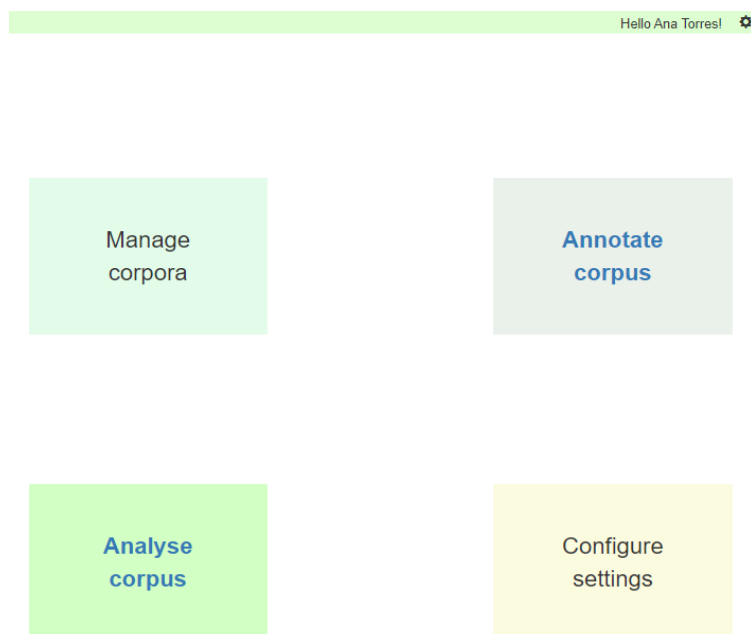


Figure 3. METOOL interface.

Secondly, in the Annotate Corpus section, we can observe the corpus divided into the levels we are going to analyze (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Corpus divided into levels. METOOL.

Next, we proceed to the main task of the tool, the labeling of the interactive markers. As we can see in figure 5, the tool underlines them in yellow and when the user labels the category to which they belong, the color assigned to each category changes (figure 6).

B1 TFM Ana

MY IMPOSSIBLE DREAM JOB Nowadays, many people can't choose his dream job because they are working for pay their factures . People not fight for come true his dreams . Firstly, I ' m one of this people who can't choose his dream as I work in a " chinese " restaurant . However , I would like be a important teacher because I should help people to learn many interesting thinks : a new language , or maybe somethink more easy . To my mind , I think the teachers are so important for the word because they must teach the future people . Many children will be a important scientist if his education is good . Secondly , this dream can change my life . I would like live in other country for learn more thinks . Maybe I had choosen other degree that help me to do my dream job . If you can dream with this , you can do it , so dont leave your drem and fight for it .

My parents are bakers so I have spend all my life seeing how they have to work every minute of the day . Every day . They have never gone on a holiday for more than

day . Every day . They have never gone on a holiday for more than a weekend , they never go out with friends on Friday ' s nights and they have lost a tot enjoyed without them because they always have to work . I don ' t want for me and my family the life that my parents have had . That is why I am studying at the University and obviously thanks to them . In conclusion , my dream job is the one that makes me feel free and I can have time to spend with my family . I am studying Chemistry , so I spend many weeks far from home but it is worth it . I really love my degree and I think that some day , when I finish my studies , I could be part of some usefull investigations . I see myself as a scientist working in a laboratory . It can be considered my dream job , I think . But I don ' t want to focus in an only one idea . Sometimes , I feel that I

Text
Display
Operations

Title: B1 TFM Ana

Description:

Statistics:

- can't: 0/6
- Would: 0/32
- Like: 0/24
- Should: 0/1
- Think: 0/16
- Maybe: 0/6
- Can: 0/17
- Want: 0/14
- Feel: 0/6
- Some: 0/6
- Could: 0/11
- See: 0/3
- Consider: 0/1
- Idea: 0/3
- Sometimes: 0/4
- Might: 0/1
- any: 0/5
- Just: 0/8
- About: 0/15

Figure 5. Unlabeled markers.

