AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS BY TURKISH EFL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING EXAMS AND ITS RELATION WITH THEIR EXAM SCORES

SİNEM TÜRKYILMAZ

MA Thesis

Eskişehir, 2023

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS BY TURKISH EFL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING EXAMS AND ITS RELATION WITH THEIR EXAM SCORES

Sinem TÜRKYILMAZ

MA THESIS

Department of Foreign Language Education

MA in English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gül DURMUŞOĞLU KÖSE

Eskişehir

Anadolu University

Graduate School of Educational Sciences

March, 2023

JÜRİ VE ENSTİTÜ ONAYI

ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS BY TURKISH EFL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING EXAMS AND ITS RELATION WITH THEIR EXAM SCORES

Sinem TÜRKYILMAZ

Department of Foreign Language Education
MA Programme in English Language Teaching
Anadolu University, Graduate School of Educational Sciences, March 2023

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gül DURMUŞOĞLU KÖSE

Discourse markers with their functions contributing to the coherence and cohesion of discourse and indicating cooperation between interlocutors and co-construction of the conversation play an important role in pragmatics of a language. Although there have been some studies focusing on the use of discourse markers by non-native English speakers from different language backgrounds such as Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese, there is a limited amount of research on the use of these markers by Turkish learners of English. This study aims to examine the variety of discourse markers used by Turkish EFL learners and investigate the relationship between students' use of discourse markers and their speaking exam scores and proficiency level. The results revealed a wide variety of discourse markers used by the participants, and students heavily depend on textual discourse markers and used them significantly more frequently than interpersonal markers, however, no correlation was found between Turkish EFL students' use of discourse markers and their speaking exam scores and overall proficiency exam scores. The findings suggest several implications for teaching practitioners and curriculum designers regarding the development of pragmatic competence of learners in EFL contexts.

Key words: Discourse markers, Turkish learners of English, Spoken discourse, Speaking exam, Proficiency level

ÖZET

TÜRK ÖĞRENCİLERİN İNGİLİZCE KONUŞMA SINAVLARINDA SÖYLEM BELİRLEYİCİ KULLANIMLARINA VE BUNUN SINAV PUANLARI İLE İLİŞKİSİNE İLİŞKİN KEŞFEDİCİ BİR ÇALIŞMA

Sinem TÜRKYILMAZ

Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
İngilizce Öğretmenliği Yüksek Lisans Programı
Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Mart 2023

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Gül DURMUŞOĞLU KÖSE

Söylemin tutarlılığına katkıda bulunan ve muhataplar arasındaki iş birliğini ve konuşmanın ortak inşasını gösteren işlevleriyle söylem belirteçleri, bir dilin edim biliminde önemli bir rol oynar. İspanyolca, Çince ve Japonca gibi farklı anadillere sahip konuşmacıların söylem belirteci kullanımına odaklanan bazı araştırmalar olmasına rağmen, bu belirteçlerin İngilizce öğrenen Türklerin bu belirteçleri kullanımına dair sınırlı sayıda araştırma vardır. Bu çalışma, Türk öğrencilerin kullandığı söylem belirteçlerinin çeşitliliğini ve söylem belirteci kullanımı ile konuşma sınavı puanları ve İngilizce düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma sonuçları, katılımcıların çok çeşitli söylem belirteçleri kullandığını fakat metinsel söylem belirteçlerine ağırlık verdiğini ve bunları kişilerarası söylem belirteçlerinden önemli ölçüde daha sık kullandıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır ancak Türk öğrencilerin söylem belirteci kullanımı ile konuşma sınavı puanları ve genel İngilizce yeterlilik sınavı puanları arasında bir ilişki bulunamamıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, İngilizce öğrenenlerin edim bilimsel yetkinliğinin gelişimi ile ilgili öğretim uygulayıcıları ve müfredat tasarımcıları için çeşitli çıkarımlar önermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Söylem belirteçleri, İngilizce öğrenen Türk öğrenciler, Sözlü anlatım, Konuşma sınavı, Yeterlilik düzeyi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Gül Durmuşoğlu Köse for her invaluable guidance and continuous support throughout the last two years. Without her academic and emotional support and warm encouragement, this study would not have been completed. I am also grateful to the members of the thesis defense committee Dr. Gonca Subaşı and Dr. İlknur Yüksel for their careful reading, constructive feedback, and thoughtful comments.

I would also like to thank the administrator of the Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages Prof. Dr. Ümit Deniz Turan and all members of the school board for giving me permission to access to the school's archive of examinations.

Last but not least I would like to thank my beloved parents Ayşe and Recep Türkyılmaz, my brother, and my precious friends, who have always been there for me, for their constant emotional and moral support.

ETİK İLKE VE KURALARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ

Bu tezin bana ait, özgün bir çalışma olduğunu; çalışmamın hazırlık, veri toplama, analiz ve bilgilerin sunumu olmak üzere tüm aşamalarında bilimsel etik ilke ve kurallara uygun davrandığımı; bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilen tüm veri ve bilgiler için kaynak gösterdiğimi ve bu kaynaklara kaynakçada yer verdiğimi; bu çalışmanın Anadolu Üniversitesi tarafından kullanılan "bilimsel intihal tespit programı"yla tarandığını ve hiçbir şekilde "intihal içermediğini" beyan ederim. Herhangi bir zamanda, çalışmamla ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda, ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçları kabul ettiğimi bildiririm.

Sinem Türkyılmaz

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

I hereby truthfully declare that this thesis is an original work prepared by me; that I have behaved in accordance with the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with "scientific plagiarism detection program" used by Anadolu University, and that "it does not have any plagiarism" whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

Sinem Türkyılmaz

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **III**

ÖZET ..... **IV**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **V**

ETİK İLKE VE KURALARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ ..... **VI**

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES ..... **VII**

CONTENTS ..... **VIII**

THE LIST OF TABLES ..... **XI**

THE LIST OF FIGURES ..... **XII**

THE LIST OF ABBREVATIONS ..... **XIII**

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1 Statement of the Problem **3**

1.2 Purpose of the Study **5**

1.3 Significance of the Study **6**

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW **9**

2.1 Terminology of discourse markers **9**

2.2 History and Definition of Discourse Markers **11**

2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Discourse Markers **14**

2.3.1 Coherence-based approach 14

2.3.2 Grammatical-pragmatic approach 16

2.3.3 Relevance-theoretic approach 17

2.4 Properties of Discourse Markers **19**

2.4.1. Orality 19

2.4.3. Connectivity 20

2.4.4. Non-truth conditionality 21

2.4.5. Multifunctionality 21

2.4.6. Multi-categoriality 22

2.4.7. Syntactic position 23

2.4.8. Meaning.....24
2.4.9 Prosody.....24
2.5 Classifications of Discourse Markers 25
2.6 Discourse Markers and Second and Foreign Language Education 28
CHAPTER 3
3. METHODOLOGY 34
3.1 Setting.....34
3.2 Participants.....35
3.3 Data Collection 36
3.3.1 The proficiency exam.....36
3.4 Data analysis.....38
3.4.1 Identification of discourse markers.....40
3.4.2 Functional analysis of the discourse markers.....44
CHAPTER 4
4. RESULTS 46
4.1 Identification of Discourse Markers and Calculations of Their Frequencies 46
4.2 The Relationship Between Turkish Learners' Use of Discourse Markers and Their English Speaking Exam Scores 50
4.3 The Relationship Between Turkish Learners' Use of Discourse Markers and Their English Proficiency.....54
4.4 The comparison of the total number of the interpersonal and textual discourse markers used by the students.....57
CHAPTER 5
5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS.....59
5.1 Discussion.....59
5.1.1 The total variety of discourse markers used by the participants and frequencies of them.....59
5.1.2 The relationship between students' use of discourse markers and their speaking exam scores.....65
5.1.3 The relationship between students' use of discourse markers and their overall English proficiency.....67

5.1.4 The comparison of the total number of interpersonal and textual discourse markers used by the students.....68
5.2 Conclusion.....**70**
5.3 Pedagogical Implications.....**70**
5.4 Limitations.....**74**
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research.....**77**
REFERENCES.....**80**
APPENDICES
CURRICULUM VITAE

THE LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Frequencies and percentages of the discourse markers used by the students 46

Table 4.2. Frequencies and percentages of the discourse markers used by the students 48

Table 4.3. Normality scores of the data sets of speaking scores and normalised frequency of DMs.....50

Table 4.4. Results of the correlation test between the speaking exam scores and the use of discourse markers.....50

Table 4.5. Results of the correlation test between the speaking scores and the types of discourse markers.....51

Table 4.6. Normality scores of the data sets of overall proficiency scores and normalised frequency of DMs.....54

Table 4.7. Results of the correlation test between the overall proficiency exam scores and the use of discourse markers 55

Table 4.8. Normality test scores of the data sets of normalised frequency of interpersonal and textual DMs used by the students.....55

Table 4.9. Results of the correlation test between the overall proficiency exam scores and the types of discourse markers 56

Table 4.10. Results of the paired sample t-test for the two types of discourse markers used by the students.....57

THE LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Discourse particles versus discourse markers 10

Figure 2.2. A discourse model 15

THE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUSFL : Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages

DM : Discourse marker

L1 : First language

L2 : Second language

EFL : English as a foreign language

ESL : English as a second language

ELT : English Language Teaching

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

We all engage in conversations in different contexts on a daily basis, we express ourselves, build relationships and establish our own identity and our own place in society through a series of conversations. As Tannen (1981) notes "the satisfaction of having communicated successfully goes beyond the pleasure of being understood in the narrow sense. It is a ratification of one's place in the world and one's way of being human" (p. 145). However, for language learners, it is rather challenging to achieve communicative competence, engage in successful and effective communication and express themselves in a foreign language without causing any misunderstanding and misjudgement of their personality or opinions, and thus experience this satisfaction. To maintain an effective interaction, language learners do not only need a good command of the grammar of the target language but also an understanding of sociolinguistic clues and the mastery of certain pragmatic strategies. As Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) state, "it is thus not sufficient to learn just the grammatical forms of the language. There is a relationship between the forms of language and how they are used to express meanings and intentions in appropriate ways" (p. 161). Discourse analysis helps both native speakers and language learners to understand the relationship between form and meaning.

Discourse analysis is a method of studying language which attempts to determine the connection between form and function in any language by analysing the written or spoken discourse. Schiffrin (1987) explains the main assumptions that she bases for discourse analysis as follows:

> "Language always occurs in a context.
>
> Language is context sensitive.
>
> Language is always communicative.
>
> Language is designed for communication." (p. 3)

McCarthy (1991) also asserts that discourse analysis can be applied to all genres of oral and written discourse from daily informal conversations to speeches taking place in formal contexts and academic or literary pieces of writing and it has concerns beyond the form. Brown and Yule (1983) pinpoint that the aim of a discourse analyst is not to

investigate language forms merely from a transactional approach but adopt a more pragmatic approach focusing on interactional and interpersonal functions of language in the social context it is used, and although discourse analysis is in some measure related to syntax and semantics, it is mainly connected with pragmatics.

Discourse analysis is of capital importance not only for the field of linguistics but also for the field of foreign language teaching. The analysis of written and spoken language can be beneficial for foreign language teaching practitioners because it provides authentic examples in terms of the usage of grammatical and lexical structures, but more importantly, the studies of discourse analysis can help learners gain sociolinguistic competence by providing them with the understanding of appropriate language use in different contexts since it is mainly associated with pragmatic analysis of authentic spoken and written data. McCarthy (1991) also acknowledges the contribution of discourse analysis to foreign language education and states that "discourse analysis can supply data where intuition cannot be expected to encompass the rich detail and patterning of natural talk" (p. 145). Sociolinguistic competence is of vital significance in non-native speakers' language development. While speakers are engaged in a spoken conversation with their interlocutors to convey their messages in an intended way, they have to take several elements such as the degree of formality, their relationship with the interlocutors, and the social context into consideration. Discourse markers are one of the means that help speakers to make necessary linguistic and social adjustments and communicate their intended message in a coherent and socially appropriate way.

Discourse markers are lexical items which facilitate the interpretation of texts and utterances by contributing to their cohesion and coherence. Schiffrin (1987) defines discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (p. 31) and perceives the analysis of discourse markers as "a part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence -how speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meanings, and actions to make overall sense out of what is said" (p. 49). While describing the nature of discourse markers and their functions in spoken discourse, Crystal (1988) refers to them as "the oil which helps us perform the complex task of spontaneous speech production and interaction smoothly and efficiently". Despite their lack of grammatical ascription and semantic meaning and their peripheral place in syntax, discourse markers have an

indispensable place in pragmatics. Although discourse markers can be described as lexically, grammatically, and syntactically elusive, they have textual and interpersonal functions such as helping the organisation of text and utterances in spoken and written discourse and helping speakers express and share emotions (Brinton, 1996). Müller (2005) also acknowledges discourse markers' contribution to the pragmatic meaning of any piece of discourse and their crucial role in speakers' development of pragmatic competence.

The general aim of foreign language education is to enable learners to develop communicative competence (Rivers, 1973) and one of the main constituents of communicative competence is pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990, p. 87). Discourse markers have a significant part in spoken and written discourse and thus play a prominent role in the development of pragmatic competence by contributing to the coherence and fluency of speakers' utterances. Starting from the mid-eighties, considerable interest has emerged in the identification and classification of discourse markers and their functions in discourse and early studies on this topic focused on the use of discourse markers by native speakers (Aijmer, 2002; Fraser, 1988; Schourup, 1985; Schiffrin, 1987); however, in the last two decades, there has been considerable and increasing interest in non-native speakers' use of discourse markers (Aşık, 2012; Hellerman &Vergun, 2007; Liao, 2009; Mei, 2012; Polat, 2011; Romero Trillo, 2002). Studies focusing on non-native use of discourse markers in English revealed that learners use discourse markers less frequently than native speakers (Aşık, 2012; Hellerman &Vergun, 2007) and they use discourse markers in more limited functions compared to native speakers of English (Fung & Carter, 2007; Öztürk, 2018) and also for different purposes in conversations than native speakers (House 2009). Learners also master certain types of discourse markers better while they underuse other types that serve other functions in discourse (Hays, 1992; Shimada, 2014). Moreover, Müller (2005) states that based on the assumption that discourse markers have a pivotal place in native speaker discourse, they should also be a part of second and foreign language teaching curricula. Therefore, the study of discourse markers used by non-native speakers is significant since it contributes to the literature in the field of interlanguage pragmatics and is beneficial to second and foreign language teaching and learning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Pragmatic competence is one of the core elements that constitute communicative competence (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p. 69), and in terms of second language acquisition, it is defined as producing and understanding language which is appropriate and sufficient to the L2 social and cultural contexts of discourse (Kecskes, 2014, p. 64). Learners' failure in producing utterances suitable and accurate in terms of the socio-cultural contexts of communication might lead to misunderstandings and identification of the speakers as impolite or inconsiderate (Thomas, 1983). On the other hand, as Boxer (1993) points out non-native speakers' awareness of sociolinguistic clues and pragmatic strategies employed by native speakers of the target language can facilitate meaningful interaction and help to build a rapport with native speakers which in return leads to increased social interaction and thus improvement in the language development of non-native speakers. Romero Trillo (2002) advocates that learners' linguistic development follows two tracks, formal and pragmatic tracks. The formal track refers to the acquisition of the necessary grammatical and semantic rules and structures while the pragmatic track corresponds to the development of appropriate and accurate use of language in various social contexts. While simultaneous development of both tracks is possible for native speakers thanks to the constant exposure to the language in a natural environment, it cannot be achieved easily in a classroom environment. In his study, Romero Trillo (2002) focuses on the use of discourse markers since they have a pivotal place in pragmatic competence and concludes that proficient adult non-native speakers' restricted use of discourse markers might stem from the fact that discourse markers are rather overlooked in foreign language teaching curriculum, and their deficiency in the use of these markers can lead to communication breakdowns. Sankoff et al. (1997) claim that fluent speakers' superior mastery of discourse markers compared to the less fluent group stems from their exposure to the target language in a natural environment starting from the early ages since discourse markers are not one of the subjects on which explicit instruction and special emphasis are given as a part of second language teaching curricula of schools. Müller (2005) also states that discourse markers are linguistic features which mainly belong to spoken discourse and are employed more in informal contexts, thus acquisition of these features also requires exposure to these informal contexts.

