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A Corpus-based Analysis of The use of Discourse Markers in Master Two (linguistics) dissertations

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Declaration

We hereby solemnly declare that the work we are going to present in this dissertation entitled “A Corpus-based Analysis of The use of Discourse Markers in Master Two (linguistics) dissertations" is our own to the limits of our knowledge, has not been submitted before to any other institution or university or degree and all sources that we have used and quoted from have been indicated by means of complete references. This work is to be carried out and completed at Mohamed Boudiaf University M’sila, Algeria.

Dedications:

I dedicate this modest work to:

My family members

My friends

To those who supported me during this journey

To my friend and partner Asma who stood by my side and encouraged and supported

me

To all my dear teachers

To Ms Barkani , Mrs Herizi, and Mrs Madani who inspired me to select this topic

To all of you

Racha

I dedicate this work to:

My mom anddad, my source of happiness and success in life.

(May Allah bless them)

Asma

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Abstract

Writing a dissertation can be one of the most difficult challenges in the academic context. The use of cohesive devices and particularly discourse markers can improve the quality of writing and facilitate the interpretation of ideas by the readers. The current study aims to investigate the use of discourse markers in the discussion sections of master two linguistics students in the department of English (M'sila University) and to identify the dominant classes of these linguistic items to be able to evaluate the accuracy of their use. This research is a corpus-based study that analyses 30 discussion sections both quantitatively and qualitatively. It adopts Fraser's (2009) classification of discourse markers. Data was collected through the use of a concordance tool (AntConc 3.2.4.2020). The results show that the three classes are used and the class of elaborative discourse markers is the dominant class while the class of inferential discourse markers is the least used one. The qualitative analysis reveal that elaborative discourse markers are used more correctly than the other classes and contrastive discourse markers received the least percentage of correct use. Moreover, issues related to the overuse, the underuse, the use of few types, and the misuse characterised discourse markers use. This study raises awareness of students to the importance of these lexical items in enhancing the quality of their written productions. This research recommends conducting a detailed study of each class of DMs or of individual DMs to figure out the problems that face students while using these lexical items

Keywords: discourse markers, academic writing, coherence, corpus, master dissertations, master two students

List of abbreviations

AF: average frequency

BPMs: basic pragmatic markers

CDM(s): contrastive discourse marker(s)

CPMs : commentary pragmatic markers

DA: discourse analysis

DCs: discourse connectives

DM(s): discourse marker(s)

DSMs: discourse structure markers

EDM(s): elaborative discourse marker(s)

F :frequency

H &H: Halliday and Hasan

ICLE: International Corpus of Learner English

IDM: inferencial discourse marker

IDMs :inferential discourse markers

S1: segment one

S2: segment two

List of tables:

Table 1. Plans of discourse markers function.....

25

Table 2. Description of the corpus.....

41

Table 3. Frequencies of each class of DMs.....

42

Table 4. Top most used of used DMs.....

43

Table 5. Frequency of EDMs.....44

Table 6. Frequencies of CDMs.....46

Table 7. Accuracy of DMs use.....

48

List of figures:

Figure 1. A screenshot of a compiled DSs as it appears in the AntConc program.....39

Figue 2. Represents a screenshot of the AntConc program.....40

Figure 3. Frequencies of each class of DMs.....42

Figure 4 . Top ten most used DMs.....43

Figure 5. Frequencies of individual EDMs.....45

Figure 6. Frequencies of individual CDMs.....47

Figure 7. Frequencies of individual IDMs.....49

Table of content:

Declaration.....I

Dedications.....II

Acknowledgment III

Abstract.....IV

List of abbreviations.....V

List of tables..... VI

List of figures.....VII

Table of content.....VIII

General introduction

1.Background of the study.....

1

2.Statement of the problem.....3

3.Research questions.....3

4.Research objectives.....4

5.Significance of the study.....4

6.Research methodology.....4

6.1.Method.....5

6.2.Corpus.....5

6.3.Tools and instruments.....5

7.Structure of the dissertation.....5

Chapter one : the theoretical part

Introduction 8

Section one : corpora and corpus

linguistics.....9

1.Definition of corpus.....9

2.types of corpora.....9

2.1.general Vs specialized corpora.....
10

2.2.learner Vs pedagogic corpora.....
10

2.3.Parallel Vs comparable.....
11

Section two: discourse, discourse analysis, and academic
writing.....12

1. Definition of discourse.....
12

2. Definition of discourse analysis.....
13

3.A brief history of discourse analysis.....
13

4. Approaches of discourse
analysis.....14

5. Discourse analysis and corpus
studies.....16

6.Academic writing, discourse, and

cohesion.....17

6.1. Academic writing.....

17

6.1.1.writing.....17

6.1.2.Academic writing.....

18

6.1.3.Features of academic writing .....

18

6.2.Cohesiom and discourse.....

19

Section three: discourse markers.....

21

1. Definition of discourse markers.....

21

2. Approaches of discourse markers.....

22

2.1.Coherence-based approach.....

22

2.1.1.The theory of cohesion.....

23

2.1.2.DeborahSchiffrin's account of discourse

markers.....24

2.2.Relevence-based approach.....

25

2.2.1.DianeBlackemore's account of discourse

markers.....27

2.3.Grammatical-Pragmatic

approach.....29

2.3.1.Bruce Fraser's account of discourse

markers.....30

2.3.2.Fraser's (2009) framework.....

31

Conclusion.....

34

Chapter Two: Methodology and Discussion of the results

Introduction.....36

Part one: research design and

methodology.....37

1. Method.....37

2.Sample.....37

3.Tools and instruments.....

38

4. Procedures for the selection of the DSs and for increasing the validity and reliability of the findings.....38

4.1.The selection of the texts and the compilation of the corpus.....38

4.2.The validity and reliability of the findings.....39

Part Two: Data analysis, results, and discussion of the results.....41

1. Data analysis.....41

1.1.Analysisof discourse markers' frequencies.....41

1.2.Analysis of the accuracy of discourse markers.....50

1.3.Some examples of mistakes found in the corpus.....50

2. Discussion and Interpretation of the main findings.....52

2.1.Interpretation of the accuracy part.....55

2.2.summary of the findings.....55

3.Pedagogical Implications.....56

4. limitations of the study.....57

5.Recommendations for further research.....

57

Conclusion.....58

General conclusion.....59

Resumé.....60

References.....61

General introduction

1.Background of the study:

Cohesion is a crucial element in all academic genres including essays, articles and dissertations .According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p.4) cohesion refers to the semantic relationships that shape a text. This set of related meanings is what defines

a text. So, it is evident that Holliday and Hasan (H&H) consider that cohesion is what makes a passage different from a set of unrelated sentences. Cohesive devices are used to achieve cohesion and discourse markers (hence DMs) are a type of cohesive devices. DMs contribute to the production of well-organized and meaningful academic discourse .Schiffrin (1987) defines DMs as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk"(p.31) .Moreover, she (1987) argues that knowledge about DMs can improve the writing skill.

The work of H &H(1976) ,in their book "Cohesion in English ", paved the way to the notion of DMs .Then, this field of study has attracted an increasing number of researchers and linguists who has been influenced by the development and emergence of sub-fields of linguistics such as Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. Yet, literature indicates a disagreement among scholars about these lexical items due to the diversity of approaches and perspectives towards the issue .This disagreement includes the classification, characteristics, functions, and the way of analysis. Thus , this field of study is heterogeneous and disunited (lenk, 1998b, p.37) and the ways to classify, approach, and define them are debatable (Huang, 2011,p. 23).Fraser (2009,p.294) stated that there is a variety of terms or labels to address DMs .In fact , scholars used different terminologies including Cue phrases (knott and Sanders , 1998) , Discourse connectives (Blackmore, 1987,2002 ; Hall, 2007), DMs (Blackmore,2002 ; Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1999, 2006; Lenk, 1998), Discourse operators (Redeker , 1990, 1991).

According to Delahaunty (2012,p.57) one of the most advanced contributions in this field of study is that of Fraser Bruce. He adopted a pragmatic and functional approach to DMs. Despite the disagreement about these lexical items, DMs use in

academic writing is important particularly in Master dissertations as most of the students consider writing a dissertation the most challenging and complex task they may encounter in their studies. Thus, master students should use and select DMs carefully.

Several researchs have been carried out in recent years to study the nature of discourse markers as pivotal lexical items. The rise of these studies and empirical research on discourse cohesion and coherence motivated researchers to study DMs as an interesting area of second language writing .DMs use in writing were restricted mainly to small pieces of writing such as, essays, paragraphs, backgrounds of research proposals (jalilifar, 2008; Rahayu&Cahyono,2015; Patriana Rachmajanti, & Mukminatien, 2016; Ali, E. and Mahadin, 2016; Al-khazraji, (2019)). Surjuwati (2018) conducted a research comparing the use of DMs produced by high and low undergraduate students adopting Fraser's taxonomy (1996, 2005). He found that high grade student's use of DMs was more in quantity and variety and their essays run smoothly. However, low grade students essays lack cohesion and coherence due to the lack of discourse markers and the inadequate knowledge of these expressions. Another study done by Patriana, Rachmajanti, & Mukminatien (2016) where they analysed essays of master students adopting Fraser (1999) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) taxonomy. The findings of this analysis indicate that students are aware of using discourse markers to build well connected compositions. However, they face problems in using them. Those problems are, overuse, surface logic, mistranslation and misinterpreted relation. The review of previous literature shows that few studies were interested in the study of DMs in dissertations in the Algerian context. Thus, the present study aims to investigate the use of DMs in the discussion sections

(DSs) of Algerian master 02 students who are enrolled in linguistics specialty at Msila University.

2.Statement of the problem:

Writing a dissertation can be a challenging task and it may be the most difficult step while conducting the whole research due to the fact that it requires mastery of the language, conforming to academic conventions, and the ability to construct coherent and well-organized pieces of writing. It also requires making smooth and logical transitions between the ideas discussed in the dissertation. In fact, the use of DMs , which are cohesive devices, can contribute to the cohesion and thus to the quality of whole work and particularly to the cohesion of the discussion section as it involves the researchers 'own interpretations, inferences, and conclusions. Moreover, the fact that DMs relate ideas and sentences and express the relationship between them necessitates using them carefully. So, the use of DMs in Master dissertations can be a problematic issue that requires careful attention.

Master two students may find it difficult to make logical connections, to write well-organized and coherent discussion sections , and to select appropriately DMs to relate their ideas. Therefore, this study is intended to identify how these lexical items are used in Master students 'discussion sections and to fill the previously mentioned research gap.

3.Research questions :

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- .How discourse markers are used by Master two linguistics students?
- .What is the most occurring DMs class according to Fraser 's classification

(2009)?

- .How is the accuracy of the DMs employed in Master linguistics dissertations?

4.Objectives:

The general aim of this research is to investigate the use of DMs by Master two (linguistics) students in their dissertations. It also aims to figure out the dominant class of DMs and the most used DM as well as the least used class and type of these linguistic items. Moreover, the current study examines the accuracy and correctness of the employed DMs in order to evaluate the quality of students ' writing.

5.Significance of the study :

The ultimate significance of this study is evaluating the studentswriting skill and to what extent they have benefited from their five years learning experience at university. The results of this research may raise students' awareness to the importance of having sufficient knowledge about the uses and functions of DMs and to their role in improving the quality of writing.

This research also attempts to pave the way to researchers to explore the different aspects of these linguistic items .

6.Research Methodology:

This study makes use of a corpus based study to analyse the use of DMs in master dissertations at the university of Msila. It seems the most appropriate method

to approach this topic as it enables the researchers to examine a considerable number of texts (here DSs) and to extract all the items needed effortlessly with the help of computer programs instead of manual identifications. Therefore, this method facilitates the identification and extraction of DMs and increases the validity and reliability of the findings.

6. 1.Method:

This research opts for a corpus based analysis to examine the use of DMs and thus to be able to answer the three research questions. The DSs are analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively to identify the frequencies of each DM and later on to evaluate the correctness or accuracy of the used DMs.