B1 TFM Ana

as I work in a " chinese " restaurant . However , I would like be a important teacher because I should help people to learn many interesting thinks : a new language , or maybe somethink more easy . To my mind , I think the teachers are so important for the word because they must teach the future people . Many children will be a important scientist if his education is good . Secondly , this dream can change my life . I would like live in other country for learn more thinks . Maybe I had choosen other

Secondly , this dream can change my life . I would like live in other country for learn more thinks . Maybe I had choosen other degree that help me to do my dream job . If you can dream with this , you can do it , **so** dont leave your drem **and** fight for it . My parents are bakers **so** I have spend all my life seeing how they have to work every minute of the day . Every day . They have never gone on a holiday for more than a weekend , they never go out with friends on Friday ' s nights **and** they have lost a tot enjoyed without them because they always have to work . I don ' t want for me and my family the life that my parents have had . That is why I am studying at the University **and** obviously thanks to them . In conclusion , my dream job is the one that makes me feel free **and** I can have time to spend with my family . I am studying Chemistry , **so** I spend many weeks far from home but it is worth it . I really love my degree **and** I think that some day , when I finish my studies , I could be part of some usefull investigations . I see myself as a scientist working in a laboratory . It can be considered my dream job , I think . But I don ' t want to

Text Display Operations

Title: B1 TFM Ana

Description:

Statistics:

- So: 27/28
- And: 113/113
- Also: 7/7
- Furthermore: 1/1
- as well: 1/1
- Moreover: 1/1
- In addition: 1/1

Figure 6. Labeled markers.

Thus, after identifying and labeling the interactive markers, as shown in Figure 7, the tool offers the possibility of observing the percentages of the different discourse markers, as well as those of the categories and subcategories. Therefore, we can quantify and qualify the results obtained.

Simple search

Enter expression... Analyze!

Useful for quick searches, but does not allow setting any restrictions.

Extract concordance from

- a selected corpus

Extract statistics and search corpus by:

- categories

Report from a corpus

- select corpus

Figure 7. Analysis of interactive markers using METOOL.

When searching for a discourse marker (Figure 8), in our case, ‘in conclusion’, it is possible to observe the name of the person who tagged it, the frequency it appears in the corpus, the use within the text, the category to which it belongs and the marker in its context (Concordance).

The search results for category *In conclusion*

The statistics and annotation are from *the TFM Jaen B2 Ana corpus*

Statistics					
Show	User	Marker	Sense	Category	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ana Torres	in conclusion	Finish a proposition	Discourse labels	3
All	None				

The annotation					
1.	what kind of food you should eat more .	in conclusion	,	having an active life is essential .	If +
2.	which are delicious and low in calories .	in conclusion	,	healthy lifestyle not only includes sports	+
3.	selfcoming and emotion - understanding mindset .	in conclusion	,	young people should stay fit and do sports	+

Figure 8. Contextualization of discourse markers.

Finally, it is also possible to view the statistics by category (Figure 9) and the final report of the markers individually (Figure 10).

Logical markers: 138	Additive: 86
	Contrastive: 41
	Consecutive: 11
Code Glosses: 18	Reformulation: 5
	Exemplification: 13
Frame markers: 8	Sequencers: 2
	Topicalisers: 2
	Discourse labels: 4
	Announcers: 0
Endophoric markers: 1	Anaphoric: 0
	Cataphoric: 1
Evidentials: 5	Personal: 4
	Impersonal: 1

Figure 9. Statistics by category. Level B2.

Annotated markers from the TFM Jaen B2 Ana corpus

Punctuation

:: 4

A

also: 27

and: 115

as well: 1

as well as: 1

B

before: 2

below: 1

but: 25

C

consequence: 2

consequently: 1

The statistics are from the TFM Jaen B2 Ana corpus

also: 27 >>

Sense: Not a marker: 0

Sense: Describes new information: 27 >>

Ana Torres, 27 >>

Figure 10. Individual report of each discourse marker.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results obtained after the identification and labeling of the interactive markers and the qualitative analysis of these data.

4.1 Results

In this section, the statistics per categories have been organized in the following way taking into consideration the objectives of the study.