Furthermore, Startvik (1980) underlines the importance of mastering the use of discourse markers and asserts that although grammatical mistakes are more obvious and easier to point and correct, mistakes in the use of discourse markers can go unnoticed and can be interpreted as a reflection of the attitude or behaviour of the speaker, thus result in more serious communication problems. Incorrect use of discourse markers is one of the reasons that cause native speakers to perceive non-native speakers' speeches as incoherent and disorganized, which leads to misjudgements about speakers' language proficiency, personality, and professional competence (Tyler et al., 1988). However, appropriate and accurate use of discourse markers in an extended variety of functions in a nativelike sense is seen as a characteristic of a fluent and competent L2 speaker (Olynyk et al., 1987; Sankoff et. al., 1997). Williams (1992) also notes that explicit use of discourse markers can be more crucial for non-native speakers for compensation of their lack of proficiency in the target language. Hence, Hellerman and Vergun (2007) pinpoint the need for research on learners' comprehension and utilization of discourse-pragmatic features of language in the field of second language acquisition. Huang (2011) also notes that despite their frequent utilization in spoken discourse, their neglected appearance in classroom instruction and teaching curricula makes discourse markers significant features of language for discourse analysis.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Since discourse markers play a crucial role in the maintenance of a fluent and coherent interaction among native speakers of English, it is of utmost importance to examine the extent non-native speakers achieve mastery in the use of them. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the use of discourse markers by Turkish speakers of English in an unplanned spoken discourse. University students enrolled in an intensive English programme at a state university called preparatory class before starting their studies in their departments were selected as the representative sample and recordings of the speaking exam that they need to take before they start their departments were chosen as the source of the data. Therefore, this study aims to identify the discourse markers that Turkish learners of English used in speaking exams and to determine the relationship between discourse marker use and speaking exam scores. The study also aims to investigate

the relationship between students' use of discourse markers and their overall English proficiency and compare the participants' use of two types of discourse markers functioning in textual and interpersonal domains. The study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are the discourse markers used by Turkish learners of English in English speaking exams?

RQ 2: What are the frequencies of discourse markers used by Turkish learners of English in English speaking exams?

RQ 3: Is there a relationship between Turkish EFL learners' use of discourse markers and their English speaking exam scores?

RQ3a: Is there a relationship between Turkish EFL learners' use of textual discourse markers and their English speaking exam scores?

RQ3b: Is there a relationship between Turkish learners' use of interpersonal discourse markers and their English speaking exam scores?

RQ 4: Is there a relationship between Turkish EFL learners' use of discourse markers and their English proficiency?

RQ4a: Is there a relationship between Turkish EFL learners' use of textual discourse markers and their English proficiency?

RQ4b: Is there a relationship between Turkish EFL learners' use of discourse markers and their English proficiency?

RQ 5: Is there a significant difference between the total number of textual and interpersonal discourse markers employed by Turkish learners of English?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The present study is significant since it contributes to the growing body of research on non-native speakers' use of discourse markers in spoken English discourse by filling the gap in the literature regarding the analysis and examination of discourse markers employed by Turkish learners of English, and thus it allows for a better understanding of interlanguage pragmatics of Turkish learners of English in terms of spoken discourse. Compilation of a corpus of spoken discourse is more onerous and demanding in terms of time and effort since it requires manual transcription and typing of the recordings of spoken

data compared to collecting data of written forms of language, which has led to a deficient amount of research on spoken forms of learner language (Huang, 2011), indicating a further need for exploration of learners' spoken discourse.

Even though there is a growing interest in the non-native use of discourse markers in the field of foreign language education, there is a dearth of research focusing on the use of discourse markers by Turkish speakers of English. Aşık's (2012) study on Turkish learners' use of discourse markers was conducted with the data compiled from in-class presentations of senior students majoring in English language teaching, and her overall analysis of discourse markers used by Turkish ELT students and its comparison with a native corpus revealed that Turkish students' use of discourse markers was rather limited in terms of frequency and variety when compared to the native speakers' use. In his notable study, Öztürk (2018), on the other hand, focused on the five most frequently used discourse markers in English and examined the relationship between Turkish students' use of discourse markers and their perceived speaking fluency. A comparison of the corpus of informal interviews with fifty English language teaching students and a corresponding corpus of interviews with native English university students showed that Turkish students used more textual discourse markers, but fewer interpersonal discourse markers compared to English students and there is a positive relationship between Turkish speakers' use of discourse markers and their perceived fluency. Another corpus study conducted by Şahin Kızıl (2021) focusing on three frequently used discourse markers also indicated the underuse of discourse markers by Turkish speakers compared to native speakers. Since discourse markers are features of unplanned speeches and informal conversations more than planned speeches (Müller, 2005; Olynyk et al. 1987), it is of utmost importance to analyse non-native speakers' use of discourse markers in an unplanned spoken discourse. Although a positive relationship between non-native speakers' fluency and their use of discourse markers has been proved in several studies (Olynyk et al. 1987; Öztürk, 2018; Sankoff et al. 1997), the relationship between the use of discourse markers and overall evaluation of learners' speaking performance has not been addressed sufficiently in the literature yet. Therefore, this study is important since it was conducted with Turkish freshman university students who were enrolled in an intensive English programme before starting their studies in various departments rather than students majoring in English

language teaching, and the data came from an unplanned spoken discourse, a speaking exam, and it also analysed the relationship between students' use of discourse markers and their speaking exam scores and their overall English proficiency.

Furthermore, analysis of the discourse markers employed by Turkish speakers of English can provide an insight into the development of interlanguage pragmatics, which in turn can conduce to significant implications for classroom teaching and the design of foreign language instruction. Identification of learners' deficiencies in specific types and uses of discourse markers might facilitate the development of an enhanced input and classroom discourse and the creation of contexts and activities in which students have opportunities to be exposed to discourse markers and utilize them, which in turn, in a broader sense, help to foster intercultural communication of Turkish learners. As Boxer (1993) stated, before implications from studies on native speakers' speech are implemented in language teaching and learning environments, analyses of specific groups of learners' development of certain linguistic features are required. Besides, the analysis of discourse markers employed by learners in a speaking exam and the relationship between their use and formal assessment scores can raise awareness for language testers and practitioners and lead to an improvement in language testing, especially the assessment of speaking skill.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the related literature. First, an overview of the terminology and definitions of discourse markers is given, and the main approaches adopted in the studies of discourse markers are explained. Secondly, general characteristics attributed to discourse markers and different classifications are reviewed. Lastly, a general review of the studies carried out in the field of second and foreign language learning, focusing on non-native speakers' use of markers is presented.

2.1 Terminology of discourse markers

Starting from early studies on the phenomenon of discourse markers in the 1980s, there is a profusion of terms employed to refer to these linguistic entities. The terms assigned to label these linguistic units include but are not limited to "cue phrase" (Knott & Dale 1994); "phatic connective" (Bazzanella, 1990), "pragmatic connective" (Lamiroy, 1994), "discourse connective" (Blakemore 1992), "discourse particle" (Aijmer, 2002; Schourup, 1985; Fischer, 2006), "pragmatic particle" (Östman, 1982), "pragmatic marker" (Anderson, 2001; Brinton, 1996), and "discourse marker" (Blakemore, 2002; Fuller, 2003a; Fung and Carter, 2007; Müller, 2005; Romero Trillo 2002; Schiffrin, 1987). While certain terms such as connective and cue phrase were abandoned in the course of history since they were too narrow or inaccurate to cover all of the functions of these items, some others gained prevalence in the field. The most frequently used terms seem to be "discourse particle", "discourse marker", and "pragmatic marker". Fischer (2006) argues that if we assume that these linguistic items have functions more than marking and they help create meaning, the term discourse marker is not a fully adequate term to address all the functions of the items under discussion. He summarizes the discussion related to the terminology in a figure (see figure 2.1).

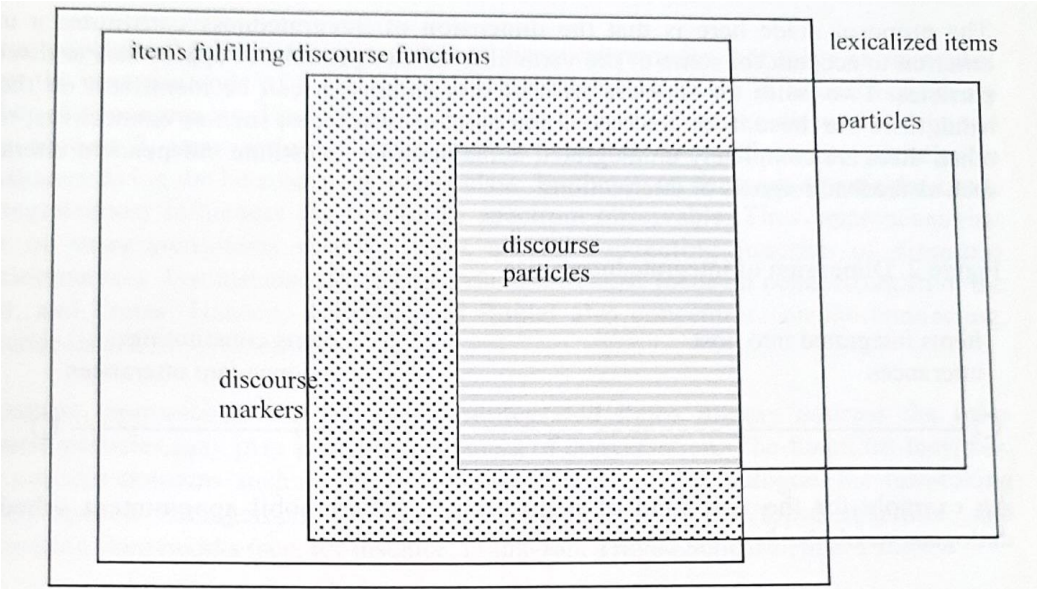


Figure 2.1. *Discourse particles versus discourse markers (Fischler, 2006, p.7)*

However, the term particle is also used to refer to a certain grammatical category in some languages (Brinton, 1996, p. 30), and it is generally preferred by scholars who work on languages other than English (Müller, 2005, p. 5), but the linguistic items under discussion cannot form a unified syntactic or grammatical category, and they consist of a group of items coming from a variety of word classes such as conjunctions, adverbials, and interjections. Although the term discourse marker is generally employed as a more comprehensive term to encompass a large variety of linguistic items (Schffrinn, 1987), Fraser (1990) used the term as a sub-category of pragmatic markers. However, the term discourse marker used by Fraser (1990) and Schiffrin (1987) does not refer to the same set of items. On the other hand, the term pragmatic marker can be assumed to be used to emphasize the importance of the place of the linguistic items in the study of pragmatics rather than their syntactic and semantic meanings and functions. Andersen (2001) points out that "the label 'pragmatic' is meant to suggest a relatively low degree of lexical specificity and a high degree of context-sensitivity" (p. 40). Moreover, although Schourup (1985) used the term discourse particle in his early work, later he preferred "discourse marker" by stating that "the term DM used in this review is merely the most popular of a host of competing terms used with partially overlapping reference" (Schourup, 1999, p.

228). Aijmer (2002) also employed the term discourse particle in one of his studies while switching to pragmatic marker in a later study (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2004).

Therefore, as it can be concluded from the fact that scholars can also change the term that they use from one study to another in time and the same term employed by different scholars might not refer to the same group of items, there is no consensus on either the terminology to be employed or the group of linguistic items to be referred to under that terminology. Diversity in the terminology stems from the scope of the term, the range of markers referred to, and the diversity in the functions of these markers. Discourse marker is the term adopted in this study since as Schourup (1999) pointed out it is the most commonly used term in the literature and "discourse" is a term broad enough to meet the aims of this study, and the term "marker" can cover both single word items and phrases (Brinton, 1996, pp. 29-30).

2.2 History and Definition of Discourse Markers

In the last three decades, there has been an increasing interest in research on discourse markers in the areas of both linguistics and second and foreign language teaching. As the plethora of terms to represent these linguistic items indicates, there is not a consensus on the definition or classification of these linguistic items. While discourse markers are identified by some researchers as a "fuzzy concept" which there is no agreement either on the term for or the definition of (Jucker and Ziv, 1998, p.2), it is also pointed out that "discourse markers are as pervasive in language as they are difficult to define for the linguist" (Taboada, 2006, p. 568). Scholars suggested various definitions based on different approaches. Although he did not name or define them specifically, one of the earliest references to discourse markers was made by Levinson (1983) who acknowledges the significance of these linguistic units for further study in terms of their pragmatic value within discourse.

> […] there are many words and phrases in English, and no doubt most languages, that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. Examples are utterance-initial usages of *but, therefore, in conclusion, to the contrary, still, however, anyway, well, besides, actually, all in all, so, after all,* and so on. ... what they seem to do is indicate, often in very complex ways, just how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse. (pp. 87-88)

While Schourup (1985) identifies them as evincives and emphasizes their role in demonstrating speakers' thoughts about the message that is conveyed in the conversation, Chaudron and Richards (1986) classify them as micro markers whose main function is to give speakers time to organize and plan the next segment of the talk, with a relatively less contribution to the overall discourse and listeners' comprehension.

The first comprehensive analysis of discourse markers was conducted from the coherence perspective by Schiffrin (1987) who defines discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (p. 31). The reason for her preference to use "units of talk" is the generality of the term compared to more specific units such as sentence, speech act, or proposition since discourse markers cannot only be defined based on propositional terms and syntactic structure, and their position in a sentence is rather flexible and not syntactically constrained. Schiffrin's (1987) definition of discourse markers comprises both anaphoric and cataphoric references and also linkage to the discourse as a whole rather than just adjacent units of talk with the inclusion of the terms "bracketing and sequential dependence". While Redeker (1991) restricts the category of discourse markers and the context that they provide coherence for and suggests the term discourse operator along with the definition of "a word or phrase – for instance, a conjunction, adverbial, comment clause, interjection – that is uttered with the primary function of bringing to the listener's attention a particular kind of linkage of the upcoming utterance with the immediate discourse context" (p. 1168), Lenk (1998a) views coherence from a broader perspective and points out that discourse markers can be utilized to link to the previously discussed topics or topics prior to the deviation from the actual conversation or subjects to be followed and to signal reference to the information not relevant to the immediate conversation but from general world knowledge.

From the grammatical-pragmatic perspective, Fraser (1990, 1996) classifies discourse markers as the hyponym of pragmatic markers and describes them as linguistic expressions which signal a relationship between the message that the discourse segment that contains the discourse marker conveys and the segment preceding the discourse marker. Contrary to Schiffrinn (1987) who also points out the possibility of account of paralinguistic features and non-verbal gestures as discourse markers, Fraser (1999) describes discourse markers as only linguistic features. Fraser (1999) also notes that discourse markers do not form a

specific syntactic category but comprise linguistic expressions from the syntactic categories of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases. They have a conceptual core meaning which can be enhanced by the interpretation of the context, and they do not affect the meaning of the units adjacent to them. Moreover, from a broader perspective, including a wider range of words and phrases, Carter and McCarthy (2006) also view discourse markers as a sub-category of pragmatic markers, along with stance markers, hedges, and interjections, describe them as linguistic expressions that help speakers to organize the discourse linking its segments together and to express their attitudes according to the formality of the social context.