6.2.Corpus:

The corpus of this study consists of 30 DSs extracted from 116 master dissertations (available on moodle) which were written between (2018-2021) by linguistic students at the university of M'sila (department of English). To ensure the validity and the reliability of the findings, the DSs were selected randomly by the use of lottery and then coded to achieve anonymity. The current corpus contains a 20894 words (tokens) and 2592 types.

6.3.Tools and instruments :

This study makes use of three research instruments. First, data is collected through the use of the AntConc 3.2.4.2020 program which is a widely employed concordance tool in corpus studies. It is used to extract the DMs and obtain their

frequencies . To identify these items , Fraser's (2009) functional classification and pragmatic approach are adopted. Then, the SPSS is used to deal with the statistical calculations and to elicit the numerical data.

7.The structure of the dissertation:

This dissertation is going to be divided into two chapters. The first chapter deals with the main variables and it provides a brief literature review of the main concepts related to the current study. This chapter is also composed of two sections .the first one tackles corpus studies and their importance. The second section presents the main perspectives and approaches towards DMs (coherence-based functional approach, Relevance-based approach, and grammatical-pragmatic approach) in addition to the different labels, definitions , characteristics, classifications , and functions. The second chapter is devoted to the methodology used in this research. It outlines the techniques and procedures of data collection and data analysis in addition to findings, discussion, conclusion and general conclusion, and future implications

Chapter One

Introduction:

This chapter provides a brief literature review of the main variables related to the topic of the current study. It is divided into three sections. The first section is concerned with Corpora, corpus studies and corpus linguistics. It introduces the terms "corpus" and "corpora" and highlights the main features and uses of corpora. On the other hand, section two presents an account of discourse, discourse analysis and the importance of cohesion in academic writing. The third section is devoted to DMs as it provides a detailed account of the main approaches to DMs. It also explains Fraser's(2009) approach that was adopted in this study.

Section One: Corpora and Corpus Linguistics

1.Definition of corpus :

A corpus (pl. corpora) is a term that has been added to the field of linguistics, giving rise to what is known as corpus linguistic. The traditional methods of corpus analysis have shifted to computerized methods due to the development of technology, leading to the growth of the corpus-based approach. The use of electronic corpora allow researchers to study large amounts of texts, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The term corpus can be defined as "a collection of naturally-occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language, typically contains many millions of words" (Sinclair, 1991, p. 171). In other

words, a corpus is descriptions of real life language that are stored electronically, which contain large amounts of words. The process of selecting corpora is based on specific criteria that are accepted by the majority of researchers who work in the field (e.g., Aarts, 1991; Sinclair, 1991). Any corpus should include authentic texts. Baker (2010) claims that examples of natural language help to 'derive rules or explore trends about the ways in which people actually produce language' (p. 94). Representativeness is another important feature of corpus. Stefanowitsch (2020) points out that " a representative sample is a subset of a population that is identical to the population as a whole with respect to the distribution of the phenomenon under investigation".(p.28). That is, a corpus has to contain a sample that should be representative of the language of the whole population. In addition, corpus has to be machine-readable, which means that the data has to be structured, and automatically processed by a computer software.

2.Types of corpora:

Corpus is usually selected for a specific purpose , and corpora are chosen according to that purpose. Thus, it was applied in different fields because of its important results precisely in the teaching curriculum. There are eight types of corpora, however, some of them will be discussed here:

2.1.General VS specialized corpora:

General corpora is the biggest type of corpora comprising of a set of general texts, oral or written or both. It includes general descriptions of language. However, it cannot entirely represent a particular language. It is often used in creating reference books for language teaching. An example of this kind is the Bank of English (400

million words in January 2001). Whereas, Specialized corpora are specifically used to answer highly precise questions. It includes texts in different sizes from a single genre or register, and a specific period or context that represents the language of this type. Some examples of specialized corpora are the International Corpus of Learner English (20,000 words extracted from student's essays who are learning English as a foreign language) and the Nottingham Health Communication Corpus (Hunston, 2002).

2.2.Learner VS Pedagogic corpora:

Learner corpus is constructed of texts collected from learners of a foreign language. This type is applied to identify areas where learners' texts are different and determine the differences in comparison to native corpus. A popular example of this is the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE), which consists of 20,000 words each, each of which includes texts by learners from various backgrounds. However, pedagogic corpora as defined by Hunston (2002) is "a corpus consisting of all the language a leaner has been exposed to" (p.16). In other words, it is the language used by teachers in the classrooms that the learners may experience, it can include any written texts or spoken transcript, plus an academic textbook which might be seen as visual proof of an interaction between an academic and his readers (Povolná, 2012). This type guarantees that the language to which learners are exposed is useful and it acts as a self-examination tool for teacher improvement.

2.3.Parallel VS comparable :

Comparable corpus contains a set of corpora from different languages or different varieties of the same language. The texts consist of similar genres, similar

amounts of texts, and the same sample procedures for the form. The ICE corpora (International Corpus of English) is one type of comparable corpora containing one million words from various types of English. However, parallel corpus include the same texts in both their original and translated versions . They are aligned, which permits equivalents in the two languages to be compared.

Section Two: discourse, discourse analysis, academic writing

1.The definition of discourse:

The term "Discourse" can be used to refer to different meanings . It is associated with a lot of disciplines due to the fact that it manifests itself in any field

related to language. In literature , discourse is used to refer to both written or spoken language while in linguistics this term received a variety of definitions as a result of the different ways that linguists and scholars believe to be the best way to study language. So, providing a standard definition of discourse is not an easy task and any researcher may come across different and even controversial definitions .

A considerable number of scholars stressed the idea that finding a "unified " definition of discourse is a problematic issue. For instance , Jaworski and Coupland (1999) provided ten definitions of discourse while others tried to summarize the different views towards discourse. In this context, Schiffrin et al (2001, p.1) argued that the different perspectives and definitions of "Discourse" can be summarized in three main definitions which are:

- .Anything beyond the sentence.
- .language use.
- .A broad range of social practices.

Indeed , it can be noticed that most of the meanings associated to discourse fall into one of those main definitions. Other scholars' definitions also stress the social dimensions of discourse .For example, Fair clough (1989) regarded discourse as a social practice .On the other hand, Fasold (1990, p.65) believed that discourse is related to language use or language in use and the same tendency is seen in the work of Yule and Brown(1983).Moreover, Blackmore (2002) adopted the notion of " beyond the sentence" and argued that the study of discourse should consider the functions of discourse since discourse is "a social behaviour ".Yet , some linguists adopted a structural view to discourse and therefore they assumed that discourse is " a system of statements which constructs an object" (Parker, 1992,p.5) which means

that discourse is the next structure in the hierarchy of the language system as it comes directly after the sentence. Other linguists did not focus on the form and structures but on meaning regardless to whether it is a complete sentence grammatically or syntactically speaking or not because what is necessary ,according to them, is that discourse or this expression should" convey a complete and meaningful message" (Nunan, 1993).In this context, Gee (2014, p.89) claims that discourse is related to the ways a flow of sentences contribute to producing meanings and easily interpreting them .

2.The definition of Discourse Analysis:

In fact, the diversity in perspectives and definitions of discourse led to several definitions of Discourse Analysis (DA) across several disciplines. DA is a sub-field of linguistics that emerged in the 1960s and gained its independence later. It is concerned with the study of " language use" or the study of the language used in both written and spoken communication (Hatch , 1992,p.1).

Celce-Murica and Olshtain ' s (1995) definition covers the most essential aspects of discourse such as "language use", "beyond the sentence", and the social dimension of discourse. They (1995,p.4) (as cited in (Montes et al, 2014, p.104)) suggest that " discourse analysis is minimally the study of language in use that extends beyond sentence boundaries .....which entails a more cognitive and social perspective on language use".

3.A brief History of DA: How and why did it emerge:

The first scholar who used the term DA was Zelling Harris (1952). This discipline started to emerge in the mid 1960s and 1970s due to the emergence of other

disciplines such as Semiotics , Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Speech Act Theory and even Pragmatics later by Levinson 1983 and Leech' s works .It can be said that one of the fundamental issues or notions in DA which is "language use" gain attention thanks to several efforts of scholars under the study of Pragmatics. For instance , the work of John Austin (1962) "How To Do Things With Language" , John Searle' s Speech Act Theory 1969, Grice(1975) maxims of conversation and The Theory of Implicature and even Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Nowadays, DA is found in nearly all disciplines .Thus , people can come across terms that indicate the existence of many types of discourse according to the discipline where that discourse is used . Moreover, many discourse analysts restricted their analysis or focused on a given field or discipline .For instance, discourse of politics or political discourse (Chilton,2004), media discourse (Fair clough, 1995), environmental discourse (Hajer, 1997), in addition to other examples including discourse of power, remedial discourse, legal discourse, and ecological discourse .

The examples listed previously represent an evidence of the multidisciplinarity of DA.

4.Approaches of DA:

A considerable number of previous works have tackled the issue of DA approaches. Generally speaking, there are two major types or approaches to DA which are the formal and the functional approaches as described by several scholars such as Schiffrin and the following part of this paper will try to explain them and illustrate by referring to scholars under each approach .

First, this categorization was adopted by many researchers such as Schiffrin

(1994, 2006) and Leech(1983).The formal approach was the first one to emerge with the work of the formalist Z. Harris (1952) then the second trend came later. The first one sees DA as the study of language beyond the sentence i,e they do not study isolated sentences but a "sketch "of connected speech or sentences or a whole text while the second one believes that DA is concerned with the study of language use and it focuses on the functions of the structures that are used in communication and it has been adopted by many scholars such as Fair clough (1989) and Focault (1980) even though Fair clough was interested in critical DA , Brown and Yule (1983).

Other attempts did not opt for one approach but rather combined the two approaches for a better analysis. One of the famous examples of this attempts is the work of Schiffrin (1996, 2006).She (2006) synthesizes the two approaches and thus she(ibid) defines DA as" the study of language use above and beyond the sentence" (p.170).Here, she considered that "above the sentence" stresses the formal tendency towards viewing discourse as one of the parts of the hierarchy of language just above the sentence level or layout while " beyond the sentence" stresses the functional dimensions of language by considering meaning rather than forms and grammatical structures and thus she considered both text and context.

In fact ,to many scholars, it is necessary to synthesize the two approaches and to study both the external and the internal aspects related to language because any language embodies structures, functions, social , and psychological aspects.

Note:

The "internal" aspects of language represent the focus of the formalist approach to DA. This approach tends to analyse the features that exist within the text

or the discourse analysed .Examples of these features include coherence, deixis, co-text, DMs , punctuation, register, and vocabulary. On the other hand, the functional approach gives more attention to the " external aspects" mainly the context of use particularly when analysing spoken discourse where a lot of paralinguistic features exist or as Nunan (1993) called them factors or elements of extra- linguistic context :

- .Type of communicative event such as jokes, stories, lectures
- . Topic.
- .The purpose of the event.
- .The setting.
- .The participants and the relationship between them.

6. The background knowledge and assumptions about the event and even other things that are found in spoken discourse such as intonation, gestures, pauses, pitch, and facial expressions.

5.DA and Corpus studies:

A lot of linguists and discourse analysts have adopted a corpus-based approach , regardless of the different methodologies applied, to DA by using corpora while analysing any type of discourse. It is necessary to restate that "corpora" includes a large number of texts that are selected for a given purpose and the words of a corpus may exceed thousands or millions of words which are stored in computers .These words normally occur in natural use of language

In the field of linguistics, Baker (2006) provided many examples concerning the use of corpora to study different types of discourse .For instance , Baker (ibid) stated

that Holmes (2001) studied the use of two words "girl(s)" and "boy(s)" and their collocations in five corpora of British English. Other examples include Lorenz (1998) and Flowerdew(2000) while examples in other fields include the analysis of political texts (Fair clough,2000;Piper, 2000;Partington,2003) in addition to the analysis of scientific writing (Atkinson,1999) and even Newspaper articles (Van Dijk ,1991).

The previously mentioned examples prove that the use of corpora can be a useful method or tool to analyse discourse.