In table 3, it can be seen that Logical Markers are commonly used in both levels, although the frequency increases the higher the level of the students. The use of 'and' as an interactive marker is noteworthy, and although it is used 114 times in B1 level texts and 115 times in B2 level texts, only 64 and 86 times it appears as an interactive marker. This is because 'and' is only considered a discourse marker when it has the function of a conjunction that joins two propositions, but not when it joins two nouns.

With respect to the use of Contrastive Markers there is a big difference between levels, as it appears only once in level B1 and 41 times in level B2. Within this subcategory, we highlight the markers 'but' and 'however'; the former appears 25 times and the latter, 8.

Finally, 'so' is the most used Consecutive marker, standing out as the only marker used at B1 level (15 times) and at B2 level (9 times). Despite the higher frequency of Consecutive Markers in B1 level texts, they do so with little variety since the only one they use is 'so' as opposed to B2 level which also uses others such as 'consequently'.

LOGICAL MARKERS	B1 CORPUS	B2 CORPUS
Additive	64	86
Contrastive	1	41
Consecutive	15	11

Table 3. Results on Logical Markers

In Table 4 below, we observe the use of Code Glosses and the frequency increases as the students' level of English increases. Concerning Reformulation Markers, B1 level students hardly use them compared to B2 level students, who, although they do not use them very often, use them in a varied way ('that is', 'finally', 'to conclude'). As for Exemplification Markers, they tend to be used more frequently in B2 level texts ('for example', twice as opposed to 5; 'such as', once as opposed to 3' or ':', twice as opposed to 4).

CODE GLOSSES	B1 CORPUS	B2 CORPUS
Reformulation	1	5
Exemplification	5	13

Table 4. Results on Code Glosses

In the following table (5), we can observe different results from the previous ones since, in total, Frame Markers are used more frequently in lower level texts, that is, in B1 level texts. In general, we highlight the use of Sequencers ('first' is the most used in both levels) and 'in conclusion' is the most used Discourse label. Finally, we highlight that no Announcer has been used in any level, since 'will' is used 19 times in B1 level and 34 times in B2 level, but in neither case, it appears as a discourse marker but as an auxiliary of future (see Figure 11).

FRAME MARKERS	B1 CORPUS	B2 CORPUS
Sequencers	6	2
Topicalisers	1	2
Discourse labels	3	4
Announcers	0	0

Table 5. Results on Frame Markers

1. ...use they must teach the future people . Many children **will** be a important scientist if his education is good . Seco...
2. what I want to be , I always say doctor . And all my life **will** change a lot . For example I don ' t make the same frie...
3. ...o fell like i ' m helping someone . Everything in my live **will** change , i will have less advances , but this is my passi...
4. ... helping someone . Everything in my live will change , i **will** have less advances , but this is my passion , this is the ...
5. my passion , this is the way for my happiness . So , yes I **will** try it . ¿ Dream job ? The moment I ask myself this que...
6. ...ck ? So , now I just have another question in my head . **Will** I be happy ? because that is what my dream job looks ...
7. ' t enjoy of pleasures of having one . But I ' m sure I **will** do it if I have a chance , at least , during a short period...
8. ... the entry of the university of XXX , with this lines , we **will** talk to you about the most important information that...
9. ... have to know before studying here . First of all , as yu **will** probably know the unviersity offers lots of different de...
10. ... have a team of really nice and prepared teachers that **will** offer to you their knowledge and experience for you t...

Figure 11. Use of 'will' in context. Level B1.

Next, in Table 6, we observe the statistics of Endophoric Markers, which stand out for their scarce use, being zero at B1 level and scarce at B2 level, with 'below' only being used on one occasion.

ENDOPHORIC MARKERS	B1 CORPUS	B2 CORPUS
Anaphoric	0	0
Cataphoric	0	1

Table 6. Results on Endophoric Markers

Finally, regarding the Evidentials, we underline the similar use of personal and impersonal discourse markers in both levels, highlighting 'before' and 'consequence' in both levels.

EVIDENTIALS	B1 CORPUS	B2 CORPUS
Personal	2	4
Impersonal	2	1

Table 7. Results on Evidentials

The next step, after examining the results of the analysis, is to normalize the results since the number of words in each corpus is different, as the lowest level students were required to write essays with fewer words. For this purpose, they are normalized to 1000. The total number of discourse markers in the corpus is 478 and the frequency normalized to 1000 is 8.37. The normalized results according to category can be seen in the following table.