Blakemore (1987, 1992) analyses discourse markers based on the relevance theory framework. She prefers the term "discourse connective" and defines them as "expressions that constrain the interpretation of the utterances that contain them by virtue of the inferential connections they express" (Blakemore 1987, p. 105). Blakemore (1992) employs a broader definition for the term "context" and includes interlocutors' world knowledge and beliefs and presumptions rather than the adjacent units of language in the immediate discourse and immediate environment where the conversation takes place (p.18). The role of context is not necessarily to establish coherence relations. The hearer's search for relevance to constrain the context establishes the coherence in the discourse. The right context for the interpretation of an utterance is constructed in the course of the hearer's interpretation of the utterance rather than in advance of the utterance (pp. 21-22). Within the framework of relevance theory, Andersen (2001) also views discourse markers as linguistic units that lead hearers to the intended and the most relevant interpretation of an utterance, focusing on the pragmatic functions of discourse markers. He identifies them as pragmatic markers and defines them as "a class of short, recurrent linguistic items that generally have little lexical import but serve significant pragmatic functions in conversation" (2001, p.39).

Besides these three approaches, other researchers also provided definitions in their recent studies based on these approaches or the results derived from the corpora they utilized. Buysee (2012) defines discourse markers as "optional linguistic items that fulfil an indexical function, in that they connect an utterance to its co-text and/or the context" (p. 1764) by emphasizing their non-propositional meaning which makes them semantically and

syntactically optional and their indexical potential for textual and interpersonal functions. Fung and Carter (2007) also acknowledge their feature of non-truth conditionality and describe them as indexical expressions that signal the changes in the flow of a conversation, indicate a coherent link between the utterances in the discourse, and denote speakers' attitudes, feelings and social stance. Furthermore, Aijmer (2002) emphasizes the indexicality feature of discourse markers which links them to the context as a whole and its constituents, the interlocutors, and their attitudes and emotions.

Therefore, as pointed out by Lenk (1998b, p. 37), "not one single definition of the term discourse marker remained undisputed or unaltered by other researchers for their purposes". The abundance of the terms and definitions is an expected consequence of increasing focus on the subject in the last decades and the subject's association with different areas of discourse studies. Researchers proposed various terms and definitions to reflect a particular theoretical stance and delimit or include certain linguistic items or functions (Schourup, 1999, p. 242).

2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Discourse Markers

2.3.1 Coherence-based approach

In her meticulous analysis of discourse markers, Schiffrin (1987) establishes that the main function of discourse markers is to add coherence to the discourse. She states that discourse markers "provide contextual coordinates for utterances: they index an utterance to the local contexts in which utterances are produced and in which they are to be interpreted" (p. 326). She developed a model of discourse which focuses on local coherence and which can also be expanded to global coherence. In this model of coherence, she places discourse markers in five planes of talk which are information state, participation framework, ideational structure, action structure, and exchange structure. Information state has a cognitive focus rather than a pragmatic or social focus, and it has a relation with interlocutors' cognitive capacities. Knowledge which refers to what interlocutors in a conversation know and meta-knowledge which refers to what each interlocutor knows about the others' knowledge are organized and managed in this state. During the course of a conversation, there is a constant change in the information state as the interlocutors'

expectations about each other knowledge evolve. For successful communication, not all the knowledge that interlocutors have but only relevant parts of knowledge to the particular conversation are activated. Participation framework involves speakers and hearers' relation to each other, their roles, and their relation to the particular conversation, "to their propositions acts and turns" (p. 27). Ideational structure refers to the propositional content of the conversation or as Schiffrin calls ideas. Semantic relationships between units, organizations of topics and sub-topics, and functional relations between ideas constitute ideational structures. Action structure is related to how speech acts are ordered in a discourse. Occurrences of actions are not random, but they have a pattern, and they are predictable. Exchange structure is mainly related to taking turns in a conversation, holding, relinquishing, and gaining the floor again. Although they are realized by the use of language, exchange and action structures are non-linguistic structures. Moreover, a discourse marker can operate more than one plane of talk at the same time, and Schiffrin (1987) perceives markers as "having a function within the overall integration of discourse as a system" (p. 313). The organization of the discourse model and relations between the planes of talk are summarized and demonstrated in the following figure by Schiffrin (1987).

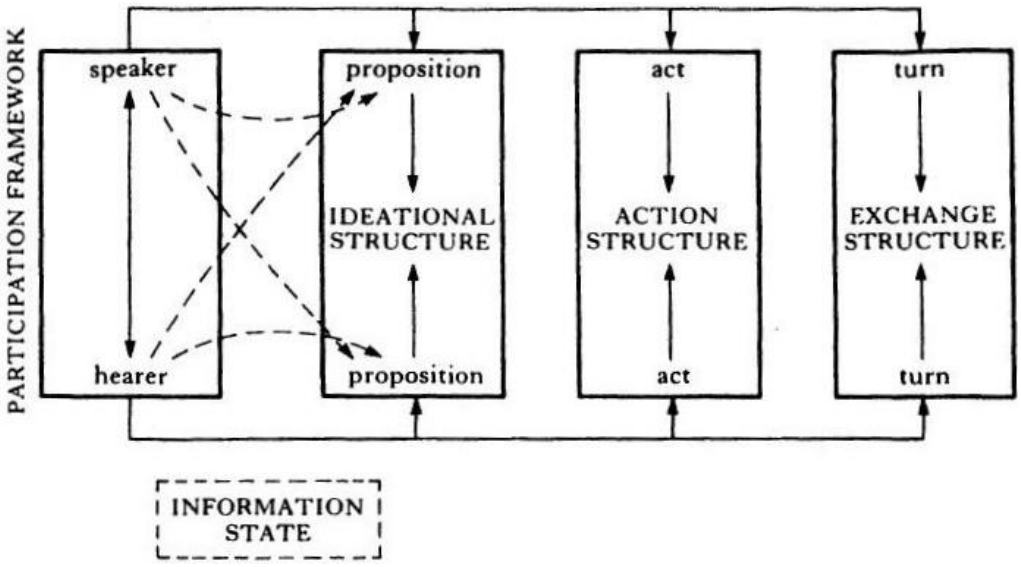


Figure 2.2. *A discourse model (Schiffrin, 1987, p.25)*

To summarize, according to Schiffrin, successful communication and comprehension are achieved through the interlocutors' constant search for relationships between the segments of the discourse, and discourse markers have a crucial role in marking these relationships both at local and global levels. They are characterized by their indexicality function, and the indexicality of discourse markers does not only refer to the relationship between the adjacent segments of discourse but also the relationship between the speakers and hearers since Schiffrin also takes the socio-functional dimension of discourse markers into consideration.

2.3.2 Grammatical-pragmatic approach

Bruce Fraser's grammatical pragmatic approach views discourse markers as a pragmatic class consisting of only linguistic items, unlike Schiffrin who defines them "as members of a functional class of verbal (and nonverbal) devices which provide contextual coordinates for ongoing talk" (Schiffrin, 1987, p. 41). Fraser as a pragmatician who classifies discourse markers as a sub-category of pragmatic markers, a rather broad category also emphasizes the coherence that they add to the discourse. Fraser (1999) notes that discourse markers are characterized by a core meaning which the context facilitates the enhancement of and a main function which signals the relationship that the speaker intends to form between the utterance that hosts the discourse marker and the previous discourse segment. In his earlier works, Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999) points out that discourse markers do not have conceptual meaning, but only procedural meaning; however, in his later work, he notes that almost all discourse markers have both conceptual and procedural meaning (Fraser, 2006). He mainly rejects the notion that a linguistic item can have only one type of meaning and argues that it can have both conceptual and procedural meaning at the same time. Fraser notes that discourse markers do not constitute a unified grammatical or syntactic category, but they form a heterogenous group consisting of adverbs, prepositional phrases, conjunctions, and even some idioms (1999, p. 943). Fraser (1999) excludes expressions such as "frankly", and "stupidly" and classifies them under the category of commentary pragmatic markers since they do not refer to a relationship between adjacent units of discourse but just indicate a commentary message that is related to the upcoming utterance. He also puts forward that vocatives such as "wow" and "oh" do not hold the

status of a discourse marker since they do not signal a relationship between the parts of discourse, but they rather convey a separate message.

Therefore, although he emphasizes the relationship between discourse segments like Schiffrin (1987), he adopts a more pragmatic and comprehensive perspective, creates a taxonomy of pragmatic markers, and analyses different types of pragmatic markers including discourse markers from a grammatical-pragmatic approach.

2.3.3 Relevance-theoretic approach

Diane Blakemore (1987, 1992, 2002) discusses the concept of discourse markers within the framework of relevance theory which was first developed by Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber in 1985. Working within this theoretical framework, she focuses on how the messages in a discourse are cognitively processed and what roles discourse markers play in this process. Blakemore (1987) defines discourse markers as "expressions that constrain the interpretation of the utterances that contain them by virtue of the inferential connections they express" (p. 105).

According to Blakemore, relevance is the key to the fundamental understanding of communication. The principle of relevance is that "every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its optimal relevance" within the relevance theory which proposes a cost-benefit model of communication (Sperber & Wilson, 1996, p.158). Interaction is an ongoing process and both hearers and speakers contribute to the cognitive environment by adding new assumptions during the course of interaction. In order to interpret an utterance, the hearer needs to work out the presumption that the speaker expresses with the particular utterance and also needs to incorporate this assumption into the pre-existing assumptions in the particular context. That is, it is a process that requires the hearer to figure out the contextual effects of a new message in relation to the pre-existing context. The main aim of interlocutors in a conversation is to achieve the most contextual effects with the minimum cognitive effort. In order to achieve effective and successful communication, a speaker's role is to help the hearer by providing the greatest contextual effects so that the hearer can reach and process them within the existing context with a minimum cognitive cost. Within this theory, discourse markers are one of the devices that interlocutors resort to in order to achieve effective communication since they

provide instruction to the hearers on the interpretation of the utterances so that they can reach the intended meaning with less cognitive effort.

Blakemore (1992) notes that the function of discourse markers is not restricted to indicating how the utterance that hosts the discourse marker is relevant by constraining the interpretation of the preceding utterance. Discourse markers can also introduce contextual implications. For instance, in the following example, "so" introduces a contextual implication that the speaker made based on his/her observation of the hearer's actions.

"(Hearer (who is driving) makes a left turn)

So we're not going past the university (then/after all)" (Blakemore, 1992, p.139).

Moreover, discourse markers can also be utilized to strengthen or deny the existing assumptions. In the dialogue below, the proposition that "besides" introduces strengthens the assumption that the hearer derives from the first part of the utterance. In the second example, the utterance that "however" introduces, denies the assumption that could be derived from the preceding utterance.

"A: Will you make pancakes?

B: I haven't really got time tonight. Besides, there's no milk." (Blakemore, 1992, p.140).

"David is here. However, you can't see him." (Blakemore, 1992, p. 141).

Furthermore, Blakemore (1987) pinpoints that discourse markers should be regarded as items owning procedural meanings since they do not encode conceptual representations. They encode instructions on the interpretation of the utterances constituting the discourse. She notes that although some discourse markers such as "in other words", and "seriously" have some sort of similar conceptual representations to their adverbial counterparts, they still should be regarded as procedural linguistic items since they have the feature of non-truth conditionality and do not change the propositional content of the utterances (Blakemore, 2002, pp. 83-84).

Blakemore argues that coherence in discourse is achieved through the hearer's search for relevance during the inferential processes and rejects that there is a direct relationship between discourse connectivity and discourse markers. She points out that discourse markers facilitate the hearer's inferential process by providing clues for the direction that the hearer searches for relevance between the particular utterance and the

existing context and decrease the hearer's cognitive effort in this process. In conclusion, on contrary to other researchers who analyse discourse markers from a coherence-based approach or a pragmatic approach, Blakemore focuses on cognitive processes underlying human communication and provides a cognitive account of discourse markers.

2.4 Properties of Discourse Markers

Although the terms and definitions that apply to discourse markers vary greatly, there are certain common characteristics that are identified by scholars in the studies of discourse markers. While some features are seen as descriptive, certain features are perceived as diagnostic for discourse markers. On the other hand, not all descriptive or diagnostic features are shared by every linguistic item that is identified as a discourse marker. Thus, Jucker and Ziv (1998) proposed a continuum where "elements demonstrating more of the criterial features may be taken to be more prototypical members of the class of discourse markers and those showing fewer characteristic properties may be considered more peripheral" (pp. 2-3).

The key properties attributed to discourse markers in the most prominent studies in the literature are summarized below.

2.4.1. Orality

One of the stylistic features attributed to discourse markers is orality although it is not generally included in the necessary criteria to define a discourse marker. Discourse markers are seen as a feature of oral discourse rather than written discourse since the nature of oral discourse is more informal, and it is characterized by a lack of time for planning (Brinton, 1996; Müller, 2005). Louwerse and Mitchell (2003) point out that discourse markers are more frequently employed in spoken discourse, especially in dialogues rather than monologues. While certain discourse markers tend to exist more in oral discourse, some others might be utilized more in written discourse (Fraser, 1990, p. 389). The meaning and formality of a discourse marker can affect its status as a predominantly written or oral marker, and it can constrain its register since it may denote a high or low degree of utterance planning and assumption of intimacy or fellowship between the hearer and speaker (Schourup, 1999, p. 234).

2.4.2. Optionality

Optionality is one of the defining features of discourse markers which is stated by several researchers (Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999; Fraser, 1988; Brinton, 1996; Yang, 2006). They are syntactically and semantically optional, and the omission of a discourse marker does not change the meanings of adjacent utterances and break the sentence structure. Fraser (1988) views this "privilege of absence" as a distinctive feature of discourse markers and points out that "absence of the discourse marker does not render a sentence ungrammatical and/or unintelligible" (p. 22). Schiffrin (1987) focuses on the non-obligatory status of discourse markers and states that "any utterance preceded by a marker may also have occurred without that marker" (p. 64). However, discourse markers are not just decorations or fillers since "they are also commonly said to 'reinforce', or 'clue' the interpretation intended by the speaker" (Schourup, 1999, p. 232). Although the omission of discourse markers does not change the meanings of utterances, it makes the intended interpretation more difficult to achieve for the hearers since they are left without the clues to help them interpret the utterances in the most relevant way (Fraser, 1988, 1990; Fung & Carter, 2007).

2.4.3. Connectivity

Connectivity is the feature that serves as a diagnostic for the class of discourse markers, and that is included most notably and prevalently in their definitions (Schourup, 1999). Schiffrin (1987) defines discourse markers as "members of a functional class of verbal (and non-verbal) devices which provide contextual coordinates for ongoing talk" (p. 41). Fraser (1999) states that they are utilized to signal the relationship between the utterance that hosts the discourse marker and the prior part of the discourse. Hansen (1997) also underlines that although the discourse segment where the discourse marker occurs might change from a short intonational phrase to a chunk of utterances, the main function of a discourse marker is to connect the utterance in which it exists to the adjacent co-text or the context as a whole. While some researchers analyse the feature of connectivity as a linkage between adjacent linguistic units (Fraser, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987), others focus on the connection to outside the context from a broader perspective (Blakemore, 1992; Lenk,

1998a). Blakemore (1987) points out that “so” in the following example which is uttered after seeing someone with a lot of parcels does not provide a connection to any linguistic utterance, but it signals a reference to the observation that the speaker has had.

“So you’ve spent all your money” (p. 86).

Hence, discourse markers lead hearers on how to interpret an utterance by linking the different parts of discourse together coherently or by making connections to inside or outside the context in a broader sense.