6. Academic writing, Discourse, and cohesion:

6.1.Academic writing:

6.1.1.Writing:

Generally, writing is a cognitive and creative process in which the writer expresses, transmits , and transforms his thoughts and emotions into a well written form. It is considered as a written way of communication. In the teaching context, assessing and evaluating learners worldwide tends to test the writing skill. In the pedagogical context , there are several approaches to the teaching of writing including product-approach, process-approach, and discourse -based approach .Nunan (1999,p.59)(as cited in Yi (2009,p.57)) defined writing as the capacity of complying to style instructions in regards to syntax, order, and punctuation marks. Furthermore, Gardner &Johnson (1997) considered that writing is a process which includes a set of steps and stages and that the writer can return to one step several times .Thus, they defined writing as "a fluid process created by writers as they work"(p.36).In fact, this process includes three main stages starting from "brainstorming" ideas into the final version after many drafts. These stages are

the pre-writing stage, the writing stage, and the post-writing stage where the writer edit the draft and re-write the final version.(Bak, 2013,p.4).

6.1.2.Academic writing:

Academic writing has gained the attention of a considerable number of researchers (for instance Swales, 2001; Hyland, 2006; Ferris, 2009).

Wilkinson & Jeannette (2010,p.4) argue that academic writing refers to the different types of written activities and assignments that a student writes in the academic setting, academic articles, researches, and Phd and master dissertations.

In fact, academic writing conforms to some academic conventions related to both form and content. Concerning the form, the language used in academic texts is characterised by preciseness, objectivity ,and impersonality.(Hartley, 2008, p.3) which means that the language used in academia is characterized by formality and objectivity.

6.1.3. features of academic writing:

Academic texts tend to be more formal , cohesive, coherent, and organised in the same way an essay is structured. In other words, all forms of academic genres contain an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Bailey (2015, p.6) lists a set of common texts features which may distinguish academic texts (particularly in terms of ethical considerations and avoidance of plagiarism):

- .Citing and using references.
- .Using abbreviations .
- . Writing in italics to distinguish words that are not English such as et al

which means and others.

- .Using brackets to include additional pieces of information or to further explain a point.

6.2.Cohesion and Discourse:

As stated before, cohesion can be one of the most important features in academic texts which represent academic written discourse.

H&H(1976) state that cohesion "occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (p.4). So, cohesion is one of the elements that characterizes discourse and that facilitates the interpretation of it. In the same work, H &H (ibid) argue that text is cohesive and thus they emphasized the idea that cohesion is a basic feature in any text. In this context, Beaugrand and Dressler (1981) provided seven standards that are , according to them, linked to discourse:

- Cohesion
- Coherence
- Intentionality
- Acceptability
- Situationality
- Informativity
- Intertextuality

The two scholars (ibid) considered that the function of cohesion in discourse is linking or relating the constituents and components of discourse .furthermore, the same view, approximately, is found in the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) who argue that cohesion and coherence are used to arrange discourse. In fact ,

Beaugrand and Dressler' s(ibid) view agrees with H&H' s (1976) view towards the role of cohesion in discourse.

It seems evident that cohesion is used to produce coherent discourse through the use of different types of cohesive devices and a DM represents one of the types of the cohesive devices .It functions at the discourse level as the term given to this lexical item suggests .

The next section tries to provide a brief account of the nature of DMs and their functions.

Section Three:

1.Definitions of discourse markers :

Discourse markers gained a lot of attention in the last decades. Numerous researchers studied these lexical items as an interesting area of second language writing. However, DMs raised some debates between scholars concerning their meaning, and what they refer to. On the other hand, they may agree on the core features of discourse markers but they use different labels to refer to the same concept. Fraser (2009) states a variety of terms used by scholars to refer to DMs, including, discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987), sentence connectives (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), Discourse Particles (Schourup, 1999), and Redeker (1990) refers to them as discourse operators. Moreover, it is important to review the various definitions of these linguistics items. Discourse markers are primarily composed of a collection of words or phrases such as anyway, right, to begin with. DMs are used to

connect, organize and manage what we say or write or to express attitude "Cambridge Dictionary". On other hand, a lot of modern linguists attempt to define DMs. Schiffrin (1987, p.31) defines DMs as "sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk." That is, discourse markers are optional components of utterances, but their use might be helpful in connecting units of talk together. However, Brinton (1996) argues, "they are not pragmatically optional or superfluous". A discourse that is lacking these linguistic items may cause a "communicative breakdown," as Fraser points out (1990, p.390). He adds that discourse markers are:

" pragmatic class, lexical expressions drawn from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases with certain exceptions, they signal a relationship between the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1" (1999, p.950). In other words, DMs are expressions derived from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases that serve in connecting clauses and sentences and show logical relationships between them. In addition, Hansen(1997) defines DMs as a linguistic item or variable scope, And whose primary function is connective". From the above definitions, it is noticeable that scholars share the same viewpoint on the importance of connectivity in defining DMs. Blakemore (2002), points to the significance of connectivity in distinguishing discourse markers from other items. She states that:

"If the term 'discourse markers' does indeed refer to a particular class of expressions, then they must have a property which distinguishes them from other discourse indicators. This property is generally considered to be their function of marking relationships or connections among units of discourse" (Blakemore, 2002 ,p. 2) Regardless of the different views towards these items, they are undeniably useful

and capable of creating coherence to the discourse. A lot of studies have investigated The use of DMs in students' writing. Surjuwati (2018) conducted a research comparing the use of DMs produced by high and low undergraduate students adopting Fraser's taxonomy (1996, 2005). He found that high grade student's use of DMs was more in quantity and variety and their essays run smoothly. However, low grade students' essays lack cohesion and coherence due to the lack of discourse markers and the inadequate knowledge of these expressions. jalilifar (2008) claimed that the correct use of DM improves the quality of written works.

2.The approaches to DMs:

The study of DMs has attracted many scholars, researchers, and linguistics who have different perspectives towards this field of research. Therefore, several approaches to DMs emerged basically because of the emergence of the theory of cohesion, Relevance theory, pragmatics and other sub-fields of linguistics. For a lot of researchers , the variety of definitions and characteristics which DMs received were the results of three prominent approaches which are coherence-based functional approach, Relevance-based , and grammatical -pragmatic approaches(Huang ,2011). It is important to note that there are other approaches such as Aijmer's (2013) work within the theory of potential meaning. Each approach has different ways of analysis and each one reached different findings .In this context, Fischer (1998,p.113) states that different frameworks and perspectives have been used to analyse DMs .These differences led to different results.

2.1 Coherence-based approach:

This approach was adopted by several scholars such as (Halliday and Hassan,

1976 ; Schiffrin,1987; Redeker, 1990-1991;Lenk, 1998; Schiffrin 2005).Within this framework, the emphasis is on the cohesion of texts and the analysis is at the level of the sentence.

2.1.1.The theory of cohesion:

Halliday and Hasan (H&H) argue that cohesion" refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text , and that defines it as a text" (1976,p.4).This theory paved the way to DMs as it gave importance to some linguistic items that were seen useless before. It was proposed by M.A.K.Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976) in their book "cohesion in English". This work provided a general account about the definition of cohesion, its importance, and its types or categories. In fact, H&H(ibid) list five types of cohesion which are :

- .Reference.
- .Substitution.
- .Ellipsis.
- Repetition.
- .Conjunction.

According to Schiffrin (1987,p.55) conjunctions are the equivalent of DMs in Fraser's framework. This framework will be discussed in another part of this research paper within the grammatical-Pragmatic approach. On the other hand, H &H consider that conjunction represents a type of cohesive relation such as" and", "but", and" so". H&H agree with Fraser as they all consider that DMs signal a relationship. Yet , the work of H&H is less detailed than Fraser's work.

2.1.2.DeborahSchiffrin's account of DMs:

In fact, she was the first researcher who , according to many scholars, directly addressed DMs and used this term. As stated by her(1987b ,p.55) , her interest in DMs is due to her view towards discourse as a social interaction. Therefore , she(1987b ,p.54) argues that " expressions like well, but, oh ,and y 'know – are one set of linguistic items that function in cognitive, expressive, social, and textual domains ". This sentence is a brief and concise definition of DMs. In her first attempt of defining these linguistic items, Schiffrin (1987a, p.31) defines DMs as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk". Her focus on individual DMs led her to analyse eleven DMs which are and, because, but , I mean, now, oh, so, then, well, y' know used in sociolinguistic interviews with Jews Americans in 1987.Since her work is one of the first attempts to study DMs , a lot of scholars agreed with her view towards the issue .For instance, Fraser(1996) agrees with her argument in which she says that DMs have a core meaning that is both pragmatic and semantic .So, Fraser , similarly , considered that DMs have a core meaning which should be procedural(a procedural meaning is related to inferences and interpretations of discourse).This common point between them led Schiffrin (ibid) to exclude "oh "and "well" as they do not have a core meaning. Moreover , she stated that the other DMs used in her analysis have core meaning (1987,p.314). Fraser (1996) called " oh " and " well " pause markers as they do not signal any relationship .Fraser disagree with Schiffrin's point of view in terms of the two DMs "you know" and" I mean" because he (1990,p.392) excluded them from the list of DMs as they are , according to him, content words that refer to no relationship.

Schiffrin (ibid) used interviews rather than other material because she advocates that DMs are generally considered as one of the features of oral discourse

rather than written one (1987,2002).Basing on her analysis of the eleven DMs , she proposed categories of markers, this categorization is known as The Model of discourse cohesion . This model consist of five planes of analysis .The summary of the model is displayed in table number(1) as cited in (Algouzi,, 2014,p.32)

In this classification , it seems clear that Schiffrin believes that discourse has five structures or planes which are information state , participation framework , ideational structure, action structure, and exchange structure. The table stresses the multifunction of DMs as it shows that one DM is found in more than one plane and thus one DM can have more than one function .

Schiffrin explained these planes in relation to speech acts , turn taking , conversation, pragmatics and some other notions.

Table 1. Planes of discourse marker functions:

Information state	Participation framework	Ideational structure	Action structure	Exchange structure
oh	Oh	**Oh**	Oh	
well	**Well**	well	well	well
		and	and	And
		But	But	But
		Or		or
So	So	**so**	so	so
because		**Because**	Because	
	Now	**Now**		
Then		**Then**	Then	
I mean	**I mean**	I mean		

You know	You know	You know		You know

Note: primary planes are written in bold font (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 316) as cited in (Algouzi,, 2014,p.32).

To sum up ,as(schourup, 1999, p.240) claims, several scholars adopted the coherence-based framework which looks at DMs as items that signal coherence relationship and that are used to relate units in any text .

2.2.Relevence –based approach:

The relevance theory was proposed by Sperber and Wilson in 1986 and it is generally about human communication . It is based on cognitive principles. Several linguists and scholars , who studied DMs , were influenced by this theory . For instance, Diane Blackmore is one of the prominent researchers in this field. Blackmore (1992) uses the term discourse connectives (DCs) instead of DMs. She was interested in the "psychological theory of utterance interpretation ".

It is important to highlight the fact that Relevance-theory and particularly Blackmore's (1998,2001) view towards DMs or DCs, as she referred to them, describes them as items that signal how a discourse segment is relevant to another considering the context.

So, this approach has adopted a different way as they considered what is beyond discourse (Chen,2019, p.1).They care more about to what extent DCs show that segments in the text are relevant to the context of use and how DCs function as signposts which contribute to the interpretation of discourse. Examples of scholars under this framework include (Blackmore, 1987;Jucker,1988;Blass, 1990;Ariel, 1998;Anderson, 2001;Blackmore, 2001).

2.2.1 Diane Blackmore's account of DMs:

In fact , she is one of the first scholars who approached DMs from the perspective of Relevance theory .According to Blackmore (1987, p.105), DCs constrain "the interpretation of the utterance that contain them by virtue of the inferential connections they express" .She (1992, pp137-138) suggested that an utterance which conveys a piece of information can be relevant by three ways :

- -It may refer to contextual implication.
- -It may use evidence to strengthen the assumption.
- -It may be a contradiction of the assumption.