TEXTUAL DEVICES	B1 NORMALISED FREQUENCIES	B2 NORMALISED FREQUENCIES
Logical Markers	0,02	0,03
Code Glosses	0,001	0,004
Frame Markers	0,0025	0,002
Endophoric Markers	0	0,0002
Evidentials	0,001	0,0012

Table 8. Normalised frequencies of the results

To conclude this section, we highlight that we can observe the detailed frequency of each discourse marker individually in Annex I.

4.2 Discussion

The initial research focused on the use of interactive markers in B1/B2 level essays by Spanish EFL learners. As can be seen in section 4.1, the use of these markers is similar in both levels, although the frequency increases in B2 level essays. In addition, we can see that B2 level students use a greater variety of markers than B1 level students and that both levels coincide with Logical Markers being the most used. On the other hand, we can observe that the least used markers are the Endophoric Markers, which was to be expected, since fewer markers are included in this category. In this sense, teachers should pay more attention to the categories where more markers are included because it can create confusion in the students and should focus the explanation on specific examples.

After observing the statistics by category, we can make the following statements:

- There are no significant differences in the use of Endophoric and Evidential Markers between both levels.
- The use of Logical Markers and Code Glosses increases as the level of the students increases.
- The use of Frame Markers decreases as the level of the students increases.

In Annex I, we can observe the annotated markers and although the variety of markers is greater in the B2 texts, no significant differences are observed. It should be noted that the number appearing in annotated markers does not mean that all of them are interactive markers, because as we have mentioned in chapter 4.1 and can see in Figure 11, 'and' appears 113 times in the B1 corpus, but only 53 times it is used as an interactive marker.

The statistics are from the Corpus ANA TFM B1 corpus

and: 113 >>

Sense: Not a marker: 61 >>

marisa, 1 >>

Ana Torres, 60 >>

Sense: It introduces additional information. Be careful, "and" is a metadisocurse marker when it joins two propositions, but not two names: 53 >>

Ana Torres, 53 >>

Figure 12. Breakdown of 'and' as an interactive marker.

Also, thanks to METOOL's Concordances tool, we can observe the use of 'and' in context (Figure 12) and see when it is used as an interactive marker and when it is not.

The search results for category *and*

The statistics and annotation are from the Corpus ANA TFM B1 corpus

		Statistics			
Show	User	Marker	Sense	Category	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	marisa	and	Not a marker		1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ana Torres	and	It introduces additional information. Be careful, "and" is a metadisocurse marker when it joins two propositions, but not two names	Additive	51
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ana Torres	and	Not a marker		60
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ana Torres	And	It introduces additional information. Be careful, "and" is a metadisocurse marker when it joins two propositions, but not two names	Additive	2
All	None				

The annotation

1.	, you can do it , so dont leave your drem	and	fight for it . My parents are bakers so	+
2.	, you can do it , so dont leave your drem	and	fight for it . My parents are bakers so	+
3.	go out with friends on Friday ' s nights	and	they have lost a tot enjoyed without them	+
4.	always have to work . I don ' t want for me	and	my family the life that my parents have had	+
5.	That is why I am studying at the University	and	obviously thanks to them . In conclusion	+
6.	dream job is the one that makes me feel free	and	I can have time to spend with my family .	+
7.	it is worth it . I really love my degree	and	I think that some day , when I finish my	+
8.	preffer enjoy every moment during my education	and	find myself at the end of the way . I am	+
9.	to countryside , people are really polite	and	they can help you in everything . I am studying	+
10.	you in everything . I am studying finance	and	accounting is a fantastic degree . I would	+
11.	recommend it if you like the maths , accting	and	the finance . but It ' s very difficult .	+
12.	still have time to study my really dream	and	everyone might follow their dreams . Nothing	+

Figure 13. Use of 'and' in context.

The same happens with 'so' or 'will'. The former is used most of the time in the corpus as an adverb of degree which modifies an adjective or another adverb. Similarly, the second is used in future or conditional sentences.