2.4.4. Non-truth conditionality

Discourse markers do not affect the truth condition of an utterance where they occur. It means that they do not contribute to the propositional content of the utterances. It is widely accepted as one of the criteria that is utilized to describe discourse markers along with connectivity and optionality (Schourup, 1999, p. 232). Blakemore (1992) underlines that discourse markers such as but, moreover, after all do not impinge on the truth conditions of the utterances where they occur, and they just instruct hearers on the intended interpretation of the utterances without any contribution to the propositional content. She demonstrates in the following examples that the truth conditions of the two sentences are the same, however, discourse markers instruct hearers on how to process the content in the intended way. If the hearers are unable to interpret the sentences in the expected way, this does not show that the speakers convey any false information with these sentences.

“(a) Nigel is home but he's busy,

(b) Nigel is home and he is busy.” (p. 146)

Hansen (1997) refers to non-truth conditionality as a “part of the definition of markers” (p.161) while Fuller (2003a) perceives it as one basic criterion that helps identify whether a linguistic item holds the status of a discourse marker. Furthermore, non-truth-conditionality is a semantic feature of discourse markers that “distinguishes them from uses of ‘content’ words, including manner adverbial uses of words like *sadly*” (Schourup, 1999, p. 232).

2.4.5. Multifunctionality

Although it is a feature prominently attributed to discourse markers by various researchers (Brinton, 1990, 1996; Redeker, 1990; Schiffrin, 1987; Siepmann, 2005), Jucker and Ziv (1998) point out that it is not a characteristic that can be utilized as a diagnostic feature for discourse markers, but that can be defined as a descriptive feature. Schiffrin (1987) notes that discourse markers can function at local and global levels of discourse simultaneously, and none of the functions can be identified as predominant. Redeker (1990) pinpoints that taking multifunctionality into consideration, hearers' comprehension of the intended meaning in a particular context and ontogenetic and diachronic relations between the ideational and pragmatic functions of discourse markers require further investigation. Moreover, Aijmer (2002) acknowledges that discourse markers have a distinctive feature compared to ordinary words with a wide range of pragmatic values that are attributed to them, and their multifunctionality is not troublesome for native speakers, but it could be a challenging feature for non-native speakers to master.

2.4.6. Multi-categoriality

Discourse markers cannot form a single unified syntactic class or a grammatical category and they are a group of linguistic expressions drawn from various syntactic categories (Brinton, 1996; Fraser, 1990, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999). Schourup (1999) states that the status of discourse markers "is independent of syntactic categorization" (p. 234). Fraser (1999) notes that there are three sources of discourse markers, conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases (p. 943). Different scholars delimited or enhanced these categories and the items belonging to them. For instance, although she did not include them in her detailed analysis, Schiffrin (1987) also suggested that "the perception verbs, see, look and listen", "the location deictics, here and there", "the interjections, gosh and boy", "meta-talk such as this is the point, what I mean is", "the quantifier phrases, anyway, anyhow, whatever" (pp. 327-328), could be regarded as additional categories of discourse markers. Siepmann (2005) underlines that "the set of discourse markers as a whole does not constitute a word class in the traditional sense of the term because there are no morphosyntactic or semantic criteria allowing us to delimit it" (p. 44). Therefore, discourse markers may vary in a great range in terms of their lexical category and functions and constitute a heterogeneous group of linguistic items.

2.4.7. Syntactic position

Although it is not seen as a diagnostic criterion, it is commonly accepted that discourse markers tend to occur in utterance or turn initial positions (Fraser, 1990, 1996; Schiffrin, 1987). Utterance initial position is also reasonable when the functions of discourse markers are taken into consideration since they put constraints on the interpretation of utterances, it is logical and preferable to limit the interpretation and the context and lead the hearer to the intended message from the onset of the utterance (Schourup, 1999). Fung and Carter (2007) also note that discourse markers can serve many functions as the points of departure "such as marking boundaries of talk ("okay" in (a)), topic initiation ("now" in (a)), topic closure or as an attention seeking signal ("right" in (b))" (p. 412).

"(a) Okay so you're all happy with it. Now how are we going to approach it would anyone like to suggest a method?

(b) Right. That's the end of that little section." (p.412)

Aijmer (2002) also pinpoints that for some specific markers, occurrence in utterance-initial position can also help determine whether a linguistic unit carries the status of a discourse marker. For instance, "now" cannot function as a discourse marker in sentence-medial positions (p. 29).

On the other hand, the flexibility of the position of certain discourse markers is also acknowledged among researchers. Although most of the discourse markers can occur in utterance-initial position, and they generally occur in this position, certain discourse markers can occur in utterance-medial or utterance-final positions. Schourup (1999) points out that discourse markers in the following sentences function in the same way.

"(After all/Now/however), corgis are an intelligent breed.

Corgis, (after all/now/however), are an intelligent breed" (p. 233)

Fung and Carter (2007) also note that although it is less frequent, certain discourse markers can occur in the utterance-final position functioning as comments, additional thoughts, or clarifications as demonstrated in the following examples.

"She likes all kinds of music classical er mainly classical I think."

"He sends his regards actually." (p. 413)

2.4.8. Meaning

Lack of propositional meaning is another feature generally attributed to discourse markers, and they are mostly recognised as linguistic items with pragmatic meaning in discourse. It is a feature that goes along with their non-truth conditionality and optionality; that is, they do not have a conceptual meaning; thus, they do not affect the truth condition of utterances where they occur and can be omitted from the discourse without causing any major changes in the meaning and structure of utterances. Schiffrin (1987) notes that discourse markers have little vague or no propositional meaning. Wilson and Sperber (1993) state their stand on the meaning of discourse markers by clarifying the distinction between conceptual and procedural meaning: “If 'now' or 'well' encodes a proposition, why can it not be brought to consciousness? …. Conceptual representations can be brought to consciousness: procedures cannot. We have direct access neither to grammatical computations nor to the inferential computations used in comprehension” (p. 14). Moreover, Erman (2001) also pinpoints their deficiency in meaning and functional contribution to the discourse as a characteristic of discourse markers. In his early account of discourse markers, Fraser (1990) also emphasizes that discourse markers have procedural meaning rather than conceptual meaning and defines core pragmatic meaning as “a meaning separate from any content meaning of the homophonous form, and a meaning which signals how the speaker intends the message following to relate to the foregoing discourse” (pp. 394-395). However, in a later work, Fraser (2006) disputed that discourse markers can have both conceptual and procedural meaning at the same time since they can engage in compositional combinations such as “as an (unfortunate) consequence”, “that’s (exactly) why”, and denial of the truth is possible for the meanings of most of the markers. Thus, although there are some counterarguments, most of the scholars in the field emphasize the procedural meanings of discourse markers by giving little or no reference to their propositional meaning.

2.4.9 Prosody

It is generally recognised among researchers that discourse markers are prosodically independent and mostly separate from the rest of the utterances. Schiffrin (1987) notes that

a discourse marker "has to have a range of prosodic contours, e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction" (p. 328). Östman (1982) also pinpoints that they are also generally characterised as short and prosodically unstressed expressions compared to the other words in discourse. Fung and Carter (2007) explain that a separate tone attributed to the discourse marker "right" in the following sentence differentiates it from the rest of the utterance.

> "Right. Very good. What do you think might have happened since he left hospital that caused this ulcer to break down yet again?" (p. 413).

Therefore, discourse markers are distinct from the other function and content words and phrases in the discourse with their phonological features, separate tone, and stress.

2.5 Classifications of Discourse Markers

Similar to the terminology and definitions of discourse markers, classification of discourse markers is a controversial issue. Scholars suggested different types of taxonomies based on either functions or grammatical categories of discourse markers, and they included different items as discourse markers based on the theoretical approaches they adopted. As Jucker (1993) points out "there is no generally accepted list of discourse markers in English" (p. 436), and even researchers could include some items that they previously excluded from their list of discourse markers. For instance, "oh" and "y'know" are included in Schiffrin's (1987) analysis, however, Fraser (1990) rejects that "oh" holds the status of a discourse marker and notes that "y'know" is a different type of pragmatic marker rather than a discourse marker. Moreover, in an earlier work, Fraser (1990) claims that "because" does not hold the status of a discourse marker, however, in a later work he identifies these items as discourse markers (Fraser, 1999, p. 940). Furthermore, "even when an item is widely accepted as a DM, there can be disagreement about which instances of the item qualify" (Schourup, 1999, p. 241). Different researchers can delimit the uses of an item as a discourse marker in a broader or narrower range. For instance, to differentiate the uses of "now" as an adverbial and as a discourse marker, Fraser (1996) suggests that a comma intonation indicates that it functions as a discourse marker, however, Schiffrin (1987) notes that the adverbial "now" requires the use of present tense, and it is stressed in an utterance, and the distinction between the use of "now" as an adverbial and a discourse

marker can be neutralized in some cases, meaning that it can be too ambiguous to identify (pp. 230-232). On the other hand, Redeker (1991) argues that the adverbial "now" can occur in the past tense, and the discourse marker "now" can also be stressed in utterances. Hence, variations in definitions and criteria for the status of discourse markers lead to classificatory differences, and as Romero Trillo (2002) points out "they are elusive to classification" (p. 774).

Bruce Fraser whose studies (1988, 1990, 1996, 2006, 2015) have made a great contribution to the development of the concept of discourse markers in English utilizes the term "pragmatic marker" as a superordinate of "discourse marker". In his earlier work, Fraser (1988) divided pragmatic markers into three sub-categories; namely, basic pragmatic markers, commentary pragmatic markers, and parallel pragmatic markers, and discourse markers were described as a sub-category of commentary pragmatic markers. In this study, discourse markers were divided into three sub-categories each of which was divided into further sub-categories related to their functions. However, in a later work, Fraser (1996) developed a new taxonomy, and although the term "discourse marker" was still a hyponym of "pragmatic marker", discourse markers constituted a sub-category of pragmatic markers along with basic markers, commentary pragmatic markers, and parallel markers. In this study, he divided the category of discourse markers into four sub-categories based on their functions. The first category is topic change markers which serve as a cue that indicates that the speaker moves from the subject of the particular conversation to a new topic. This category includes markers such as "by the way", "before I forget" and "speaking of X". The second sub-category of discourse markers is contrastive markers which include items such as "but", "despite" and "on the other hand". They signal that the upcoming utterance has some sort of contrastive meaning compared to the previous segment of the discourse. Markers such as "what is more", moreover", and "in other words" populate the third sub-category, elaborative markers. They indicate that the utterance following the discourse marker will refine or fine-tune the preceding utterance. The last sub-category of discourse markers in Fraser's taxonomy is inferential markers which consist of markers such as "so", "therefore", and "after all" which signal a meaning of a conclusion.

Brinton (1996) analysed the functions of discourse markers that were identified in major studies in the field and provided an inventory of functions. She divided these

functions into two categories: namely, textual and interpersonal, based on Halliday's (1970) functions of language. However, Brinton (1996) excluded the third category which is the ideational function of language since it is related to the propositional content of the language, and discourse markers lack propositional meaning. Textual functions are more related to the organization and sequence of the discourse, and they include functions such as maintaining the flow of the conversation, opening and closing a conversation, and demarcating topic shifts or boundaries of the discourse while interpersonal functions contribute to the interactional and social aspect of the discourse, and functions such as showing understanding and attention while listening to the other interlocutor and expressing sympathy or politeness constitute this category. Castro (2009) also adopted Brinton's inventory and taxonomy of functions of discourse markers, and based on their functions, he summarized the markers in the textual category as "opening and closing frame markers, turn takers and givers, fillers, turn keepers, topic switchers, information indicators, sequence/relevance markers, repair markers" and identified the markers in the interpersonal category as "response/reaction markers, back-channel signals, confirmation seekers, face-savers" (p. 61).

Fung and Carter (2007) also developed a taxonomy of discourse markers following Maschler (1994, 1998). Their taxonomy consists of four categories, interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive. The interpersonal category includes discourse markers which assist speakers to convey their viewpoints and feelings and to denote affirmation and shared knowledge. The examples for this category include "you know", "like", "I think", and "to be frank". The referential category of discourse markers consists of mainly conjunctions such as "because", "and", "or", and "anyway" which mark relationships between two adjacent units connected with discourse markers. The structural category incorporates markers indicating the sequence in the organization of the discourse such as "first", "second", and "finally", pointing out opening and closing of new topics and topic changes such as "let's start", "so", "now", affirming the continuation of the conversation on the same particular topic like "yeah", and helping to hold the floor. Discourse markers in the cognitive category denote the speaker's hesitation or thinking process and indicate an elaboration or reformulation of the previously uttered segment of the discourse. "Well", "I see", "in other words", and "I mean" can be examples of discourse markers serving these

functions. Moreover, because of their multifunctionality characteristic, the same discourse marker can be classified under different categories, performing various functions, in the same taxonomy.

In conclusion, despite the recent increase in the amount of research focusing on discourse markers, they still remain an elusive concept, and this leads to various valid definitions and classifications.

2.6 Discourse Markers and Second and Foreign Language Education

Although the first studies on discourse markers were based on native speaker data, advancements in technology allowed for digital recordings of spoken data, and software programs for analysis of them, which in turn eased the way for studies of spoken discourse analysis and led research on foreign language speaking and learners' interlanguage blossom. While some of these studies analysed non-native speakers' use of discourse markers in comparison with the use of them by native speakers, others examined solely language learners' utilization of discourse markers from various perspectives. Researchers investigated the use of discourse markers by second and foreign language learners with various first-language backgrounds. While some researchers focused on certain specific discourse markers, some others adopted a data-driven approach and tried to identify and analyse a whole range of discourse markers that occurred in a learner corpus.

Studies showed that language learners focus on the textual coherence of spoken discourse and utilize discourse markers in this vein, but they are not aware of the need for the use of discourse markers for social and interpersonal purposes. Fung and Carter (2007) conducted a study on the use of discourse markers in the Hong Kong EFL context and carried out an analysis in comparison with a native speaker corpus. The non-native data were gathered from a group of 49 secondary school students who were given an interactive task to complete in groups. The results revealed that when compared to native speakers, the students utilized discourse markers less frequently and for a restricted variety of functions. They based their analysis on the taxonomy of discourse markers they developed and noted that students mostly made use of referential and structural discourse markers such as "and", "but", "because", and "I think", but rarely used the markers in the interpersonal category such as "see", "you know", "well". Arya (2020) also investigated the use of discourse

markers by Thai university students based on Fung and Carter's (2007) taxonomy and concluded that they mostly utilized discourse markers in the referential category consisting of mostly conjunctions which constituted almost half of the occurrences of markers, and it was followed by interpersonal, structural and cognitive categories respectively. Furthermore, Jung (2009) analysed the discourse markers used in social informal dialogues between Korean speakers of English and native speakers. Participants were people who had a real social relationship with each other, and the data came from authentic daily conversations. The results revealed that although Korean speakers mastered using discourse markers to maintain cohesion in a discourse, they disregarded the social aspect of them. While Korean speakers were mainly concerned with the textual coherence of the conversations, native speakers utilized discourse markers to establish positive social relationships showing their kindness and support; however, their efforts were not noticed by Korean speakers which caused interpersonal disharmony in conversations. Unfortunately, the reason for this disharmony can falsely be attributed to the characteristics of Korean people instead of their minor deficiencies in communicative competence. Thus, Jung (2009) pinpoints that rather than their role as cohesive devices, interactional functions of discourse markers should be emphasized.

Romero Trillo's (2002) study with Spanish EFL learners focused on the fossilization of certain discourse markers. He examined the use of six discourse markers; "you know" "you see", "I mean", "well", "listen" and "look" in spoken language corpora of native and non-native children and adults and made a distinction between "operative markers" such as "look" and "listen" and "involvement markers" such as "you know", "I mean", "you see", "well" (p. 777). The findings demonstrated that native speaker children used operative markers more frequently than involvement markers while adult native speakers preferred to use involvement markers more because of the differences in the type of interaction they were involved in. However, although the frequency of the use of discourse markers in corpora of both native and non-native children was similar, there was a great discrepancy in the frequency of the use of markers in both adult groups. The analysis of the corpus of adult non-native speakers indicated a deficiency in the quantity and diversity of discourse markers. Romero Trillo interpreted this result as pragmatic fossilization which he defined as "the phenomenon by which a non-native speaker

systematically uses certain forms inappropriately at the pragmatic level of communication" (p. 770). He also pointed out that non-native children's preference for "listen" over "look" which is regarded as a politer marker to be utilized to get attention stems from the fact that the Spanish equivalent of "listen" has a very frequent use. He also attributed this result to the unnaturalistic language learning environment that the school provided to the students.