As a result to the proceeding idea, she (1992, pp.138-142) argues that DCs can be classified into three types:

*.DCs that introduce contextual implications such as "so" and "therefore". She(1992, pp138-139) states that although those "connectors" are not used to relate two segments. Yet, they can constrain the interpretation of the utterance. She provided the following example:

- "A: you take the first turning on the left .
- B:So we don't go past the university (then).
- (Hearer (who is driving) makes a left turn)
- So we 're not going past the university (then/ after all) " (Blackmore , 1992,p. 139, examples number 18-19)

Here, she explains this illustration by indicating that the function or the role of "so" in the two cases is the same.

*. DCs that are concerned with strengthening (after all, besides, moreover, furthermore, utterance-initial).This type is used to provide proof or evidence for an assumption so that the speaker guarantees that the listener will derive the conclusion. She illustrates using this example:

"A:will you make pancake ?

B:I haven't got time tonight. Besides there is no milk." (Blackmore, 1992, p.140, example 25)

Here, (B) used" besides" to strengthen her speech .Then , she argues that the five DCs listed above (after all, besides, moreover, furthermore) are not the only DCs used to strengthen but "indeed" and "also" are under this type too. She gives the following example:

- "A:that' s good news .
- B:It is indeed." (Blackmore , 1992, p.140,example 27)

*.DCs which introduce denials (however , still, nevertheless, but).This type expresses an intention to deny the assumption provided before .Consider the following example:

Example: "David is here. However, you can't see him" .(Blackmore, 1992, p. 141,example 30).

Blackmore's view somehow agrees with Fraser as both of them consider that DMs have procedural meaning due to her classification of linguistic meaning into conceptional and procedural meanings .Conceptional meaning is related to how to perform the representation while the procedural one has something to do with inferences. Therefore, she ,similarly to Schiffrin and Fraser , excluded some words

that have a conceptional meaning .This agreement with Fraser is not absolute; she (1996) excluded some expressions that were considered by Fraser (1990) as DMs because she assumed that they have conceptional rather than procedural meaning. Thus, she excluded "in other words", "that is to say " , "apparently" , regrettably ", I suppose " and other expressions.

According to her (2002), what makes DMs important is concerned with how using them offers insights about the relationship between the linguistic meaning and the context.

This theory or approach to DMs was criticized by several scholars .For instance, Aijmer (2013) believes that in order to analyse DMs it is not sufficient to deal with relevance theory but other aspects must be taken into account such as history, culture , society, and even religion. Moreover, Fraser (2009) challenged the adherents of Relevance Theory in terms of considering that a DM should carry only a procedural meaning .He (2009,pp.307- 308) explained that a DM can carry both conceptual and procedural meanings but with different "proportions" . For instance, he believes that the DM ***as a result*** which was excluded by Blackmore(2002) has a more procedural meaning than *thus* .Yet, it (i,e*as a result*) has also a conceptional meaning.

2.3.Grammatical-Pragmatic approach:

Unlike the coherence -based approach , this approach considers the discourse level and the meaning of the sentence rather than the cohesion of the text. By saying "discourse" , it seems evident that the focus is on the functions of these linguistic items .Moreover, it highlights the pragmatic perspectives of DMs. Within this

framework, Fraser' s work is the most advanced work in this field of study (Delahunty, 2012, p.57).Yet, he is not the only scholar who adopted this framework. For instance there are (Erman, 1987; Brinton ,1990 ;Swretser ,1990; Erman , 2001) .

2.3.1.Bruce Fraser's account of DMs:

The study of Fraser is seen as the most advanced work in this field due to the fact that it is one of the recent and updated efforts to address DMs through a lot of versions starting from 1987 to 2015 .therefore, his framework and particularly his(2009) classification is going to be adopted since it seems appropriate to analyse the functional classes of DMs used in written discourse and since it allows an easy and systematic way to process the corpus of the current study using a computer concordance program (AntConc3.2.4 2020).

First, it is important to state the reason that led Fraser' s framework to be considered as a pragmatic one. In fact, (Schiffrin, 1987, p.59) explains that his analysis has been based upon a distinction he made between two types of meaning which are content meaning and pragmatic meaning. According to him, content meaning stands for semantics while the other one stands for pragmatics

In his first attempt to address the issue , Fraser (1987) dealt with pragmatic formatives .Then, in 1900, he introduced the term pragmatic markers and argued that discourse markers are the fourth type of pragmatic markers .This view was adopted by other scholars such as Carter & MC Cathy (2006) .In this version(1900, p. 383), Fraser states that DMs are signals of "a sequential relationship between the current message and the previous discourse" and in a more recent work , he(1991) explains what is meant by the term "signal" by indicating that DMs are used to mark

or signpost the nature of the relationship between segment one(S1) and segment two (S2).

Fraser (1991) provided an account of his view and he considered that pragmatic markers are classified into three types :

- Basic pragmatic markers .
- Commentary pragmatic markers .
- Parallel pragmatic markers.

For him, a DM is one of the types of Commentary Pragmatic Markers and later even DMs received sub-classifications and were classified into four types :topic change, contrastive, elaborative, and inferential discourse markers (Fraser, 1996) .DMs , according to Fraser , do not create a relationship between segments but just signal an already existing relationship (Fraser, 2006, p.13).Then, his focus shifted into DMs in 1998.In this version, Fraser (1998) defined a DM as " a lexical expression that signals the relation of either contrast (John is fat but Mary is thin) , implication (John is here , so we can start the party) , or elaboration (John went home. Furthermore, he took his toys) between the integration of segment two and segment one "(p.302)

2.3.2.Fraser' s (2009) framework :

As mentioned earlier, the current study has adopted the classification proposed in this version which is the revision of previous works Fraser (1999, 2004, 2006). Still, it dealt with DMs within the scope of Pragmatic markers .His work is an account of DMs in terms of definition, syntactic and semantic properties , classification , and an analysis of the different uses of the DM "but " which came up with ten different

uses. Stressing the pragmatic perspective of his approach , Fraser (2009) reviewed the four types of pragmatic markers which were identified in his previous work (Fraser, 1996):

- .Basic pragmatic markers BPMs.
- .Commentary pragmatic markers CPMs.
- .Discourse markers DMs
- .Discourse structure markers DSMs.

BPMs mark the message type such as in this example :

"Please , sit down (a request , but not a suggestion or an order)

" (Fraser, 2009,p.295, example (2)

b)

The second type of Pragmatic Markers is CPMs has the function of commenting on the basic message. This type is subdivided into five subtypes including Assessment Markers , Manner- of- Speaking Markers that are in most cases adverbs or adverbial expressions , Evidential Markers which are used to express certainty , Hearsay Markers and they are used when expressing evidence based on reports that the speaker heard but he is not sure about, and(Non)Deference Markers. The next class of Pragmatic Markers is DSMs which mark the organisation of discourse .They include three sub- classes which are Discourse Management Markers, Topic Orientation, and Attention Markers.

According to this classification, DMs are considered as the third type of Pragmatic Markers and they are used to "signal a relation between the discourse segment that hosts them and the prior discourse segment, perhaps produced by

another speaker".(Fraser, 2009, p.296).He (ibid) classified DMs into three classes:

•Contrastive Discourse Markers:

- "A:Harry is hurrying
- B:**but**when do you think he will get there? " (Fraser , 2009,P.296, example (8) a)

•Elaborative Discourse Markers:

"John can't go .**And**Mary can't go either". (Fraser, 2009, p.296,example (9) a)

•Inferential Discourse Markers:

"Sue isn't here. **As a result**, we won't be able to see the video."

(Fraser, 2009,p,296,example (10) b).

For Fraser(2009,pp297 -299) , an expression can not be considered a DM unless it occurs in a sequence that respects the following structure S1-DM +S2 where S1 stands for discourse segment one and S2 stands for discourse segment two. Moreover, there are three conditions that should exist in a DM.

Condition1: a DM is a lexical expression.

Condition 2: S2 should contain the DM whether there is a comma or a period (.) between the two segments For example "we were late, but no one seemed to mind

We were late. But no one seemed to mind " (Fraser, 2009, p.298, example 15 (a) and (b))

A DM can occur at the beginning of S2 and in the middle of S2 , but it can not occur at the end of S2.

Condition 3:a DM does not create a semantic meaning. It just signals the relationship between S1 and S2.

Basing on his definition of DMs , he provided a list of the three functional classes of DMs :

"contrastive markers (CDMs), where a CDM signals a direct or indirect contrast between S1 and S2 (***but***, alternatively, although, contrariwise, contrary to expectations, conversely, despite (this/that), even so , however, in spite of (this/ that), in comparison (with this / that), in contrast (to this/that), instead (of this / that), nevertheless, nonetheless , (this/that point), notwithstanding , on the other hand , on the contrary , rather (than this/that), regardless (of this/that), still , though , whereas , yet …) elaborative markers (EDMs), where an EDM signals an elaboration in S2 to the information contained in S1 (***and*** , above all, after all, also, alternatively, analogously, besides, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, for example, for instance, further (more) , in addition, in other words, in particular, likewise, more accurately, more importantly, more precisely, more to the point, moreover, on that basis, on top of it all, or, otherwise, rather, similarly ,…).

inferential markers (IDMs), where an IDM signals that S1 provides a basis for inferring S2 (**so**, all things considered, as a conclusion, as a consequence (of this/ that), as a result (of this/that), because (of this/that), consequently, for this/ that reason, hence, it follows that, accordingly, in this/that/any case, on this/that condition, on these/those grounds, then, therefore, thus)." (Fraser, 2009,pp.300 -301)

Note: DMs written in bold (but, and, so) are considered by Fraser as the primary DM of each class.

Conclusion:

Chapter reviewed the literature about corpora and corpus linguistics, discourse, DA, and DMs. First, it introduced definitions of the concepts and then it dealt with the main issues related to DA and the three major approaches to DMs. Finally, it ends up by presenting the adopted classification of DMs

Chapter Two :

Methodology and Discussion of Results

Introduction:

This study attempts to figure out how DMs are used by Master two students (linguistics) at the Department of English and to identify the most used type of DMs based on the adopted classification .In order to answer the previously stated research

questions , a corpus-based approach was adopted. This chapter is devoted to the practical part of this study. It includes two different parts. The first part covers the research design and methodology used in terms of method and procedures of the selection of the corpus and the collection of data through the use of some tools. On the other hand, the second part is concerned with data analysis, results, discussion section and interpretation of the results. Finally, this chapter concludes with limitations of the study, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for further research.

Part one: Research Design and Methodology:

1.Method:

This research opts for a corpus-based study using a computer concordance tool (AntConc 3.2.4.2020 program) .It is a descriptive study which analyses data both quantitatively and qualitatively . In fact, descriptive studies are used to describe the variables or the existing phenomena without trying to find explanation or answer "why". In other words, a descriptive study answers the question" what" instead of "why" or " how". According to Williams (2007, p.66), it is a research method which studies the phenomenon in its current situation. It seems the most appropriate way to approach this topic and to answer the research questions due to the fact that quantitative techniques are used to deal with the frequencies and percentages of DMs with the help of descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis is so beneficial while studying and analyzing the accuracy of DMs' use. According to baker (2006,p. 2), corpus-based studies rely on both qualitative and quantitative methods and research techniques.

2.Sample:

This corpus is comprised of 30 discussion sections which were taken from the dissertations that are found in D-space website of the University of M'sila. These dissertations were submitted from 2018 to 2021 and they were selected randomly(lottery) from 116 dissertations available on D-space. Furthermore, only dissertations with separate DSs were selected. The total number of words in the corpus is 20894.

3.Tools and Instruments:

To collect and analyse data, some research tools and instruments are used in this study. First, Fraser's (2009) functional and pragmatic approach to DMs and his functional classification in order to identify whether the extracted items are functioning as DMs or not and to classify them into classes to facilitate displaying the results. This classification was explained and illustrated in chapter one . Second, this corpus was assisted and analysed by an AntConc concordance tool. This tool is a freeware which was created by Laurence Anthony on 10 , October, 2016 to be used in corpus linguistics and studies.