The results obtained in this analysis can be compared with previous research (Hyland & Tse, 2004; Burneikaite, 2008) and we can observe that unlike the results obtained by these linguists, which showed that the use of discourse markers decreased as the level in written productions increased, the opposite occurs in this analysis. Although the differences are not highly significant, we can observe a higher frequency of use in B2 level texts.

In comparison with the study carried out by Carrió Pastor (2021), we can observe similarities in the results, since her study also concludes that Logical Markers are the most frequent and that as the level of the students increases, so does the use of discourse markers, although without significant differences between levels.

Finally, interactive markers play a crucial role in the coherence and cohesion of the text, as they facilitate the articulation and argumentation of the text. In this sense, we can affirm that they have been acquired by students at these levels, since they use them in a varied and correct way. Furthermore, we believe that teachers should pay attention to the use of markers by students to help them improve their discursive skills and assess the pragmatic knowledge they should acquire next.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper we aimed to identify differences in the use of interactive markers in essays of different CEFR levels. For this purpose, we have compiled a corpus of 44 B1 and B2 level texts and we have broken down the use and frequency of each interactive marker. Furthermore, as stated in the specific objectives, we have classified them according to their category based on Hyland (2004) and adapted by Carrió Pastor (2021) and we have compared the use in both levels and proposed guidelines that teachers can follow in the teaching of interactive markers.

Therefore, after analyzing the differences between both levels of the use of interactive markers, we conclude that the frequency of these markers increases as the level of the students increases and as can be seen in the table of the concepts of coherence and cohesion designed by the CEFR (Figure 2). In comparison with other studies carried out in the same field, there are both similar (Carrió Pastor, 2021) and different results (Hyland & Tse, 2004; Burneikaite, 2008).

With regard to the way interactive markers are taught, this type of study serves as a reference for teachers and helps them to observe the frequency patterns that are repeated and the categories they should emphasize in order to increase their students' knowledge and improve their discourse skills.

Finally, we are aware of the limitations of this analysis due to the number of texts and the fact that it was only conducted based on a corpus of B1 and B2 levels. Future research could be carried out using a corpus with texts from learners with different mother tongues and with a larger volume of texts.

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7. ANNEX I

	B1 CORPUS	B2 CORPUS																		
Punctuation	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>:</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table>	:	5	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>:</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	:	4														
:	5																			
:	4																			
A	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>also</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>and</td> <td>114</td> </tr> <tr> <td>as well as</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	also	7	and	114	as well as	1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>also</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>and</td> <td>115</td> </tr> <tr> <td>as well</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>as well as</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	also	27	and	115	as well	1	as well as	1				
also	7																			
and	114																			
as well as	1																			
also	27																			
and	115																			
as well	1																			
as well as	1																			
B	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>before</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	before	2	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>before</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>below</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>but</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </table>	before	2	below	1	but	25										
before	2																			
before	2																			
below	1																			
but	25																			
C		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>consequence</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>consequently</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	consequence	2	consequently	1														
consequence	2																			
consequently	1																			
E		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>example</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	example	1																
example	1																			
F	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>finally</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>first</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>for example</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>furthermore</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	finally	3	first	4	for example	2	furthermore	1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>finally</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>first</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>following</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>for example</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>furthermore</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	finally	2	first	3	following	1	for example	5	furthermore	2
finally	3																			
first	4																			
for example	2																			
furthermore	1																			
finally	2																			
first	3																			
following	1																			
for example	5																			
furthermore	2																			
H	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>however</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	however	1	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>however</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	however	1														
however	1																			
however	1																			

I	in addition	1	in conclusion	3
	in all	1	instead	1
	in conclusion	2		
	in terms of	1		
M	model	1	moreover	5
	moreover	1		
N	next	1	needless to say	1
			nevertheless	2
			next	1
O			on the other hand	3
			overall	1
P			paper	1
R	research	1	regarding	2
			research	1
S	so	27	second	1
	so far	1	showed	1
	such as	1	so	19
			still	1
			such as	3

T	that is	3	that is	1
			this means	1
			though	1
			to conclude	1
W	will	19	will	34
Y			yet	1

Table 9. Annotated Markers