Research also revealed that discourse markers can attain certain new functions in learner corpora that do not occur in corpora of native speakers. Müller (2005) carried out an analysis of the functions that certain discourse markers; namely, "so", "well", "you know", and "like" attain in conversations of German speakers of English in comparison with the use of American speakers. The results showed that the most frequently used discourse marker was "so" in both groups and except for "well", other markers were more frequently utilized in the conversations of American speakers. Moreover, German speakers utilized discourse markers for the same purposes as American speakers do, except for one function of "you know". More importantly, German speakers utilized "well" for two functions that did not occur in the data of American speakers. Moreover, House's (2009) analysis of the use of the discourse marker "you know" by EFL learners with different first-language backgrounds revealed that EFL learners utilized the marker "you know" for different purposes in conversations. While native speakers generally use it to show politeness and indicate shared knowledge and common ground, EFL learners used it in a more formulaic sense for discourse organizational purposes such as overcoming their planning difficulties and monitoring their own progress in the conversation. Thus, language learners' incompetence can cause idiosyncratic use of discourse markers.

Researchers also investigated effects of the factors such as genre and type of tasks, proficiency level, and gender and identity of speakers on the use of discourse markers by language learners. Huang (2011) carried out a corpus-based study and investigated the use of certain discourse markers in three corpora consisting of dialogues and monologues of native and Chinese non-native speakers. The findings revealed that occurrences of discourse markers in dialogues are more frequent compared to monologues. The results also indicated a relationship between the use of discourse markers and social factors such as participants' identities and their efforts to create solidarity or engage listeners. Moreover, Bu (2013) conducted a study with a group of college students consisting of 15 female and

15 male students in Chinese EFL context and concluded that students utilized more discourse markers in interviews than they did in classroom discussions and female students used discourse markers more frequently than male students. The researcher also argued that apart from the gender and type of task, students' individual identities meaning how they perceived and wanted to present themselves as social beings also affected their use of discourse markers. Liao (2009) also investigated the use of discourse markers by Chinese teaching assistants and noted that they used discourse markers less frequently and in a more restricted way. She also pinpoints that they used more discourse markers in interviews than in class discussions since they wanted to present their academic identity in discussions, which showed the effect of identity and stylistic choices on the use of discourse markers. Mei (2012) specifically focused on the use of discourse markers "you know" and "I mean" in conversations of Chinese learners of English in comparison with British speakers. The analysis of the Chinese corpora demonstrated that the functions and subfunctions of both markers, but especially "you know" are very restricted. The reason for rare occurrences of some subfunctions of "you know" in Chinese corpus could be the fact that its Chinese counterpart has a limited range of functions which can be observed as the most common functions of "you know" in Chinese data. Mei also suggested that since the data were collected from intermediate learners, their proficiency level also might be the reason for their limited use of markers, and the type of tasks that they completed might have also affected their preference for specific functions of markers.

Studies conducted in the second language learning context focus on the effects of proficiency and length of stay in the country where the target language is spoken as an indication of exposure to constant input in a naturalistic environment. Sankoff et al. (1997) carried out a study with English speakers in Canada and compared their use of discourse markers in English as their mother tongue and in French as their second language. Participants' attendance at French or immersion schools and the extent of their exposure to French during their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood was taken into consideration during the analysis. The results revealed that participants used almost three times as many discourse markers in their native language than in their second language, and the participants who were exposed to French starting from their childhood demonstrated better and more frequent use of discourse markers in French, especially for the markers which do

not have an English equivalent, which showed the importance of acculturation and integration into the target language community. Moreover, Hellerman and Vergun (2007) conducted a study with immigrants in the USA who enrolled in an English class in a community college to investigate their use of the discourse markers, “like”, “well” and “you know”. The results revealed that the students who had been staying in the USA for a longer period and used English outside the class, in their homes and workplaces more outperformed the students who moved there almost a year ago and continued to speak their first language in their social environments. The researchers also analysed short excerpts from the teacher talk in classes and noted that teachers made use of “well” as a discourse marker only a few times but did not use “you know” and “like” at all. This finding suggests that these markers are more of a feature of conversational speech and tend not to occur a lot in graded speech for learners and foreigners. However, teachers used some other discourse markers such as “all right”, “so”, “now”, and “ok” which can be a part of classroom language. The analysis of the data also showed that the frequency of discourse markers in teacher talk was higher in upper-level classes. Hence, the authors emphasized the importance of exposure to the target language in a naturalistic environment, production of the target language outside the class, and acculturation to the target language community for the mastery of the use of discourse markers. Polat (2011) also investigated the use of the same three discourse markers by a Turkish immigrant who came to the USA two and half years ago. This longitudinal study focused on an immigrant’s development of competence in the usage of discourse markers during a year. The results revealed that the participant did not use “well” at all during the whole course of the data collection period. He used the marker “you know” with a really high frequency compared to native speakers, however, the frequency of the marker decreased starting from the sixth month of the study. He also did not make use of “like” during the first six months, then the frequency of the marker peaked, and then it started to decrease gradually. The analysis of his speech showed that he also utilized “you know” as a hesitation marker and pause filler at the beginning of the study. These changes in his use of discourse markers were attributed to the development of his language proficiency in a naturalistic environment where he could be constantly exposed to authentic input, and had opportunities to produce the target language. In a more recent study, Diskin (2017) analysed the use of the discourse marker “like” by Irish native

speakers and Polish and Chinese immigrants in Ireland. She noted that although the frequency of the use of like in both native and non-native groups was similar when specific functions and positions of like were examined, there were some significant differences in the use of native speakers and immigrants. Diskin pointed out that length of stay is a better determiner compared to language proficiency of acquisition of certain uses of like which is specific to Irish English.

In conclusion, studies of discourse markers and language learning showed that although they have different language backgrounds, language learners tend to use discourse markers less frequently and for a more restricted range of functions compared to native speakers. Hence, in order to achieve a successful and effective interaction, especially with native speakers and to reflect their personality and social stance truly, language learners need to master the use of discourse markers.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to present a detailed explanation of the methodology employed in this study. It provides a detailed description of the setting, participants, and data collection methods and includes in detail the examinations through which the data set was gathered and methods of statistical analysis, and procedures for qualitative analysis of the data utilized in the study.

3.1 Setting

The study was conducted in the 2021-2022 academic year with the students enrolled in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu university which is a public university in Turkiye. The school offers an intensive language programme called preparatory class in four languages, namely, English, German, French, and Russian. The aim of the programme is to help students to reach a certain proficiency level and acquire the essential language skills to continue their undergraduate and graduate studies in their departments and follow the literature in the medium of instruction in their departments. Since the medium of language is English in certain departments, some students are required to attend the school before they start their departments unless they pass the proficiency exam at the beginning of the school year. Students from other departments also have the opportunity to attend the programme to develop their language skills. All students who join the programme have to take a placement test, and they are divided into classes according to their proficiency levels which are determined according to the results of the placement test. The placement test consists of multiple-choice questions designed to test students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and reading skill.

The programme adopts an integrated language teaching approach and follows a main course book in all four levels of classes starting from beginner to the intermediate level. Students at all levels except for the ones at intermediate level have to finish the school year in order to take the proficiency exam. However, students at intermediate level have the opportunity to take the proficiency exam at the end of the fall term and continue their studies in their departments as long as they complete the first term successfully. Successful

completion of the term is a must for all students who want to take the proficiency exam. In order to be considered to have successfully completed the term, the average of the scores that they get from all the examinations held during the term must be at least 60 out of a hundred. A number of assessment methods are utilized during a school year. Students are required to take a midterm exam, a final exam, and 6 to 8 quizzes and submit 8-10 writing and speaking tasks in total. Quizzes and tasks have various focuses depending on the level of students. The midterm and final exams consist of three components. The first component consists of a multiple-choice exam assessing language use, knowledge of vocabulary, and reading and listening skills. The second and third components are a writing and a speaking examination. The score of midterm and final exams are obtained from the calculation of 20 percent of scores of speaking and writing exams and 60 percent of the score of the first component.

The school offered only face-to-face classes until the Covid-19 pandemic. However, in the academic year of 2021-2022, because of the ongoing pandemic, the school employed a hybrid education system. Students at all levels had 20 hours of lessons in a week consisting of 12 hours of face-to-face classes and 8 hours of online classes, but all the exams were conducted face-to-face. At the time of the study, the second edition of the Speakout series published by Pearson publishing was utilized as the main course book in the programme. The students were also provided with videos and written materials based on the teaching curriculum in this series prepared by the instructors.

3.2 Participants

The study employed purposive sampling and intermediate-level students enrolled in the English preparatory programme were chosen as the sample of the study. The participants were all native speakers of Turkish, living in Turkey at the time of the study, thus the sample represents a foreign language learning context. The data coming from foreign students who have different language backgrounds were excluded during the analysis. The students were generally of traditional university age. The participants constituted a heterogenous group consisting of students enrolled in various departments ranging from business administration to electrical and electronic engineering. Intermediate-level students were chosen as the group of sample since they were able to produce more

language because of their high proficiency level compared to the students at other levels. Several studies focusing on the use of discourse markers were also conducted with learners with a high proficiency level in the target language (e.g, Aşık, 2012; Fung & Carter, 2007; House, 2009; Liu, 2013).

3.3 Data Collection

The data of the study consisted of the recordings of the speaking component of the proficiency exam conducted at the end of the fall term of the academic year of 2021-2022 and speaking exam scores and overall proficiency scores of students who took this exam. For data collection, before carrying out the study, ethics committee approval was obtained from Anadolu University the Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee. Later, research permission documents explaining the scope of the study, methodology of the study, a summary of related literature, and the contribution of the particular study to the institution and the field of ELT were submitted to the school board of Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages with the approval of ethics committee enclosed. The research permission was granted by the school board and the recordings of the speaking exam and students' grades in related examinations were retrieved from the school archive.

3.3.1 The proficiency exam

The proficiency exam is designed to determine whether the students have reached a proficiency level in the target language which would be sufficient to continue their studies in that language in their departments. The proficiency exam is based on the Global Scale of English (GSE) developed by Pearson English. The exam consists of three components which are conducted in three different sessions. In the first part of the exam, the students are given a booklet of multiple-choice questions assessing listening and reading comprehension, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, and language use. Sixty percent of the questions are based on the GSE outcomes from 51 to 58 while forty percent of the questions are based on the outcomes from 59 to 66. The scores students get from this multiple-choice exam constitute 60 percent of their proficiency exam results.

The second component of the proficiency exam is a speaking exam which is a paired speaking test. Students take the exam in pairs which are announced a couple of days before the exam. The speaking exam consists of two parts, and in the first part, both students are asked two individual questions separately and in the second part, they are given a discussion question to talk about together. The questions in the first part of the exam are related to the GSE outcomes between 51 and 58, and students are expected to talk about their own life experiences. In the second part of the exam, students are given a discussion question about current issues in Turkey and in the world which do not require any specific knowledge. The questions in the discussion part of the exam are based on the GSE outcomes from 59 to 66. In this part of the exam, the students are given the sheet on which the question is written and a related picture added after it is read aloud by a jury member. Students have one minute to think about the question before they start their discussion, and they are not expected to reach an agreement at the end of the discussion.

The jury of the speaking exam consisted of two instructors working in the institution. The two jury members evaluate students' performances separately and give a score out of 20 based on the speaking criteria consisting of content, fluency, grammatical competence, lexical competence, and interaction components. There cannot be a discrepancy of more than two points between the scores of two jury members, and if that is the case, two instructors need to negotiate and make necessary changes to reach the maximum limit of discrepancy. The scores that students get from the speaking exam constitute 20 percent of their overall proficiency exam scores. Furthermore, all the speaking exams conducted at Anadolu University School of Foreign languages are video recorded and archived. Sample questions of the exam and the criteria used for the assessment of speaking skill can be found in Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

The last component of the proficiency exam is a writing exam. In this section of the exam, students are supposed to write a 300–350-word composition on a given topic. Students' writings are evaluated by two graders separately. Each grader gives a score out of 20 based on the writing criteria that are used in all writing exams in the school. The criteria have four components of equal weight, namely, content, organization, grammatical competence, and lexical competence. If the discrepancy between the scores given by two instructors is more than two points, the graders have to evaluate the paper again and

negotiate for the necessary changes to the grade. Students' score in the writing section constitutes 20 percent of their overall score for the proficiency exam.

The proficiency exam was chosen as the source of the data for this study since it does not have a direct link to the coursebook or course content. The questions in the exam are not specifically related to the units in the coursebook unlike the questions designed for the midterm or the final exam. This exam is just designed to determine the general proficiency level of the students; thus, it is more appropriate for the purpose of this study.

3.4 Data analysis

Since the recordings of all the speaking exams conducted at Anadolu University School of Foreign languages and students' results in all exams conducted in the last five years were archived, the recordings of the proficiency exam conducted at the end of the fall term of the academic year of 2021-2022 and related exam results were retrieved from the archive with the permission of the school board. In order to make them accessible for analysis, all the recordings were transcribed manually by the researcher and checked for accuracy first by the researcher and then checked again by another colleague who has a MA degree in English language teaching. All the grammatical errors and imperfections in the participants' language were kept during the transcription process, and students' names and personal information were deleted for the sake of confidentiality. The recordings were transcribed according to the transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson, and the symbols and explanations were obtained from the works of Atkinson and Heritage (1984) and Wooffitt (2005). A summary of the conventions and a sample transcript can be found in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

All the speaking exams conducted in AUSFL have a paired format. For the proficiency exam, students also take the speaking exam in pairs and have a discussion with their partners as a part of the exam. However, if one of the pairs do not show up, the other pair takes the exam with the next pair, and in this case of three students, the other student whose partner does not show up has the discussion with one of the pair of students who are designated for that time slot when they finish their own discussion. In this case, one of the students has two discussions, but the second one is not taken into consideration while grading. However, for this study, all the recordings of three students were excluded from

the data, and only recordings of regular pairs were utilized as data to establish a standard. In total, recordings of 90 students were included in the data. The average duration of a recording of a pair was 10-15 minutes including greetings and farewells.

After the transcription process was completed, all of them were read thoroughly, and instances of all the discourse markers were identified by the researcher and later checked by another colleague who had an MA degree in English language teaching. Tokens of each discourse marker were counted from the transcripts, and then frequencies of each discourse marker and the total word count of all the transcriptions were calculated. Later, in a separate analysis, the total number of discourse markers used by each student and the total word count of each student were calculated. Total word counts of students ranged from at least 100 to almost 600 words. When the calculations were made, only the students' answers to the speaking questions were taken into consideration, other utterances such as greetings or other dialogues with the jury members in which students introduced themselves or asked questions about the procedure of the examinations were all excluded.

For the quantitative analysis, calculations of the total word count of transcripts and the number of discourse markers used by each participant and retrieval of markers in the data were carried out by using Microsoft Office word tools and the concordance function of AntConc which was developed as a freeware corpus analysis toolkit by Laurence Anthony. When the markers were identified, the total word count of each student's answers in the speaking exam and the total number of discourse markers used by them were calculated. First, all the data were entered in Microsoft Excel sheets, and later they were transferred to the SPSS programme. Descriptive and inferential statistics were carried out utilizing the software package SPSS. Since each student's speaking is of a different length, statistical analyses would not yield to accurate results, and the data have to be normalized to obtain accurate results (Evison, 2010, p.126). Therefore, before the inferential statistics were run, the data sets of raw frequencies were normalized to per 100 words which resulted in the normalised counts of the total number of discourse markers and two separate types of discourse markers used by each participant. When inferential statistics are carried out, whether to decide to utilize parametric or non-parametric tests, a normality test has to be carried out to see whether the data sets are normally distributed or not. Hence, for all quantitative data sets, normality tests were carried out, and Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was

utilized since it is seen as more appropriate for large data sets when the sample size is more than 50 (Mishra et al., 2019). According to the results of the normality tests, appropriate parametric or non-parametric tests were conducted.