To display the results and deal with statistical operations, SPSS is used as a mean of eliciting data. SPSS is an abbreviation that stands for Statistical Package for the Social Science. According to Gogoi (2020,p.2424) , SPSS refers to a beneficial

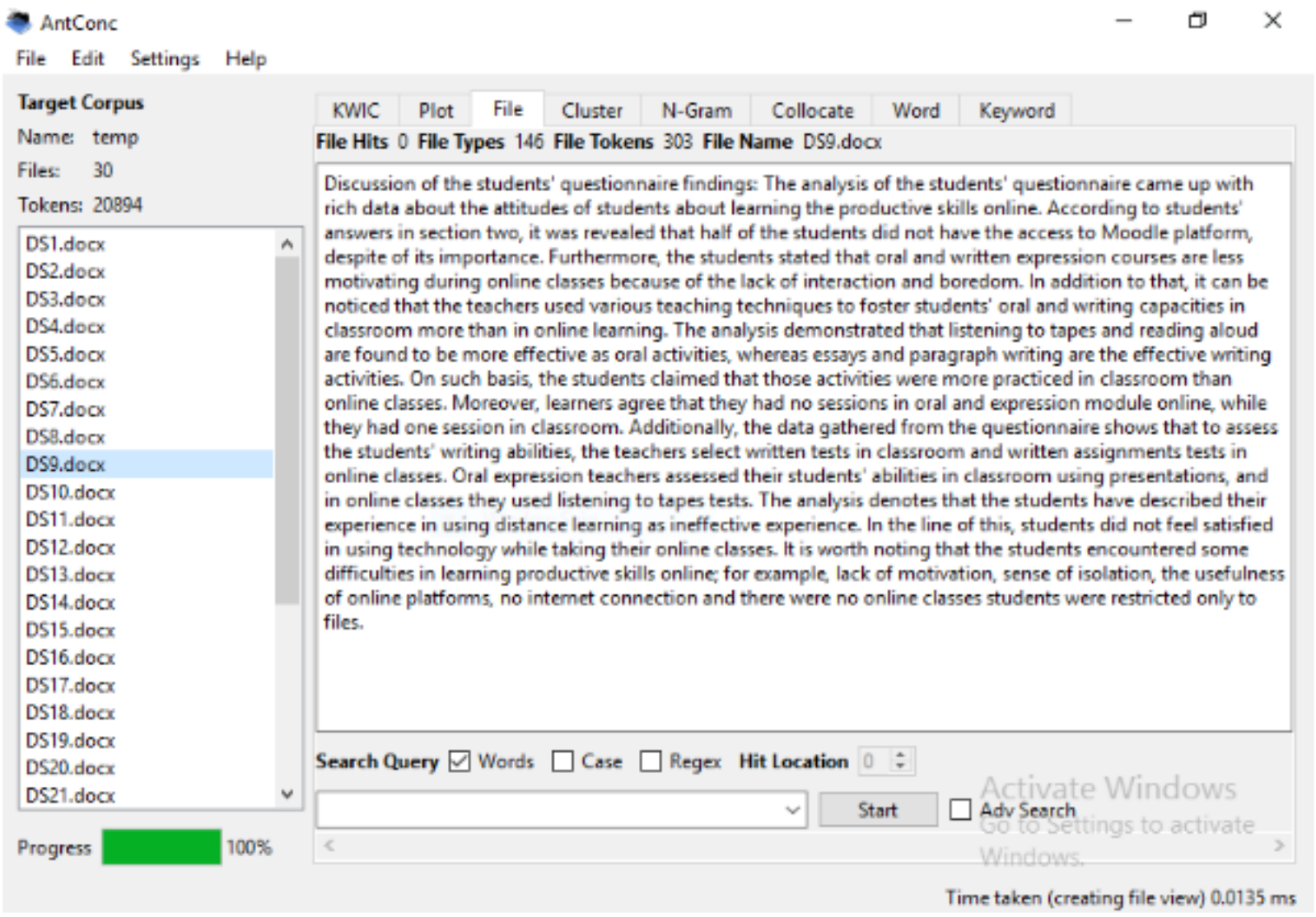
software computer program which researchers use in the field of social science to investigate analytical data through the use of several " simple" methods.

4.Procedures for the selection of the DSs and for increasing the validity and the reliability of the findings:

4.1.The selection of the texts and the compilation of the corpus:

The corpus of this study contains 30 DSs written by linguistics students in the Department of English. The year of submission varies from 2018-2021.In fact, the researchers followed some procedures or steps. First, to achieve representativeness (i,e to have a representative sample or corpus).lottery was used as a random sampling method. By doing so, all the 116 dissertations had an equal chance of being selected. Second, and after selecting the dissertations their DSs were copied in a word text format and coded using DS1, DS2, DS3.....DS30.Then, some modifications were done. For instance, quotes were deleted as they do not represent the production of the students and some figures were omitted too. Third, the 30 DSs were compiled to AntConc to start Extracting DMs.

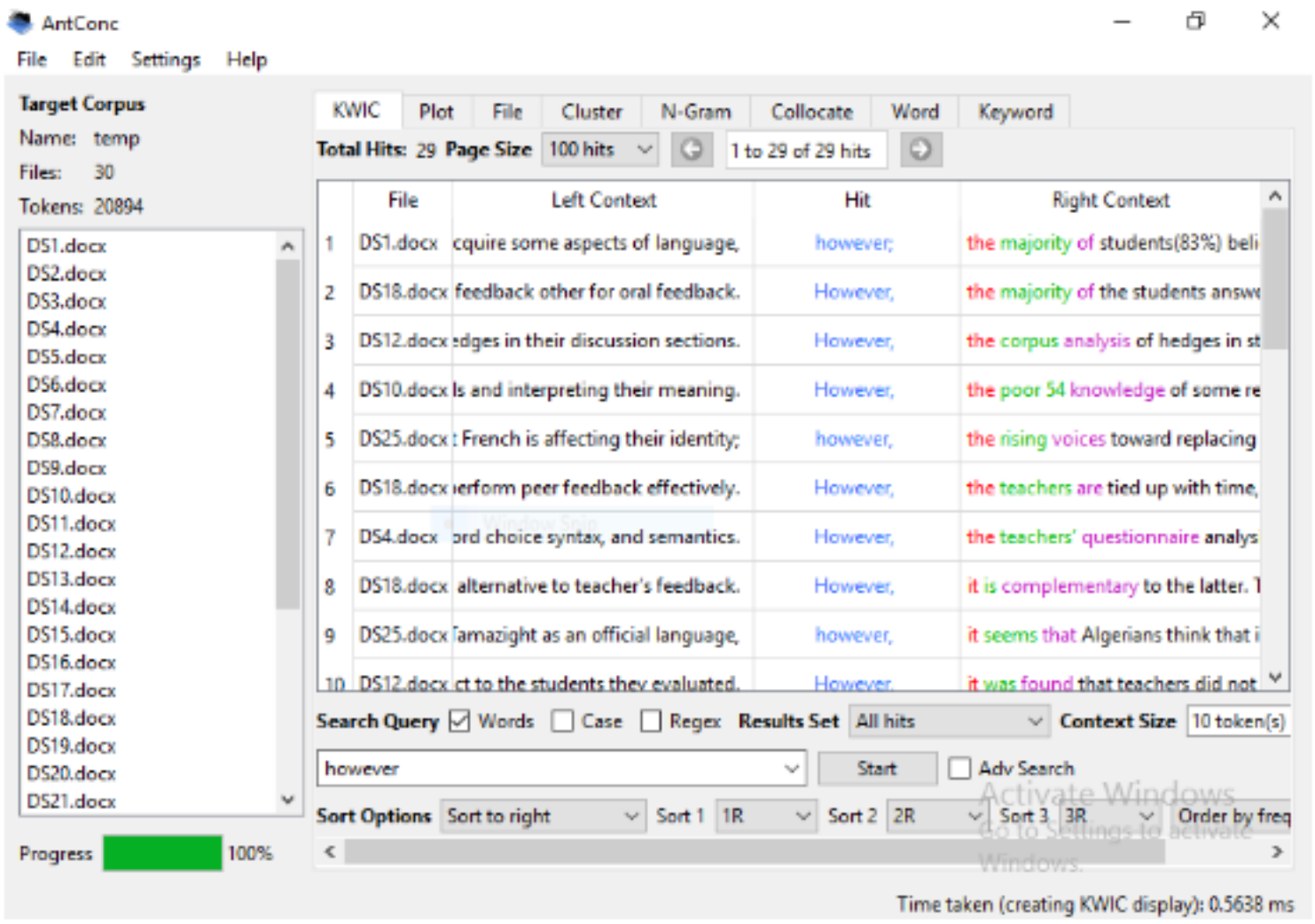
Figure 1: a screenshot of a compiled DSs as it appears in the AntConc Program



4.2.The validity and Reliability of the findings :

Some procedures were followed to increase the reliability and validity of the results. It is highly important to mention that AntConc is a reliable concordance tool in corpus studies as it provides accurate number of occurrences of any item the user is searching for. Yet, the researchers did not take all the hits (the occurrences of the items).They took only the items that function as DMs due to the fact that they have adopted a pragmatic approach and Fraser'(2009) functional classification of DMs .So, some items were excluded.

Figure (2): represents a screenshot of the AntConc program.



While searching for the DM "so" , some items were excluded .Examples include "so hard", "to do so", "is so essential", "can be so common". The same procedure was applied with many DMs such as or, and, but, rather, likewise, then, and in contrast .Moreover, in case of two DMs combined in one sentence , both DMs are counted because according to Fraser (2015) such combinations are accepted except combinations between primary DMs because for Fraser such combinations are not accepted. For example, the corpus includes combinations such as but still, but rather, but latterly however.

As have been stated before, the pragmatic approach adopted and the fact that AntConc results are based on syntax rather than pragmatics necessitate excluding many items which were extracted by the concordance tool AntConc because they do not function as DMs according to Fraser(2009). Therefore, the results and number of

occurrences of items were not taken directly from AntConc but rather calculated manually after identifying whether each item is a DM or not . To ensure the validity and reliability of the results and to make sure that no calculating mistakes were done, the calculations have been done several times (three times) by both researchers and a period of approximately a week was kept between each calculation to ensure the reliability of the whole process.

Note : Since AntConc shows the context of use of the items extracted, it was easy to identify whether each item is functioning as a DM or not.

Part two: Data analysis, results , and discussion of the results:

The second part of this chapter is devoted to data analysis, results and discussion and interpretations of the main findings in addition to general conclusions, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for further research.

The obtained data from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus is analysed through SPSS to elicit numerical data with the help of descriptive statistics. The frequencies, the percentages and average frequencies are displayed in tables and then graphical forms. Qualitative data which are concerned with the accuracy of DMs use were quantified and displayed too. Later on, the results of the analysis are interpreted in a separate section within the second part of chapter too.

1.Data Analysis :

1.1. Analysis of DMs frequencies:

Table 2:description of the corpus

Numberof DSs	**30**

Total number of Tokens	20894
Total number of Types	**2592**

Table 2 provides a description of the components of the current corpus. It indicates that the corpus includes 30 DSs and 20894 tokens. In corpus studies and corpus linguistics, the term "tokens" refers to the number of words in the corpus. Moreover, the number of types of linguistic items is 2592.

Table 3: frequencies of each class of DMs

Class	Total Frequency	%	Average f per 1k words
EDMs	230	55.69	11.007
CDMs	97	23.8	4.64
IDMs	86	20.86	4.11
Total	413	100	/

EDMs: elaborative discourse markers / CDMs: contrastive discourse markers / IDMs: inferential discourse markers.