3.4.1 Identification of discourse markers

For the identification of the discourse markers, the characteristics proposed by Brinton (1996), Schiffrin (1987), and Schourup (1999) were taken as the basis in the present study. Vocalisations such as "erm", mhm mhm, "um" were not in the data since students tend to use a lot of them as hesitation markers and pause fillers, and this might lead to inaccurate results, thus only words and phrases were included as discourse markers in the data. Identification of the discourse markers had to be carried out meticulously since some of the linguistic items can also have some other functions as an adverb, verb, or preposition. To illustrate the distinction between discourse marker and non-discourse marker use of some linguistic items, related examples were given in the following extracts from the learner data set of the study.

"So" is one of the linguistic items that both have discourse marker and non-discourse marker use. In the following extract the first "so" is utilized as a discourse marker since it connects two sentences and brings coherence to the discourse. However, the second "so" is an adverb qualifying the adjective "close", and it does not function as a discourse marker.

> …I maybe in Eskişehir, but my friend is in Adana, *so(1)* we are not *so(2)* close to each others. (jury 3, transcript no 10)

"And" is another item that has to be treated carefully since it functions as a discourse marker only when it connects two separate sentences as it is in the second extract, however when it is used to connect two words or list items, it is not regarded as a discourse marker as shown in the first example below.

> (a) … I think this is good news for me *and* my family… (jury 5, transcript no 11)
>
> (b) …because um no one should be responsible for everything, it should be both of them, *and* I think men are just don't like doing erm taking responsibilities… (jury 1, transcript no 1)

"Or" is also another linguistic item treated in the same vein with "and". As shown in extracts a and b, it does not function as a discourse marker when it connects two words or phrases, it is counted as a discourse marker when it connects two sentences.

(a) I think men and women should be equally about their responsibility in their home for example taking care of the children or doing housework…(jury 9, transcript no 32)

(b) because maybe he can he or she may be rich (jury 10, transcript no 41)

(c) …maybe they have so stressful life because of their job, or they are students like me… (jury 1, transcript no 3)

Non-discourse marker use of "like" is more common in the data set. There are three preeminent uses of this linguistic item, namely, as a verb, as a preposition, and as a conjunction as stated by Müller (2005) and Fox Tree (2006). In the following extracts, examples from (a) to (e) illustrate the non-discourse marker use of "like". As pointed out by several researchers (Fuller, 2003a, 2003b; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999) all instances of "like" in these examples cannot be considered as discourse markers since it does not qualify the criteria of optionality and truth conditionality, that is, omissions of "like" in these examples break the sentence structure leading ungrammatical utterances and affect the propositional content of the utterances. However, in example (f), "like" can be omitted without any change in the structure or the meaning of the utterance.

(a) I used to *like* playing doing sports but now I can't do anymore because of my education life (jury 10, transcript no 40)

(b) …I also want go Maldives because I *like* hot weather and I *like* sunbathing, I *like* swimming and this is very peaceful place. (jury 7, transcript no 22)

(c) Okay, I would *like* to say for to avoid monoton life we should do some activities… (jury 10, transcript no 40)

(d) …if I were rich, I would I would do always different things *like* travel… (jury 7, transcript no 23)

(e) …we will feel better and human being must be *like* that. (jury 7, transcript no 23)

(f) …and I think my mood, my feelings would change *like* I can get very depressing towards life so yeah it would be boring. (jury 2, transcript no 7)

Occurrence of “Well” as a discourse marker in the data set is extremely rare. However, non-discourse marker use of the item can be found more frequently. In the extract (a), “well” cannot be categorized as a discourse marker since it functions as an adverb describing the verb “talk” and collocating with the adverb “very”. However, “well” in extract (b) qualifies as a discourse marker since it is not part of the sentence structure and can be omitted without any change in the meaning.

(a) …maybe they have anxiety, and they don't talk they don't talk very *well* in face-to-face… (jury 1, transcript no 2)

(b) Yeah, *well*, actually these days a lot of a lot of parents think like that… (jury 9, transcript no 36)

“Okay” also has functions as a discourse marker and non-discourse marker, and the following excerpts exemplify both uses. The first “okay” in excerpt (a) is a part of sentence structure and functions as an adjective denoting the meaning that the speaker approves the content of the particular message in the utterance, however, in excerpt (b) the speaker uses the item as an opening discourse marker, and it is not part of the following sentence grammatically.

(a) I think legal age at now in the Turkey is *okay*, eighteen years enough to get driving license… (jury 7, transcript no 23)

(b) *Okay*, I think men and woman should be equally responsible for their homeworks or for their children… (jury 11, transcript no 42)

“Kind of /kinda” occurred in the data only twice. However, non-discourse marker use of this linguistic item also existed in the data set. Below, in excerpt (a), “kind of” is used meaning a particular type, however, in excerpt (b), the marker is used as a sign of not being certain or definite.

(a) I think it's affects very badly, I mean I think that face to face communication is better than any of it but actually my last exam this *kind of* questions asked me and some of my friends said maybe they have anxiety… (jury 1, transcript no 2)

(b) …now I prefer watching sports football games basketball games but it is *kinda* enjoying but doing sports more erm more enjoy than watching… (jury 10, transcript no 40)

Non-discourse marker use of “you know” occurred as a part of some questions and other sentence structures such as relative clauses or main clauses followed by a complement clause. Biber et al. (1999) set some basic criteria for differentiation of discourse marker use of “you know” and explain that when it cannot be followed by a complementizer “that”, when it appears in medial and final positions, and when it is followed by a non-declarative, “you know” can be regarded as a discourse marker (pp 1076-1077). Macaulay (2002) also lists a set of examples where “you know” can function as the subject and the verb of a sentence, and thus cannot be considered as a discourse marker (pp. 751-752). Below, in excerpt (a), “you know” is a part of a question, in excerpt (b) it is a part of a relative clause, in excerpt (c) it is followed by the complementizer “that” and functions as a declarative, and in all of these instances, it cannot be considered as a discourse marker since they are a part of the syntax of the sentence and function as a subject and verb of a clause and thus cannot be discarded. However, in excerpt (d) the marker does not have any of these features, it functions as a signal to the listener for confirmation or shared knowledge, therefore it is considered as a discourse marker.

(a) J1: Okay. Your question. What is the most influential movie or book you have seen or read?

S2: Actually, the most influential book is Nutuk for me actually because when I read a book, I feel everything about national war in nineteen nineteen. A lot of nation against us war every time and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said everything about war (provide) our country so the best movie actually Glee. Do *you know* Glee

J1: No, I don’t think so. (jury 7, transcript no 26)

(b) … Another news I heard about covid nineteen erm, we lose our social life and we lost if if you lose someone *you know* from that sick that’s so bad… (jury 9, transcript no 33)

(c) National holiday, my national holiday is Republic holiday, so *you know* that in republic holiday, in this day, people are too happy… (jury 8, transcript no 30)

(d) I am also agree with you. And in this country, especially for students, have part-time job *you know* it is hard to their or rent a pie sorry rent a flat or pay your bills yeah (jury 7, transcript no 27)

Other lexical items which have a non-discourse marker use are “yes” and “no”. “Yes” was frequently used by the participants while no as a discourse marker had only a few occurrences. In the following extracts, in (a) all of the instances of “yes” and “no” do not have the discourse marker function, and they function as a short answer to polar interrogative questions. In extract (b), “yes” is utilized as an answer to a declarative question. However, in extracts (c) and (d), the items are employed by the speakers as a discourse marker indicating agreement or disagreement with the message in the previous utterances.

(a) S2: …but I haven’t because I disagree with this. Do you have anything?
S1: *no*
S2: Do you drive a car?
S1: *no*, can you?
S2: *yes*, but I love motorbike more than cars (jury 11, transcript no 45)

(b) J1: …and I will start with you if you are ready
S1: *Yes* (jury 1, transcript no 4)

(c) S2: I totally agree with you. Men shouldn’t do just work and help his wife with houseworks and take should take care of the children. And also women can work
S1: *Yes* and if both of them works both of them do their housework and take care of children equally (jury 11, transcript no 42)

(d) S1: But not (count) all around
S2: *No* it is not but many people says it it help them feel less stressed in (jury 2, transcript no 7)

In this section, non-discourse marker and discourse marker uses of several linguistic items were exemplified. And, when concordance lines were examined, all of these non-discourse marker uses were carefully excluded from the analysis.

3.4.2 Functional analysis of the discourse markers

For the qualitative analysis of the functions of the discourse markers, Brinton’s (1996) taxonomy of the functions was taken as the basis. Textual functions are more related to the organization of the discourse and include opening and closing the discourse, sequencing, making explanations on the previous discourse, serving as a filler or a

hesitation marker, and repairing an utterance while interpersonal functions include stating personal stance or opinion, looking for affirmation from the other interlocutors, signposting shared information, signalling politeness or showing attitudes towards to the topic or the interlocutors. All transcripts were read thoroughly to identify the functions of discourse markers in the context, and all markers were labelled as interpersonal or textual by the researcher. Labelling of the markers was done again by the researcher two weeks later to check intra-rater reliability. Ensuring interrater reliability was also one of the main concerns during the data analysis since the reliability of the analysis supports the value of the findings of a study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that a minimum of ten percent of the data should be coded by another rater. Therefore, the discourse markers in 10 out of 45 transcripts which constitute almost 25 percent of the data were also labelled by another colleague who has a MA degree in the field. For each transcript, the agreement rate was higher than 90 % which is an acceptable rate since the sufficient agreement rate is accepted as 70% in several studies by researchers (Mei, 2012; Müller, 2005; Öztürk, 2018). For the discourse markers on which both coders had different labels, expert opinion was taken, and functional analysis of these markers was negotiated with a professor in the field who worked at a state university in Turkey at the time of the study. When the coding process was completed, for each participant, discourse markers functioning in textual and interpersonal domains were calculated separately.

CHAPTER 4

4. RESULTS

This chapter will present the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses in relation to the research questions. It will report the frequencies of discourse markers with their percentages in the whole data, the results of the analyses regarding the relationship between the students' use of discourse markers and their speaking exam scores and proficiency exam scores, and the mean comparison of the textual and interpersonal markers used by the students.

4.1 Identification of Discourse Markers and Calculations of their Frequencies

In order to answer the first and second research questions, all the transcripts were read thoroughly, and all instances of discourse markers were identified. A numeric table was created on an MS Office Excel sheet to calculate the total number of uses of each discourse marker. The total number of tokens of each marker was entered in the table for each transcript and then, the total sum of each discourse marker in the whole data was calculated with an Excel formula. Next, the data were transferred to the SPSS programme and percentages of each marker in the total sum of discourse markers were calculated by utilizing descriptive statistics. In total, 64 different discourse markers were identified, and the total quantity of all discourse markers was 2925, and they were arranged in the order of descending sums. The table below displays the first half of the discourse markers and the frequencies of each marker.

Table 4.1. *Frequencies and percentages of the discourse markers used by the students*

	Discourse marker	Frequency	Percentage
1	And	765	26,15
2	Because	441	15,08
3	I think	386	13,20
4	But	300	10,26
5	So	151	5,16
6	Yes	137	4,68
7	Like	100	3,42
8	Actually	90	3,08

9	Yeah	88	3,01
10	Also	80	2,74
11	For example	55	1,88
12	Okay	52	1,78
13	Of course	26	0,89
14	Or	25	0,85
15	I guess	21	0,72
16	You know	20	0,68
17	Then	19	0,65
18	I mean	15	0,51
19	That's why	13	0,44
20	Firstly	11	0,38
21	Especially	10	0,34
22	In my opinion	9	0,31
23	Like ı said	7	0,24
24	Definitely	7	0,24
25	First of all	6	0,21
26	Probably	6	0,21
27	I believe	5	0,17
28	As I said	5	0,17
29	What else	5	0,17
30	For instance	5	0,17
31	No	4	0,14
32	First	4	0,14

As it is seen in the table above, the most frequent discourse marker is “and” with 765 occurrences, and it constitutes 26 percent of all the markers in the data. And it is followed by “because”, “I think” and “but” respectively. The five most frequently used discourse markers constitute almost seventy percent of the total sum of markers in the data, and the only interpersonal discourse marker that ranks in the top five of the list is “I think” with 386 occurrences. All other most frequent discourse markers are basically conjunctions, that is textual discourse markers. They are followed by “yes” which is a mostly interpersonal discourse marker with 137 hits and is followed by another mostly interpersonal marker “like” with 100 occurrences, “actually” with 90 hits, and “yeah” with 88 hits. Textual marker “also” ranks tenth in the list with 80 occurrences and is followed by another textual discourse marker “for example” with 55 occurrences. They are followed by interpersonal markers “okay” and “of course” respectively and “or” another textual marker ranks 14th. When “first”, “firstly” and “first of all” are grouped together, the total sum of them is equal

to 21, and this puts them in the 15th place in the list. When we look at the twenty most frequently used discourse markers, it is seen that half of the markers mostly function in the textual domain, such as “and”, “because”, “but”, “so”, “also”, “for example”, “then”, “or”, “firstly”, and “that’s why” while the other half is mostly interpersonal markers including “I think”, “yes”, “like”, “actually”, “yeah”, “okay”, “of course”, “you know”, “I mean”, and “I guess”.

Through the list, it can be seen that some of the discourse markers have only several occurrences. For example, although it ranks 21st in the list, “especially” has only 10 occurrences, and it is followed by “in my opinion” with 9 hits, “like I said” and “definitely”, both with 7 hits. Moreover, some of the discourse markers have only few occurrences, and they are under the percentage of 0,2. For instance, four markers, namely, “totally”, “by the way”, “moreover”, “like you said” have only three occurrences. While fourteen markers have only two hits, thirteen discourse markers have only one occurrence. And all of these markers constitute almost half of the total varieties of discourse markers in the data. Some phrases such as “to be honest” or “kind of” are not taught explicitly in class, and some of them such as “moreover” and “however” are seen more as features of written discourse. Degree of formality is another element that affects the frequency of the use of a discourse marker in written or oral discourse. Thus, these might be some of the reasons for their rare occurrences in the student data. The second half of the discourse markers used by the students and their frequencies are given in the table below.

Table 4.2. *Frequencies and percentages of the discourse markers used by the students*

	Discourse marker	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
33	From my point of view	4	0,14
34	Totally	3	0,10
35	By the way	3	0,10
36	Moreover	3	0,10
37	Like you said	3	0,10
38	Exactly	2	0,07
39	In fact	2	0,07
40	As	2	0,07
41	Let me think	2	0,07
42	Secondly	2	0,07
43	Otherwise	2	0,07

44	Despite	2	0,07
45	To be honest	2	0,07
46	What can I say	2	0,07
47	On the other hand	2	0,07
48	On the other side	2	0,07
49	Just I said	2	0,07
50	After that	2	0,07
51	Kind of	2	0,07
52	Basically	1	0,03
53	Thirdly	1	0,03
54	Now	1	0,03
55	What else I can say	1	0,03
56	As you said	1	0,03
57	Absolutely	1	0,03
58	Unfortunately	1	0,03
59	Anyway	1	0,03
60	Finally	1	0,03
61	Well	1	0,03
62	In addition	1	0,03
63	What is more	1	0,03
64	However	1	0,03
	Total	2925	100

The total number of all the words uttered during the speaking exam by students is 28346, and the total number of occurrences of all discourse markers is 2925 which constitutes 10.31 percent of the total word count. In a similar study conducted by Aşık (2012), the total word count of Turkish students' presentations is 34.420 and the total sum of all the discourse markers is 3829 which constitutes 11.15 percent of the data. However, in Aşık's (2012) study, the data includes fillers and hesitation markers such as "uhh", "umm", and "hmm", and the marker "uhh" has the highest occurrence with 1401 hits and when even only this marker is excluded from the data, the total number of markers compared to the total word count is less than the total sum of markers in the present study. The discrepancy between the two data of these studies can be attributed to the type of speaking task that students completed. In Aşık's (2012) study, the data are composed of students' presentations which is a monological genre, however, in the present study, the data include students' answers in a paired speaking exam which has a discussion part, thus it is more dialogic.