Table 3 and figure 3 indicate that the corpus consists of 430 DM regardless of the classes. The most dominant class of DMs in this corpus is EDMs with a total F of 230 occurrence and AF of 11,007 per 1000 words Then, the next class is the CDMs with a F of 97 DM and AF of 4,64 per 1000 words. Finally, IDMs have a F of 86 and AF of 4,11. Concerning the percentage of each class, EDMS was used with a percentage of 55.69% and the other classes were used less (23,8 for CDMs and only 20,86 for IDMs).

table 3: frequencies of each class of DMs

Table 4: top 10 most used DMs

DMs	Frequency	AF per 1000 words
And	79	3.780
Also	43	2.058
Because	35	1.675
However	29	1.387
But	22	1.052
Moreover	22	1.052
In addition	19	0.909
Thus	17	0.813
Furthermore	16	0.765
So	13	0.622

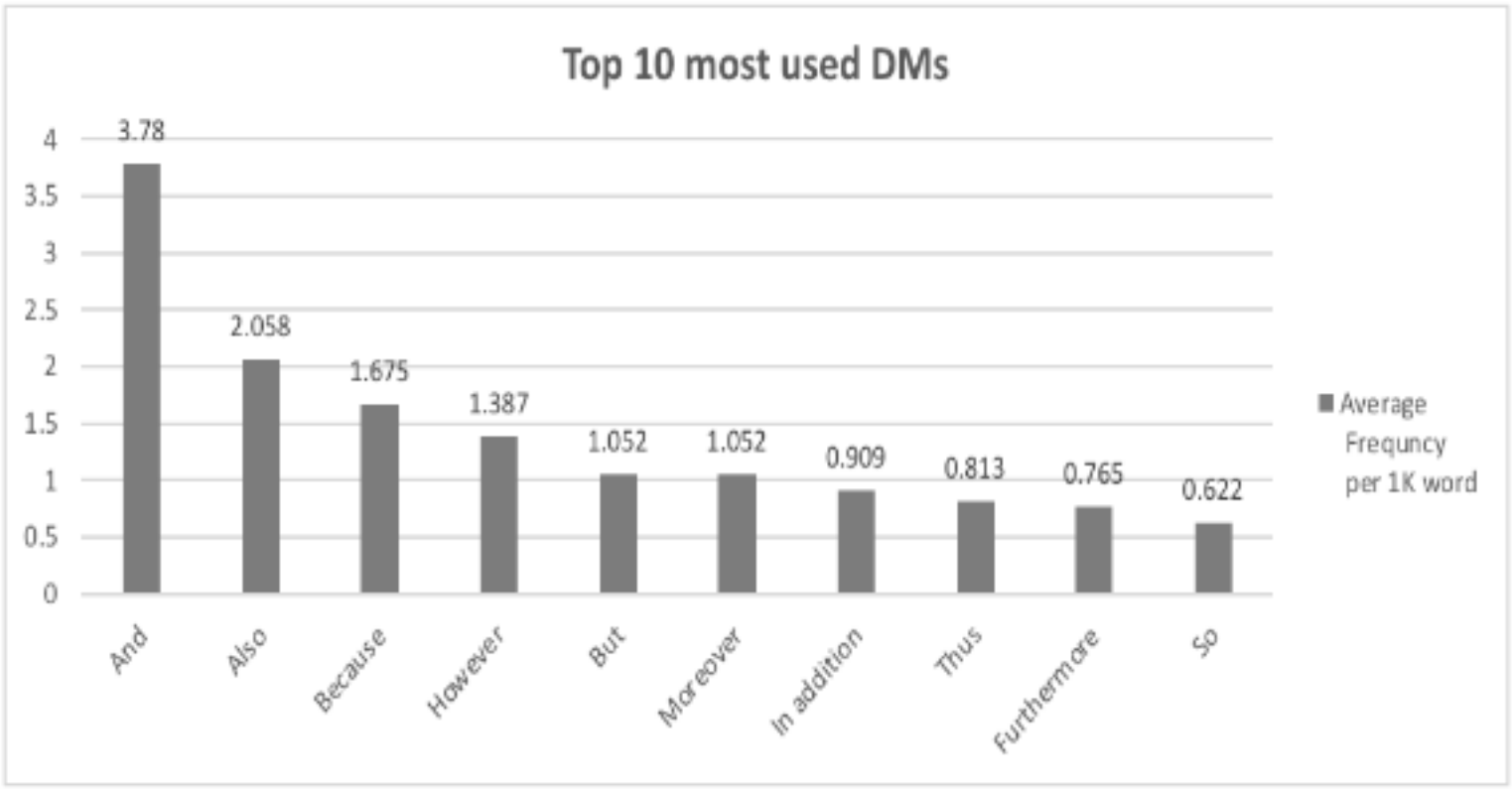


Figure 4: top 10 most used DMs

The above table and figure show that the top used DMs in this corpus are : and, also, because, however, but , moreover, in addition, thus, furthermore , and finally so. The EDM "And" was the most used DM with a rate of 3,780 per 1000 words and a F of 230 . Then, the DM "Also "was the second in the order with an AF of 2,085 per 1000 words and a F of 43.The next EDM was "Because" which was used 35 times(with an AF of 1,657 . The EDM "however" appeared the fourth as it occurred 29 times (with an AF of1,387 .The five other EDMs were used less (22 time for both "but" and "moreover", 19 time for "in addition", 17 time for "thus" , and 16 time for "furthermore". Their AF was ranged from 1,052 to 0,675. Finally, the EDM " So" appeared last in the table and figure with a F of only 13 and an AF of 0,622.

Frequencies and percentages of DMs within each class:

Table 5 : frequency of EDMs

EDMs	Frequency	%	Average f per 1k words

And	79	34.35	3.78
Also	43	18.70	2.058
Moreover	22	9.57	1.052
In addition	19	8.26	0.909
Further more	16	6.96	0.765
Additionally	11	4.78	0.526
Besides	8	3.48	0.382
Or	8	3.48	0.382
For instance	8	3.48	0.335
Further	7	3.04	0.143
For example	3	1.30	0.095
Likewise	2	0.87	0.047
Above all	1	0.43	0.047
Accordingly	1	0.43	0.047
Alternatively	1	0.43	0.047
In particular	1	0.43	0.047
Total	230	100	/

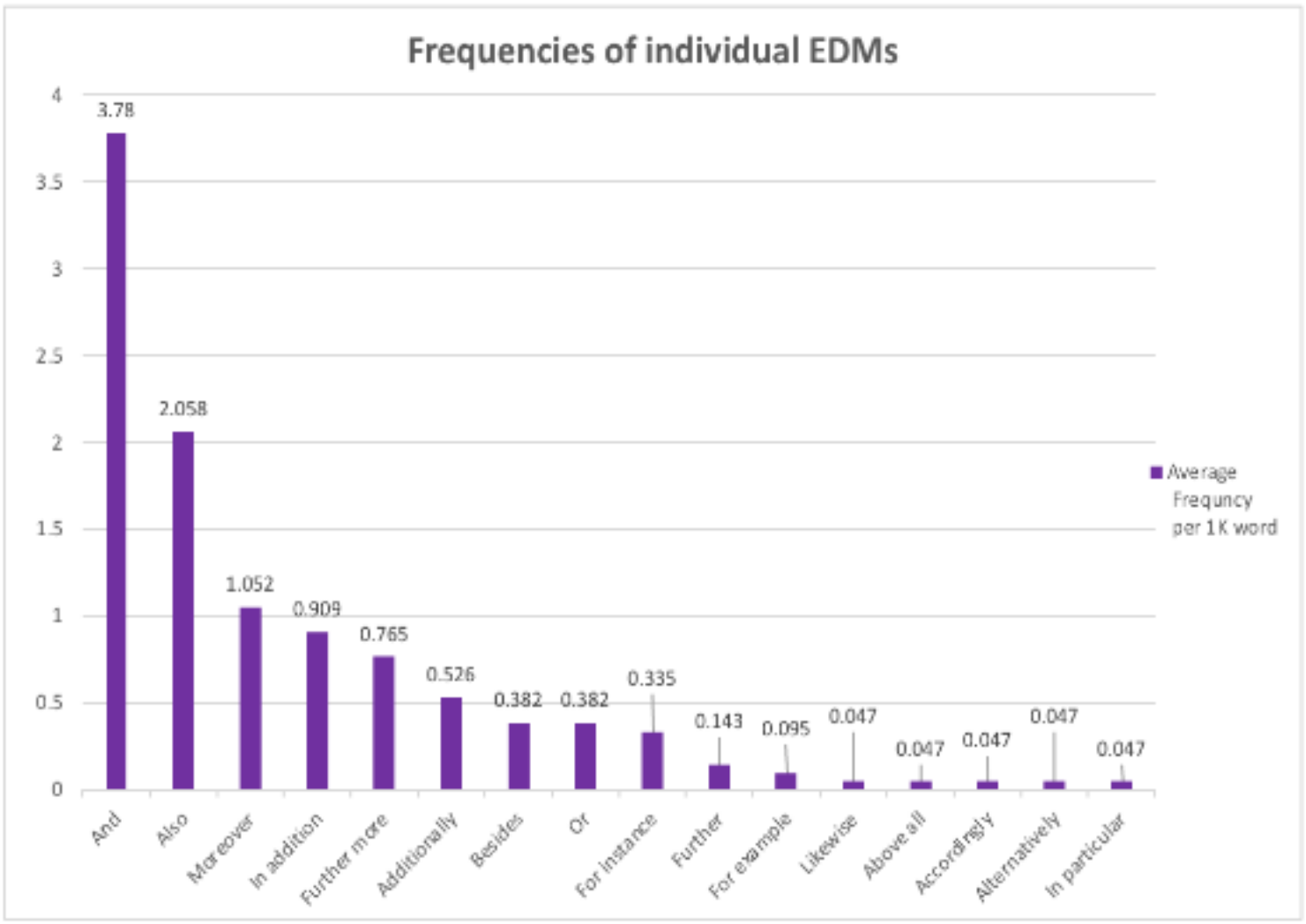


Figure 5: frequencies of individual EDMs

As illustrated in the above table and figure , 16 EDMs were used in the current corpus and the frequencies of use vary from one DM to another. Again, "And" and " Also" appear first and second with a percentage of 34,34% for "And " and 18,69 % for "Also" . Next, "Moreover" is the third EDM in the list with a F of 22 number of occurrences and 1,052 times per 1000 words and a percentage of 9,56%. The next EDM is "in addition", it was used 19 times (8,26%) with an AF of 0,909. Then, "furthermore " and "additionally" appear to be the fifth and sixth EDMs in the ordered list with a F of 16 times(6,95%) for "furthermore" and 11 times(4,78%) for "additionally". The remaining EDMs ("besides", or," for instance", "further", "for example", "likewise", "above all", "accordingly", "alternatively", and "in particular" were used less than 10 times with an AF that ranges from 0,328 to 0,047 and a percentage that is less than 4% . Some EDMs have the same frequency of use :

•"Besides" , "for instance" and "or": used 8 times and 0,382 per 1000 words .

•"above all", "accordingly", alternatively", and "in particular": only one time with an AF of 0,047 per 1000 words.

Table 6 : frequencies of CDMs

CDMs	F	%	AF per1000 words
However	29	29.89	1.387
But	22	22.68	1.052
Whereas	9	9.27	0.430
On the other hand	8	8.24	0.382
Yet	8	8.24	0.382
Despite the	6	6.18	0.287
Though	4	4.12	0.191
Although	4	4.12	0.191
Rather	3	3.09	0.143
Nevertheless	2	2.06	0.095
Nonetheless	2	2.06	0.095
Still	1	1.03	0.047
Despite the	1	1.03	0.047
Total	97	100	/