4.2 The Relationship between Turkish Learners' Use of Discourse Markers and their English Speaking Exam Scores

In order to answer the third research question, the total sum of discourse markers employed by each student and their scores from the speaking exam were analysed. To decide whether to use parametric or non-parametric tests, first normality scores were calculated for both data sets. Since the data set of students' speaking grades was not normally distributed, Spearman's rho, a non-parametric test of correlation, was utilized. No statistically significant correlation was observed between students' speaking grades and the total sum of discourse markers used by each student, $r_s = -.03$, $p = .77$, $N=90$. The results of the normality test and the correlation test can be seen in tables 4.3 and 4.4 respectively.

Table 4.3. *Normality scores of the data sets of speaking scores and the normalised frequency of DMs*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Speaking scores	,132	90	,001
Normalised frequency of DMs	,048	90	,200*

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Table 4.4. *Results of the correlation test between the speaking exam scores and the use of discourse markers*

			Speaking scores	Normalised frequency of DMs
Spearman's rho	Speaking scores	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	-,030
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,777
		N	90	90
	Normalised frequency of DMs	Correlation Coefficient	-,030	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,777	.
		N	90	90

Next, in order to analyse the relationship between students' speaking scores and their use of discourse markers functioning in interpersonal and textual domains, a Spearman rho correlation test was run. In order to get accurate results, frequencies of both

interpersonal discourse markers and textual discourse markers were normalised to 100. The results did not show any statistically significant correlation between students' speaking grades and the total number of interpersonal and textual discourse markers used by them (r_s =.07, p =.48, N=90; r_s =.09, p =.36, N=90, respectively).

Table 4.5. *Results of the correlation test between the speaking scores and the types of discourse markers*

			Speaking scores	Normalised frequency of interpersonal DMs	Normalised frequency of textual DMs
Spearman's Rho	Speaking scores	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,074	-,097
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,486	,364
		N	90	90	90

When correlation tests were run, all the discourse markers used by the students were taken into account, and appropriateness of use was not considered. Speaking exams can be stressful and can cause anxiety for many students, and if their affective filter is high, this might affect students' speaking performance and thus their grades. Also, some students tend to use a lot of pause fillers and hesitation markers while speaking in a foreign language when they are stressed, and hence this might increase the number of discourse markers that they use in spite of their relatively poor performance in the exam. There are a lot of repetitions and false starts, especially in the data of students with low speaking scores. Low level learners tend to use discourse markers as hesitation markers and fillers consecutively as they plan what to say next, and hence this leads to an increase in the use of both markers functioning in textual and interpersonal domains. For instance, in extract (a) below, the student utilized "I think" twice consecutively just with a pause filler in between, in the same piece of utterance denoting the thinking process, and in extract (b) "because" is used in the same way. These repetitions cause an increase in the number of used discourse markers although they do not necessarily affect students' performances positively and result in a higher score in the speaking exam. In extract (c), the student had a false start with the discourse marker "so" and then started the sentence again with "but". Because of their low proficiency level, and the anxiety and nervousness that the exam might have caused, students showed a lot of examples of false starts.

(a) S1: Yes, *I think* erm *I think* that for being successful in life you need to improve yourself… (jury 6, transcript 19)

(b) …I think without internet everything would be good *because* uhm *because* I wanted to avoid avoid from using internet because it's nowadays it is very toxic… (jury 10, transcript no 39)

(c) S2: definitely, *so but* I think in the part-time job so many so many stress we have, and I I don't feel don't wanna don't want to feel the stress in the our life… (jury 8, transcript 31)

Furthermore, students also tend to memorize certain phrases and chunks such as "in my opinion", "let me think" and "from my point of view" to make their performance more appealing to jury members. These discourse markers are also taught explicitly in the coursebook as a writing or speaking strategy. They might try to compensate for their lack of proficiency with the overuse of discourse markers. Thus, the use of these markers frequently increases the total number of markers and especially the number of interpersonal markers although it does not necessarily affect their performance and their scores positively. In the following excerpts (a) and (b), the same student made use of two discourse markers consecutively in a very short utterance with just a filler in between, and this might indicate a learned habit of using these markers. In excerpt (c) a student who did not have a good command of the language, employed too many discourse markers in a short utterance while struggling to continue the talk.

(a) J2: okay

S1: yeah, I can say that I don't know, *let me think* erm *in addition* erm (pause)

J2: what would you do in your girlfriend's house?

S1: just I look her (jury 10, transcript no: 41)

(b) J2: Okay, why do you think family relationships are getting weaker nowadays? Why?

S1: *From my point of view*, uhm *I think* family is the most reliable people and erm (pause)

J2: okay, why the relationships are weaker nowadays?

S1: weaker (jury 10, transcript no: 41)

(c) … and I uhm I think uh driving licence should uhm driving licence eighteen is good but maybe sixteen maybe number sixteen *in my opinion*, actually uhm but uhm I don't have a eh driving licence erm I don't need it because erm and (jury 8, transcript no 29)

Moreover, in the exam, there is a discussion part in which pairs are supposed to interact with each other and present their arguments on the given topic, and their interaction is also graded. The AUSFL speaking criteria has a component on interaction which has the weight of two points out of twenty. The type and quality of interaction in this part can change from pair to pair. While some pairs take a few turns to present their opinions and speak in paragraphs, some others just constantly take turns, interrupt and complete each other's sentences with the use of a lot of discourse markers to indicate agreement or disagreement. This depends on the students' proficiency, the topic of the discussion, and their interaction skills. For instance, as shown in the following extract, a short interaction between two students can include a lot of discourse markers compared to the size of the discourse segment. In this small excerpt, almost every utterance of the interlocutors started with a discourse marker. This type of interaction leads to an increase in the number of especially interpersonal discourse markers compared to the size of students' talks.

S2: No, I think it is people's choice, but it has no any good thing in it I mean

S1: But it is freedom. This things about your individual life.

S2: Yeah, but like those people who smoke in public area so people

S1: Yeah, it is true

S2: get angry so I think

S1: But not (count) all around

S2: No it is not but many people says it it help them feel less stressed in

S1: Yeah (jury 2, transcript no 7)

However, in the first part of the exam, students are asked individual questions and they are not supposed to interact with jury members or their partners. Jury members are supposed to repeat the question if the student does not understand it, and use only phrases like "what else" and "anything else" to encourage the student to produce more language. Since it is difficult to set a standard for interaction among all juries carrying out the exam, and this might affect students' performance and thus grades, the school limits the

interaction between jury members and students. Thus, this part of the exam does not model authentic dialogues between two interlocutors in real life. Therefore, this might be one of the factors that restrict the use of especially interpersonal discourse markers.

Another factor that might affect the results of the correlation test is the fact that students' speaking performances were graded by different instructors. The data for the study was collected from a regular examination conducted at the school, not from a specific evaluation of speaking performance designed for the present study. And, all students took the speaking exam on the same day, thus, there had to be several juries to carry out the examinations. Although the assessments were done according to the same criteria by experienced instructors who carried out the same type of exam for several years, there might have been a slight element of subjectivity in grading. Therefore, all of these issues related to the data of the study which are explained above might have affected the results of the correlation tests between students' use of discourse markers and their speaking scores.

4.3 The Relationship between Turkish Learners' Use of Discourse Markers and Their English Proficiency

In order to examine the relationship between students' use of discourse markers and their English proficiency, their overall proficiency exam scores including language use, speaking, and writing parts were taken into consideration. Again, normality tests were run for data sets of students' total number of discourse markers and their proficiency exam scores, and the results show that both data sets were normally distributed, thus a parametric test, the Pearson correlation coefficient test, was utilized. The results did not show any statistically significant correlations between two these two constructs ($r = -.06$, $p = .55$). Normality test scores of the data sets and the correlation test scores can be seen in table 4.6 and table 4.7 respectively.

Table 4.6. *Normality scores of the data sets of overall proficiency scores and normalised frequency of DMs*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Overall proficiency scores	,075	90	,200*

Normalised frequency of DMs	,048	90	,200*

Table 4.7. *Results of the correlation test between the overall proficiency exam scores and the use of discourse markers*

		Overall proficiency scores	Normalised frequency of DMs
Overall proficiency scores	Pearson Correlation	1	-,063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,552
	N	90	90
Normalised frequency of DMs	Pearson Correlation	-,063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,552	
	N	90	90

Later, the relationship between students' overall proficiency and their use of discourse markers functioning in textual and interpersonal domains was analysed separately. Normality tests were run for the data sets of normalised frequencies of textual and interpersonal markers, and since they were both normally distributed, a Pearson correlation coefficient test was utilized. The results did not show any statistically significant correlations between students' proficiency exam scores and their use of interpersonal and textual discourse markers (r= -.01, p=.88; r=-.06, p=57, respectively). Normality test scores of the data sets and correlation test scores are given in table 4.6 and 4.7 respectively.

Table 4.8. *Normality test scores of the data sets of the normalised frequency of interpersonal and textual DMs used by the students*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Normalised frequency of interpersonal DMs	,087	90	,086
Normalised frequency of textual DMs	,049	90	,200*

Table 4.9. *Results of the correlation test between the overall proficiency exam scores and the two types of discourse markers*

		Overall proficiency scores	Normalised frequency of interpersonal DMs	Normalised frequency of textual DMs
Overall proficiency scores	Pearson Correlation	1	-,015	-,060
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,886	,575
	N	90	90	90
Normalised frequency of interpersonal DMs	Pearson Correlation	-,015	1	-,108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,886		,309
	N	90	90	90
Normalised frequency of textual DMs	Pearson Correlation	-,060	-,108	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,575	,309	
	N	90	90	90

The students who participated in the study took a placement test at the beginning of the school term, and although they were taught at the same level for a full term, their proficiency exam scores had a great range of variety, starting from 36 points to 95 points out of 100. The examination which constituted sixty percent of students' proficiency exam scores was a multiple-choice test, and thus, there was not any element of subjectivity in grading. However, forty percent of the test scores are composed of speaking and writing exam scores. Although they were graded based on the same criteria separately by two graders, they were not all graded by the same two instructors. There were more than twenty instructors took part in the evaluation of writing and speaking performances of the students. Hence, the factor of subjectivity and non-standardisation might slightly affect the results of the correlation test.

Furthermore, there is a statistically significant correlation between the students' speaking exam scores and their proficiency exam scores, $r_s = .62$, $p < .01$, $N = 90$, (The table of correlation matrix of the data sets can be found in Appendix-6). There is a moderate positive correlation between students' two exam scores meaning that students who had a higher score in the proficiency exam also showed a better performance in the speaking

exam. Although this correlation shows the reliability of the examinations and grading process, it also shows that the lack of correlation between students' proficiency exam scores and their use of discourse markers is not an unexpected result since the use of discourse markers is not correlated with speaking scores either. Hence, low proficiency learners' overuse of discourse markers as hesitation markers or fillers or their reliance on the use of certain discourse markers to compensate for their low level of language proficiency and production and exam anxiety might also be among the factors affecting the results of the correlation test between students' proficiency exam scores and their use of discourse markers.

4.4 The comparison of the total number of interpersonal and textual discourse markers used by the students

In order to address the last research question about the difference between the numbers of interpersonal and textual discourse markers employed by the students, inferential statistics were utilized, and since both data sets were normally distributed, a parametric test, paired sample t-test was carried out. The results displayed a statistically significant difference between the total sum of discourse markers functioning in the interpersonal domain (M= 2.95, SD=1.39) and the total sum of discourse markers functioning in the textual domain (M=7.56, SD=1.80); [t (89) =-18.23, p<.01]. During the speaking exam, students employed a significantly higher number of textual discourse markers.

Table 4.10. *Results of the paired sample t-test for the two types of discourse markers used by the students*

		Paired Differences			T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1	Normalised frequency of interpersonal DMs - Normalised frequency of textual DMs	-4,6070945	2,3967490	,2526395	-18,236	89	,000

Four out of five most frequently used discourse markers which constitute almost seventy percent of the total sum of markers were the ones mainly used in the textual domain. “And”, “but”, “because” and “so” are conjunctions which are explicitly taught starting from the beginner level. Their meanings are clear, and they have exact Turkish translations. Thus, students are used to employing these markers in writing and speaking easily. “Also” and “for example” are also given a special focus in the Speakout series which was utilized as the main coursebook during the time of the study. Discourse markers such as “first”, “firstly”, “then”, and “after that” are also taught explicitly as sequencing adverbs in the coursebooks, and students are given several writing tasks to complete using them. The usage of all of these conjunctions and adverbs mentioned here are practiced in-class tasks such as fill-in-the-blanks or sentence writing and in graded written assignments. When all these factors were taken into consideration, the fact that students utilized more textual discourse markers during the speaking exam is not an unexpected result.

CHAPTER 5

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in the order of research questions with reference to the related literature. Pedagogical implications of the study related to the incorporation of the discourse markers EFL curricula to empower students to develop their pragmatic competence, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research are also included in detail in this chapter.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

5.1.1 The total variety of discourse markers used by the participants and the frequencies of them

The results revealed that the students employed 64 different discourse markers in total during their talks in the speaking exam. In total 2925 instances of discourse markers were identified, which constitutes 10. 31 percent of the total word count which is 28346. In the present study, the data did not include the vocal fillers and backchannelling devices such as uh, um, and mhm. The most frequent discourse marker used by the students is "and" which constitutes slightly more than a quarter of the total sum of discourse markers. The five most frequently employed discourse markers which are "and", "because", "I think", "but" and "so" in the order of frequency constitute almost seventy percent of the total number of discourse markers. In a similar study carried out by Aşık (2012), the frequencies of discourse markers used by university students majoring in ELT department were analysed. The results displayed that the students employed a wider range of discourse markers with a total number of 79 different discourse markers. The wider variety of discourse markers used by the students can be attributed to the higher proficiency level of the participants. Since the participants of the study were pre-service English language teachers, it can be presumed that they had a higher level of proficiency compared to the participants of this study who were preparatory school students.

In Aşık's (2012) study, the data included vocal fillers and reactions such as uhh, umm, hmm, and hı-huh. The most frequently used discourse marker was "uhh" and it was

followed by “and”, “so”, “yes” and “but” respectively. Although there are some similarities between the frequency results of the two studies, some differences are also observed. When the vocals are excluded, the total count of the words is higher in Aşık’s study although the total number of discourse markers is lower compared to this study. This can be attributed to the nature of the tasks that are utilized for data collection. In Aşık’s (2012) study, the data was compiled from students’ in-class presentations which is a monologic genre whereas in the present study, the data were collected through a speaking exam in a paired format which had a discussion part, which can be considered more dialogic. Discourse markers tend to occur more in dialogic discourse rather than monologic discourse (Louwerse & Mitchell, 2003). Presentation is also a rather planned genre of discourse, however, the data for this study came from an unplanned discourse, a speaking exam. As Olynyk et al. (1987) noted, discourse markers are employed more frequently in unplanned discourse compared to planned spoken discourse. In both studies, “and” is the most frequently used discourse marker with more hits in the present study when the vocal fillers are excluded. In the present study, “because” is the second most frequently used marker while it ranks 10th in Aşık’s (2012) study, and “so” is the second most frequent marker, but it ranks 5th in the present study. “But” has the same ranks in both frequency lists, however, occurred twice as frequently in the present study. “I think” ranks 3rd in the frequency list of this study, however, the findings of Aşık (2012) showed that it had a really low number of occurrences in the students’ presentations, and it ranked 37th in the frequency list. The differences between the frequency of the discourse markers in both studies can be attributed to the proficiency level of the participants and the type of speaking tasks.