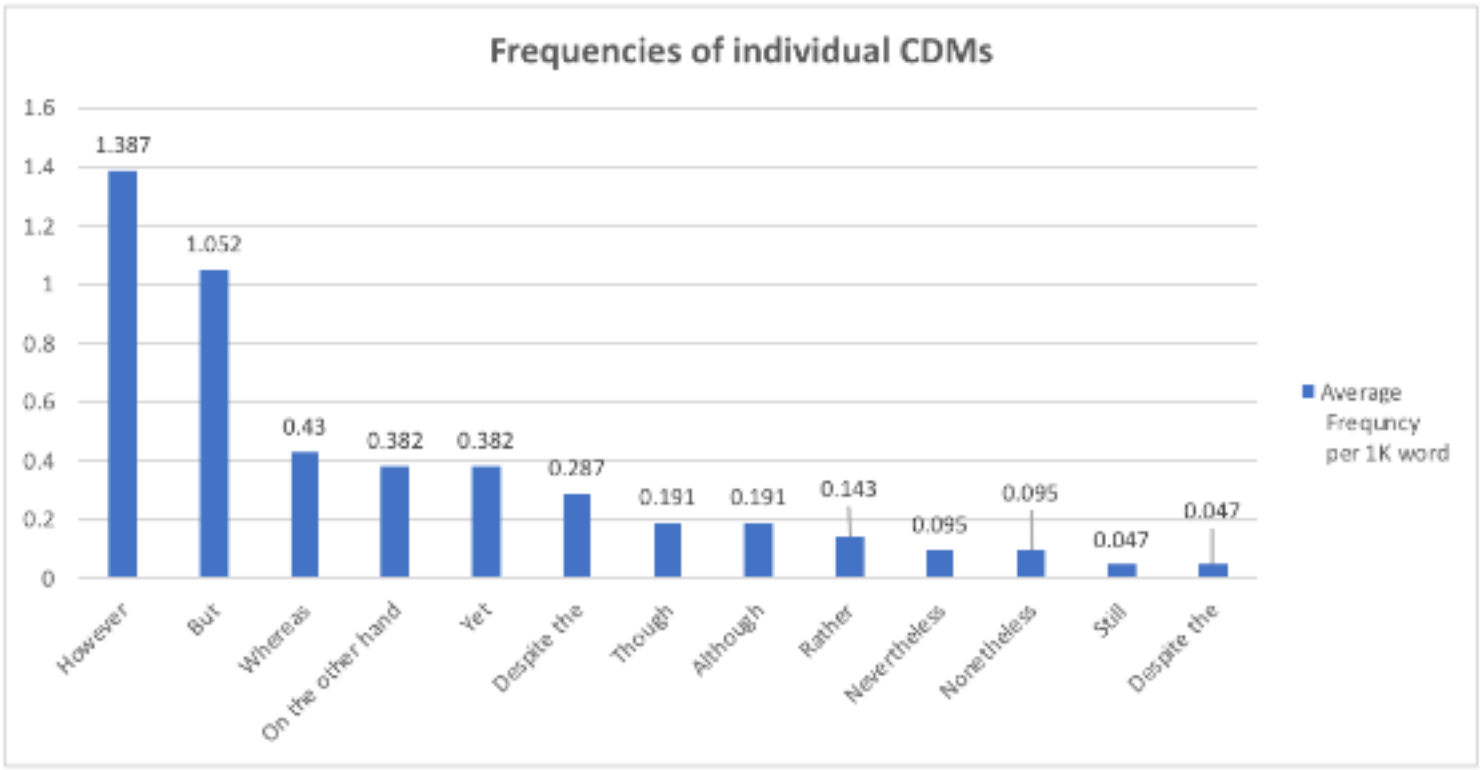


Figure 6: frequencies of individual CDMs

Data from table 6 and figure 6 reveal that 13 CDMs were used with a variety of frequencies. The most used CDMs is "however"(29 times, 29,89%, and with an AF of 1,387) . "but" appears the second CDM in terms of frequency of use. It was used 22 times (22,68%) with an AF of 1,052. The remaining CDMs were used less than 10 times (and less than 10%) and their AF ranges from 0,430 to 0,047." Whereas" is the third most used CDM followed by both "yet" and "on the other hand" (9 times for "whereas" and 8 times for the other two CDMs). "despite the" appeared only six times and "rather" three time.

Some CDMs were used with an equal frequency:

•"On the other hand "and "yet" as seen before.

•"though" and "although": used four times (4,12%)with a percentage of 4,12% and an AF of 0,191 per 1000 words.

•"nevertheless" and "nonetheless" : used two times(2,06%) with a percentage of 2,06% and an AF of 0,095 per 1000 words .

•"Still" and "despite that": only one time (1,03%) with a percentage of 1,03 and a rate of 0,047 times per 1000 words and they are considered as the least used CDMs.

Table 7: Frequencies of individual IDMs

IDMs	F	%	AF per 1000 word
Because	35	40.69	1.675
Thus	17	19.76	0.813
So	13	15.11	0.622
Therefore	8	9.30	0.382
Hence	5	5.81	0.239
Consequently	2	2.32	0.095
As a result of that	1	1.16	0.047
For that reason	1	1.16	0.047
Accordingly	1	1.16	0.047
Then	1	1.16	0.047
In this case	1	1.16	0.047
As a result	1	1.16	0.047
Total	86	100	/

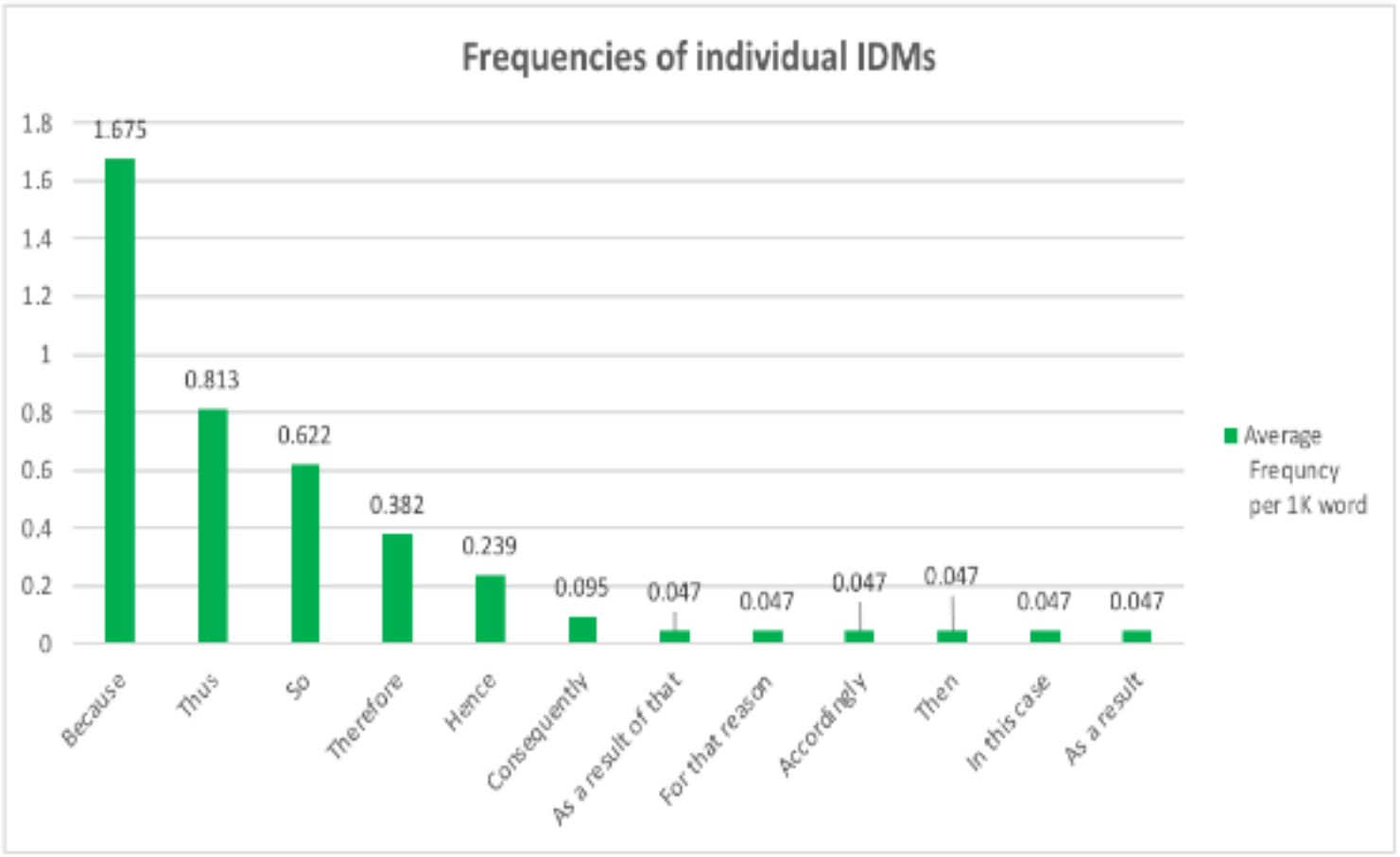


Figure 7: frequencies of individual IDMs

Observing both table 7 and figure 7, 12 IDMs are used in this corpus. "because" appears the first. It is the most used IDM with an AF of 1,675 per1000 words and a percentage of 40,69 %. Then, "thus" appears the second with a F of 17 times of use , percentage of 19,76, and an AF of 0,813 per 1000 words. "so" is the third IDM as it was used 13 times with a percentage of 15,11% and an AF of 0,622. The fourth IDM is "therefore" which was used 8 times with a percentage of 9,30% and an AF of 0,382 per 1000 words. Next , we have "hence" and "consequently" as the fifth and sixth IDMs in the list (hence: 5 times, 5,81%, AF= 0,0239 and "consequently: 2 times, 2,32%, AF=0,095 per 1000 words). The six remaining IDMs ("as a result of that", "for that reason", "accordingly", "then"," in this case", "as a result") were used only one time with an AF of 0,047 and a percentage of 1,16%.

1.2.The accuracy of DMs :

DMs class	Correct use		Incorrect use	
	F	%	F	%
CDMs	77	79.39	20	20.61
IDMs	74	80.05	12	19.95
EDMs	219	95.21	11	4.78

Table 8: The accuracy of DMs

The obtained data from the qualitative analysis of the use of the 413 DMs found in this corpus are displayed in the table above. Table 8 shows that the most accurate use of DMs is found within the class of EDMs. It indicates that EDMS class is the most correctly used class of DMs with a rate of 95,21% . The percentage (%) of mistakes committed within this category did not exceed 4,78%. The next class in terms of accuracy is IDMs. The % of their correct use is 80,05 % whereas the incorrect use has the rate of 19,95 % . Finally, CDMs have the least accurate use. The table indicates a % of only 79,39 % of correct use and more than 20 % of mistakes.

Note: the incorrect use covers several issues such as punctuation , grammar, meaning and arrangement of ideas.

1.3.Some examples of mistakes found in the corpus:

1.The following sentence includes a misuse of two DMs which are "and" and "so" :

“Second year LMD students 'answers supported our assumptions of this study where we assume that different activities and strategies teachers use can overcome the students speaking difficulties ***and so*** promote their speaking proficiency” DS 26

Fraser (2015) studied the possibilities of any combinations of DMs and he concluded that combinations between primary DMs (and, but, so) are impossible. So, this sentence is wrong and instead they might say " and thus " which seems exactly what the researchers wanted to say. In fact , accepted combinations were found such as "but rather" and " but still".

2.Master students sometimes forget the comma. Let's consider the following example: “So writing a dissertation is not an easy task” DS5

Another problem is adding a non- necessary comma before because. This DMs should be integrated in the sentence instead of being separated by a comma:

“Most students considered that authentic materials is the best way to enhance their reading skill ***, because*** they help them in understanding better” DS 20

•Examples of mistakes while using CDMs :

Here, problems of meaning and arrangement of ideas appeared because of the use of two separate CDMs in a single sentence . Another issue is related to compound complex sentences; it was noted that some researchers have problems with this type of sentences as they tend to use punctuation marks in a wrong way. Let's observe this

sentence:

1. “ ***, however;*** the majority of students (83 %) believed that writing is a difficult task because of many reasons” DS1. Here, the comma and the semicolon are inversely

used and many examples contain the same mistake.

2.The following sentence is an example of the use of two CDMs in one sentence :

"***Though*** the government made Tamazight as an official language ***, however,*** it seems that Algerians think that it is difficult to implement Tamazight in different fields". DS25. It seems unnecessary to use two CDMs in this sentence.

3. Another problem is related to capitalization and forgetting the semicolon or the comma:

"***However*** a few of the respondents consider personality is a choice and each learner has his own way of learning". DS6. They may also add unnecessary comma:

"***Despite the fact,*** they are implementing different approaches to raise students awareness of the aspect of communication" DS15.

2.Discusion and interpretation of the main findings:

The current study tries to answer three research questions . To answer them, data was gathered from a corpus that is consisted of 30 DSs . The third research question's focus is on the use of DMs and how is the accuracy of DMs in Master two students ' written production in the DS. This analysis can shed the light on the quality of their production and their writing skill too in terms of mastery of the language , coherence, cohesion, and arrangement of ideas.

Results from the quantitative analysis show that the most dominant and used class of DMs is the class of EDMs. Such results may indicate several issues such as:

1.Master students are less familiar with other classes of DMs because they are less

exposed to them in and outside the classroom. Thus, they overuse EDMs and use less CDMs and IDMs.

2. The interference of the mother tongue or the positive transfer. It seems evident that EDMs in English have nearly the same uses and functions of Arabic EDMs mainly "And" and "also".

3. They overuse some EDMs particularly the discourse marker " and "(79 times) as it is used to connect sentences and elaborate ideas. This overuse negatively influences cohesion, coherence , and sometimes even the interpretation of their written production due to the fact that they tend to write large and long sentences which are connected by several" ands".

4. The previous idea suggests that they tend to write their ideas directly without trying to reformulate or refine them and that is why they prefer using "and " rather than other items.

These findings correspond with a number of previous studies (Martinez, 2004;Yunus&Haris ,2014; Aysu, 2014; Alahmed&kirimzi, 2020) which found that the most used class is EDMs.

Yet, this result is different from some previous results .The difference of results may be easily explained by indicating that the current corpus consists DSs whereas other previous studies dealt with different types of texts such as essays (Surjuwati , 2018; Al-khazraji, 2019) and backgrounds of research proposals (Jalilifar, 2018). Furthermore, most of these previous attempts to study DMs did not have the same aims, did not adopt the same classification of DMs (some studies adopted Fraser's (2006) classification while others used either 1990 or 2009 versions or even other

taxonomies and classifications) , and did not reach similar results too. Therefore, the nature of the DS makes it logical to use a lot of EDMs to arrange the explanations and interpretations of results and to elaborate the deduced points. Moreover, EDMs are needed to list and link between similar conclusions. Concerning CDMs , they were used less because they seem more appropriate in the part of the literature review to express contrast, differences, and debates among scholars. "However" and " but " were overused within this category. This can be explained by the fact these two DMs represent an easy and simple way of expressing contrast.

Concerning IDMs , contrary to what was expected , they were the least used class of DMs even though they are necessary to make conclusions and to interpret the findings. In this case, being certain about the interpretation of such observation is not easy and a little bit problematic because it may hint to several things and many possibilities can be suggested:

•It can hint to a lack of knowledge concerning how to write and organise a DS and how to interpret the findings .This very suggestion can be strengthened by two observations that were noted by the researchers of the present study. In fact, while selecting the DSs few DSsexceeded one page and most of the DSs are so brief and that is why the total number of words or tokens of the whole corpus seems less than it should be (only 20894) even though 30 DSs were compiled to this corpus. In addition, some researchers tend to list the results only with no explanations or elaborations as if it is hard on them to interpret in paragraphs.

• Their limited knowledge about them. This conclusion can be observed in the underuse of some IDMs (as a result of that, for that reason , accordingly, then, in this case, and as a result) which were used only one time in the whole corpus.

•The use of IDMs and CDMs was characterized by few varieties of DMs within each class (13 CDMs and 12 IDMs).

A considerable number of DMs in regards to Fraser's (2009) classification are absent in the current corpus. This may hint to the fact that master two students avoid using some DMs either because they ignore them or because they ignore how to use them. So, they simply avoid them to decrease possibilities of making errors. The following list contains all the absent DMs in the corpus: Similarly, more to the point, more accurately, more importantly, equally, rather, otherwise, after all, analogously, by the same token, correspondingly, on top of it all, in other words, more precisely.

2.1.Interpretation of the accuracy part:

The qualitative analysis revealed that EDMs received the least percentage of incorrect use or mistakes and several reasons may be behind such results:

•The interference of the mother tongue (Arabic) can be a good reason. English EDMs exist with nearly the same use in Arabic in addition to the easy use of such items in English.

•Master two linguistics students ' rich background knowledge concerning the use of this type of DMs mainly "and" and "in addition" as they have been exposed to those lexical items in their early stages of learning this language .So, the learning experience and exposure to input can be another explanation of this part of the findings.

The found mistakes within the class of EDMs may happen because of typing

mistakes, stress and rushing to finish the work under time pressure. On the other hand, IDMs was the second class in term of accuracy. Yet, the % of correct use was not as high as that of EDMs and the % of incorrect use was more than 19%. In fact, IDMs are so essential in the DS as they are used to make connections and to build and structure the general conclusions and results of the whole study. Such value of misuse (12 mistakes out of 80) strengthens the possibility that Master students face the problem of a weak ability of writing properly and well organizing the DS particularly as this section is nearly the pure outcome of their own ideas and inferences. IDMs were used less than but slightly more correctly than CDMs.

2.2.Summary of the main findings:

The analysis of the corpus reveals the following results:

•All three classes of DMs are used in the corpus

•The dominant type of DMs is EDMs and the most used DM is "And" and the least used class is IDMs.

•The most accurate use is found in the use of EDMs and the most errors happened in the use of CDMs.

•DMs' use was characterised by a the overuse of several DMs including "and", "also" , "because", "however", "but", "moreover" and other DMs which appeared to be the ten most used DMs in the current corpus. Moreover, a lot of DMs were underused; they were used only once in the whole corpus.

•The number of DMs types in each class did not exceed 16 types. This indicates that master two students do not use a variety of DMs but rather they keep using some

DMs which is probably because of their limited vocabulary and limited Knowledge about the functions and uses of some DMs or because they are not exposed to them.

•Because of the previously mentioned result, a considerable number of DMs in Fraser' s classification where not found in the corpus.

3.Pedagogical Implications:

The findings of this study can be of a help for the development of Master linguistics academic level and writing skill.

•It highlights the importance of DMs in the quality of academic papers.

•It raises their awareness to the necessity of enriching their vocabulary and background knowledge about DMs and of reading to improve their writing skill.

•Teachers need to give more importance to DMs in order to help the students overcome the problems they face in their writing.

•Corrective feedback on students' use of DMs (either orally or written in their assignments) is also a suitable way to help students improve their writing generally and the use of DMs particularly.

•Teachers can develop appropriate material to enhance students' knowledge about the different uses and functions of DMs. For instance, they can distribute lists of DMs which express contrast, similarity, or order.

•A very researchable question can be :is there an influence of the DMs of the mother tongue on the production of the discourse markers of the foreign language.

•Corpus linguistics can be an effective tool that allows teachers to create the lessons

which suit the students' needs and also helps them to discover why some errors occurred.

4.Limitations of the study:

The researchers of this study encountered some obstacles:

•Only 30 DSs were analysed because of the time restrictions.

•The researchers did not rely on the AntConc solely but rather on a qualitative analysis of the context of DMs use to identify whether the items extracted by the program are functioning as DMs or not and to analyse the accuracy too,

•The process was efforts consuming because calculations were done manually

5.Recommendations for further research:

The findings of the present research leads the researches to suggest the following recommendations :

• This study recommends conducting a more specific and detailed analysis to the use of each class of DMs separately for a better understanding of the functions of the DMs employed by Master students. •Time was insufficient neither to have a deep and detailed analysis of each class separately nor to study each DM. So, the researchers suggest conducting a mixed method analysis of some individual markers.

•Another way of studying DMs can be done through changing the nature of texts analysed . Future researchers in this university can analyse essays or paragraphs writing of first year students to evaluate their level. Moreover, they can analyse

academic spoken discourse genres such as lectures and student presentations.

•Conducting comparative studies can be a good idea too. Examples include the use of DMs by males and females or between two different corpuses. Suchstudies can show whether there is a difference between males and females production of DMs.It can also compare between DMs use in two corpuses such as written and spoken corpuses, students writing Vs experts writing, literature review- DSs, or general introduction Vs DSs.

Conclusion :

Chapter two was concerned with the practical side of this research. It included the methodological procedures. It described data collection and data analysis procedures. The main findings were displayed in a form of tables and figures.The findings of this research revealed that the dominant class of DMs is EDMs with "And" as the most used DM in the whole corpus. On the other hand, CDMs and IDMs were used less. Further, it was found that EDMs are more correctly than the other two classes of DMs and that CDMs received the least percentage of correct use. Some DMs under the classification adopted were overused, underused, or not used at all in the current study. Finally, some pedagogical implications and recommendations were listed basing on the findings .

General conclusion:

Academic writing requires conforming to several standards and producing a high quality of writing in terms of mastery of the language, cohesion, and logical order and transitions of ideas . In fact, cohesion and coherence are fundamental while writing a dissertation and employing DMs is one of the effective ways of achieving

these two features of good writing. Moreover, DMs play a significant role in the DS as they facilitate the processes of interpreting the results and constructing and organising the conclusions.

This research is a corpus-based study that analyses the use of DMs in 30 DSs written by master two linguistics' studentsat the university of M' sila (English department). It adopted Fraser's (2009) classification of DMs and relied on a concordance tool (AntConc) to extract the items and to analyse their use quantitatively and qualitatively. This study aims to investigate how these linguistic items are used in order to evaluate the writing skill of master two linguistics students. To fulfil the aim of the research, three research questions were raised concerning how DMs are used , their frequencies and the most dominant class, and the accuracy of their use. Then, the first chapter reviewed the previous literature related to the topic. It was divided into three sections which discussed the main concepts and the variables of this research including corpora, DA, academic writing, and DMs. It attempts to explain the relationship between some of the concepts, On the other hand, the second chapter dealt with the methodology adopted to collect and analyse data. The findings were displayed, analysed ,and interpreted. The results of this study indicated that the class of EDMs is the most dominant class of DMs in the current corpus and that the most used DM is "And" while CDMs and IDMs are used less. Furthermore, the fact that class of IDMs is the least used class led the researchers to infer some conclusions concerning the quality of writing in the DSs and concerning students' ability to construct and develop coherent DSs. Other suggestions were listed to explain the overuse , underuse, and absence of some DMs. Basing on the results, significant pedagogical implications for both teachers and

students are provided . This study can shed the light on the importance of DMs and the problems that students face while using them and while writing the DS in general. Moreover, some recommendations and suggestions for future researchers were listed mainly concerning focusing on one type or a limited number of individual DMs in the analysis to obtain a better understanding of how students use them, what problems they face, and to what extent they are aware of the various functions and used of these lexical items. Finally, the researchers identified the limitations and obstacles they faced while accomplishing the work .

Hopefully , the current study would contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning processes . Furthermore, the findings obtained from the qualitative and quantitative analyses may contribute to the debate on the topic of DMs and their functions.

Résumé:

La rédaction d'une thèse peut être l'un des défis les plus difficiles dans le contexte académique. L'utilisation de techniques de cohésion et en particulier de marqueurs du discours peut améliorer la qualité de l'écriture et faciliter l'interprétation des idées par les lecteurs. L'étude actuelle, vise à étudier l'utilisation de marqueurs de discours dans les sections de discussion d'étudiants en Master II, spécialité linguistique, département d'anglais, Université de M'sila ,et d'identifier les classes dominantes de ces élémentslinguistiques afin de pouvoir évaluer l'exactitude de leur utilisation. Cette rechercheest corpus- fondé qui analyse 30 sections de discussion quantitativement et qualitativement. Elle adopte la classification des marqueurs de discours de Fraser (2009). Les données ont été recueillies à l'aide d'un outil de concordance (AntConc 3.2.4.2020). Les résultants montrent que les trois classes sont utilisées et que la classe des marqueurs de discours élaboration est la classe dominante tandis que la classe des marqueurs de discours inferential est la moins utilisée. L'analyse qualitative révèle que les marqueurs de discours élaborés sont utilisés plus correctement que les autres classes et que les marqueurs de discours contrasté sont reçu le moins de pourcentage d'utilisation correcte. En outre, les questions liées à la sur utilisation, à la sous-utilisation, à l'utilisation de quelques types et à l'utilisation abusive ont caractérise l'utilisation de marqueurs de discours. Cette étude sensibilise les étudiants à l'importance de ces éléments lexical pour améliorer la qualité de leurs productions écrites. Cette recherche commande de mener une étude détaillée de chaque classe de marqueurs de discours ou de marqueurs de discours individuels pour comprendre les problèmes aux que lls sont

confrontés les élèves lors de l'utilisation de ces éléments lexicaux.

Mots-clés : marqueurs de discours, écriture académique, cohérence, corpus, Mémoire de master, étudiants en master II.

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