The frequency results of this study are also in line with the findings of the study conducted by Fung and Carter (2007). They carried out a study with secondary school students in Hong Kong, and the results revealed that the most frequently used discourse marker was “and” and it was followed by “but”, “I think”, “yes” and “so” respectively. “Yes” is also a frequent marker in this study, ranking 6th in the list, however, one of the main differences between the results of the two studies is in the number of occurrences of “because”. “Because” had a lower number of occurrences in Fung and Carter’s (2007) data and ranked 7th although it was the second most frequent marker in this study. Another important difference is that “or” appeared more than twice as frequently compared to this

study although the total word count of the data was almost half of this study, and "you know" had also more occurrences in Fung and Carter's data. "I mean" had the same number of occurrences in both studies, however, when the total word count of the data is considered, it can be concluded that it appeared more frequently in the data of Fung and Carter (2007). "Actually" is one of the most frequent ten markers in this study with 90 occurrences, however, it did not appear in the data of Fung and Carter (2007) at all. These differences between both studies can be attributed to the effects of participants' age and mother tongue and the differences in the context and types of the speaking activities.

The results of this study showed that Turkish learners of English overused the discourse marker "I think", and it is the most frequent interpersonal discourse marker. When questions were addressed to them, most of the participants had a tendency to start their speech with "I think", and they were inclined to use it almost every time they presented a new piece of opinion during their individual talk and discussions. As exemplified in the following extract (a), it is heavily used to express personal opinions on a given topic, and it can also be used in the final position as seen in extract (b). Even if students do not start the sentences with it, they use it at the end to clarify that it is a personal opinion rather than a fact. As pointed out by Farahani and Ghane (2022), "I think" can also be used to signpost concluding remarks, and it can collocate with other concluding conjunctions such as "so" and "therefore". As illustrated in extracts (c) and (d), it is also employed by the participants of this study to conclude their speech.

(a) S1: *I think* it will be change my life on career side and *I think* it will be help me for my future job and there are a lot of opportunities for improving myself in university and *I think* it also helps me for future not for only jobs, it's also important for the friendships and social things. *I think* knowledge is like… (jury 5, transcript no 12)

(b) S2: I agree this question. *I think* every university student must have have a part-time job job because this life is a expensive *I think*. Erm we must have a part-time job in the university life *I think*. (jury 2, transcript no 8)

(c) S1: I don't have driving licence but I will take a twenty four because I born in two two thousand I am twenty one years old, I I have a some last last years, *I think* that's all. (jury 8, transcript no 29)

(d) …I think that's good because I don't have any of this feeling in my, in me so ambitious, I would say hardworking they work for everything like it can be job it can be study and that's it *I think.* (jury 2, transcript no 7)

The overuse of the discourse marker "I think" by the learners of English is also observed in the results of other studies in the field. Fung and Carter (2007) also noted the heavy use of "I think" by Chinese learners of English compared to native speaker data and concluded that this automatized and routine usage of the marker indicates pragmatic fossilization. Turkish learners' highly frequent use of "I think" can also be regarded as a sign of pragmatic fossilization. The findings of Huang's (2011) study on exploration of the use of discourse markers by Chinese non-native speakers of English and native speakers also displayed that the non-native speakers used "I think" much more frequently compared to native speakers. Huang noted that "I think" is used to give personal opinions and evaluations, and also utilized to sound less assertive while giving factual information and to preface questions and concluding remarks. These functions can also be observed in the data of the present study. Moreover, Liu (2013) examined the use of some English and Chinese discourse markers by Chinese speakers and compared Chinese speakers' use of these markers with native speakers. The results revealed that Chinese speakers employed "I think" more frequently compared to native speakers and Chinese speakers used the marker as a pause filler which was not a function observed in the native speaker data. The author also noted that the overuse of "I think" and its position according to specific functions can be resulted from the function and use of the Chinese equivalent of the marker. The instances of "I think" functioning as a pause filler were also observed in the data of the present study. Turkish students used the marker prefacing pauses and repeated the marker while planning what to say next. The usage of the Turkish equivalent "bence" as a face-saving marker to decrease assertiveness in initial or final position while giving an opinion should also be taken into consideration while analysing the overuse of "I think" by Turkish learners. Moreover, although its frequency is much lower compared to "I think", "I guess" is also more used in the same sense as "I think" by some students. In a short speech, it was employed frequently as shown in extract (e).

(e) S1: Without the internet, *I guess* I would be so bored because nowadays all my entertainment depends on internet, we are getting lonelier because of internet and if internet doesn't exist

> anymore, we just be lonely and depressed *I guess* because of the loneliness. We don't have that much friends like the past days like our moms or parents did so that would be hard and communication would be so hard *I guess*. I always talk my parents facetime. Without internet it would be so empty like I would miss them so much and *I guess* ev- everything in this world like depends on internet, supermarket like everything (jury 9, transcript no 33)

The markers "I mean" and "you know" did not occur frequently in the research data although they are regarded as some of the most frequent discourse markers employed in spoken discourse. However, this result is parallel to the findings of other studies regarding the use of these markers by non-native speakers. The findings of Aşık (2012) and Öztürk (2018) also showed that Turkish students used these two markers less frequently and for less variety of functions compared to native speakers. Several studies conducted with other non-native speakers of English also displayed the underuse of these two markers. Shimada (2014) carried out a study with Japanese learners and noted that Japanese learners used these two markers less frequently compared to native speakers and thus, incorporation of discourse markers into classroom language and teaching materials should be taken into consideration for improvement in Japanese students' English proficiency. The findings of Fung and Carter's (2007) study also indicated the underuse of "I mean" but especially "you know" by Chinese speakers of English compared to native speakers. In a similar vein, Müller (2005) also pointed out that "you know" is one of the discourse markers used less frequently by German learners of English compared to American native speakers and implied a cause-and-effect relationship between the underuse of "you know" by German speakers and its underrepresentation in German coursebooks. Moreover, Romero Trillo's (2002) study with Spanish child and adult speakers of English also showed that "you know" and "I mean" were employed less frequently by adult non-native speakers compared to native speakers, however, both native and non-native children displayed a comparable use of these markers. Underlying the difference between children's and adults' use of discourse markers, Romero Trillo drew attention to pragmatic fossilization and advocated the need for incorporation of explicit teaching of discourse markers in curricula. Studies with learners with different L1 backgrounds show that the main reason that accounts for the underuse of "you know" and "I mean" must be something different from L1 transfer. Certain arguments related to the limitations of the EFL context can be proposed. Lack of

explicit teaching of these markers in class and lack of representation in coursebooks can be considered as the main reasons.

"Well" was also highly underused by the participants of this study, and it is one of the least frequent markers in the data. This result is also in line with other studies conducted with Turkish learners and also some other non-native speakers of English. Aşık's (2012) study with Turkish ELT students also showed a similar result regarding the use of "well", and although the number of its occurrences was higher in the data, Öztürk (2018) also noted that "well" was the least frequently used discourse marker among the five markers analysed in the study. Results of both studies also showed a difference in the use of this marker by native speakers and by Turkish speakers of English. Also, Polat's (2011) longitudinal study focusing on a Turkish immigrant's development of competence in the use of three discourse markers did not report any instances of "well" in a year. Furthermore, Liao (2009) also noted the underuse of this marker by Chinese speakers of English, and Romero Trillo's (2002) study with Spanish learners also indicated similar results. "Well" does not have an exact Turkish equivalent, and its use is not very frequently exemplified in the coursebooks and overtly taught in the classrooms. Thus, underuse of this marker can also be attributed to the differences in the functions of "well" and its Turkish translations and its underrepresentation in the coursebooks.

"Like" ranks seventh in the frequency list of discourse markers used by the participants of this study with 100 occurrences. It has a high rate of occurrences compared to "you know", "I mean", and "well" which are frequently used for interactive purposes by native speakers. This result complies with the findings of other studies carried out in the Turkish EFL context. Even though the findings showed different rates of occurrences, and the frequency of this marker was still low compared to the native speaker data, the results of both Aşık (2012) and Öztürk (2018) displayed that "like" as a discourse marker had a higher rate of occurrences compared to "you know", "well" and "I mean". Hence, it can be deduced that acquisition of this marker is relatively less challenging for Turkish learners. All four markers, namely, "like", "you know", "I mean", and "well" can be regarded as discourse markers mostly functioning in the interpersonal domain and they are not overtly presented to the students in coursebooks as much as textual discourse markers. However, "like" has at least five times higher rate of occurrences than these other markers. This can

be the result of frequent and multifunctional use of the Turkish equivalent “gibi” in Turkish.

Another point that can be noted about the participants’ choice of discourse markers is their preference for “yes” over “yeah” which can be seen as a more informal counterpart of “yes”, which was an issue also pointed out by Fung and Carter (2007) concerning the findings of their study with Chinese learners. This result is also in line with the findings of Aşık (2012) which showed that “yes” was employed seven times more frequently than “yeah” by the students. These results can be attributed to the type of speaking tasks, the contexts, and students’ lack of exposure to language use in informal contexts. Consequently, it can be concluded that overall, the frequency results of the discourse markers used by the participants of this study mostly overlap with other studies conducted in the Turkish EFL context and some other ESL and EFL contexts.

5.1.2 The relationship between students’ use of discourse markers and their speaking exam scores

The total sums of the discourse markers used by each participant were calculated, and functional analysis of the markers was carried out, and then the number of markers used in the textual and interpersonal domains by every participant was calculated. The results of the correlation test did not show any significant correlation between students’ speaking scores and the total number of discourse markers used by them, and a significant correlation was not also observed between students’ speaking scores and separate sums of two different types of discourse markers. There can be several factors affecting the results of the correlation tests. First of all, for the purpose of this study, all the markers uttered by the participants were counted, and the appropriateness of the use of these markers was not checked. As non-native speakers and relatively low proficiency learners, participants might have employed discourse markers in incorrect ways regarding their functions and positions. Especially learners with low levels of proficiency tended to use discourse markers frequently as pause fillers and hesitation markers, and there were also lots of repetitions of discourse markers consecutively noticed in their data. These types of uses increase the number of markers used by the students despite their inadequate performance in the exam, thus affecting the results of the correlation tests. Moreover, a test-taking setting is regarded

as anxiety triggering situation, hence, this might affect students' speaking performance and their use of discourse markers. Anxiety might have caused more hesitation, and this might have led to more frequent use of hesitation markers or pause fillers or repetition of discourse markers. In addition, some students had a tendency to use certain memorized discourse markers such as "from my point of view" and "in my opinion" to compensate their low performance.

Furthermore, some issues related to the nature of exam setting might have also affected the results. Firstly, each pair allocated to a different time slot was addressed with a different set of questions, and in total, the speaking exam was comprised of more than twenty sets of questions. Although the questions were based on the same set of outcomes, the topics were different, and this might have affected students' performance. With regard to their personal interests or experiences, students might have found some questions less or more challenging, and this might have had an impact on their language production. Moreover, there were twenty instructors taking part in juries of the speaking exam, thus there might have been a slight effect of subjectivity in grading students' speaking performances although they were all evaluated based on the same criteria. Another issue related to the test-taking setting is the time limit. Each pair was allocated 15 minutes, and this included greeting, introduction, and instructors' grading, thus this might have restricted students' performance.

Although they are not directly linked to the overall evaluation of speaking performance, there are some studies focusing on the relationship between the use of discourse markers and fluency which is an essential component of speaking skill. Olynyk et al. (1987) examined the use of five discourse markers in the speeches of French-English bilinguals, and the results revealed that the high fluency group employed more discourse markers than the low fluency group did, and the high fluency group employed more progressives and transitions while the low proficiency group used more regressive type of markers. Öztürk (2018) also investigated the relationship between Turkish pre-service ELT teachers' fluency and their use of five discourse markers, namely, so, well, like, you know and I mean. The findings of the study displayed significant correlations between students' use of these discourse markers and several measurements of fluency such as the number of syllabuses per minute, mean length of run, and perceived fluency rated by a native speaker.

These studies focused on the use of specific markers instead of all markers uttered by the participants, and these markers can be seen as a sign of higher proficiency compared to simple conjunctions such as “and”, “because” and “but” which are explicitly taught starting from the beginning levels. Thus, positive correlations between students’ fluency and use of discourse markers are more of an expected result compared to this study. On the other hand, Götz (2013) conducted a corpus study and concluded that although the discourse markers under the investigation were underused by most of the learners and used in limited variation compared to native speaker data, the use of discourse markers was not a predictor of fluency neither in native speaker data nor in the learner corpus. However, in the present study, not only fluency but overall speaking performances of the students were taken into consideration, and fluency was one of the components which had the least weight in the speaking criteria.

5.1.3 The relationship between students’ use of discourse markers and their overall English proficiency

The proficiency exam scores were taken into account for the overall English proficiency level of the participants since the exam measured four skills of English, namely, reading, listening, speaking and writing, and also knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. The test results did not reveal any correlations between students’ proficiency exam scores and their total use of discourse markers, and the total sums of textual and interpersonal discourse markers used by participants also did not correlate with the proficiency exam scores. Several factors should be taken into consideration while evaluating the results of the correlation test. First of all, this examination was a part of the preparatory school curriculum, and students had to pass this exam to continue their studies in their departments, thus, this exam setting could cause anxiety and affect students’ performance. In addition, more than twenty instructors were involved in the grading of writings and speaking performances of the students, thus an element of subjectivity might have been counted as one of the factors affecting the results. Since the speaking exam was also a part of the proficiency exam, the factors affecting the speaking exam results are also in play in these results.

A few studies focusing on the relationship between learners' proficiency and their use of discourse markers yielded inconclusive results. Sankoff et al. (1997) conducted a study with French-English bilinguals and analysed the use of certain French discourse markers including some which have a direct English equivalent and certain markers which do not have an equivalent in English. The use of two French discourse markers was correlated with the participants' grammar scores. In another study carried out by Wei (2009), discourse markers used by intermediate and advanced level Chinese learners of English were analysed. The markers were divided into two categories, namely, ideational and interactional which are similar to textual and interpersonal categories of functions. The results did not reveal any significant effect of proficiency level on the use of either ideational or interactional discourse markers. This result is in line with the results of the present study as well. The relationship between proficiency level and the use of discourse markers, and the use of different types of discourse markers needs further investigation. More research should be conducted to see whether the use of discourse markers is a sign of high level of proficiency or not. Certain discourse markers which found to be correlated with fluency in previous studies should also be investigated to see whether the use of these markers is also correlated with language proficiency of learners.

5.1.4 The comparison of the total number of interpersonal and textual discourse markers used by the students

When the total sums of interpersonal and textual discourse markers used by the students were compared, it was seen that the participants utilized discourse markers functioning in the textual domain significantly more frequently than the markers functioning in the interpersonal domain. This result reflects the findings of previous research focusing on the non-native speakers' use of discourse markers. Fung and Carter (2007) divided the discourse markers into four categories, namely, structural, referential, interpersonal, and cognitive, and stated that Chinese learners used the markers in structural and referential categories, which are grouped as textual, more frequently and utilized the interpersonal markers in a very restricted sense. Aşık (2012) also used Fung and Carter's taxonomy to analyse the discourse markers used by Turkish ELT students and noted that Turkish speakers mostly depended on textual markers during in-class presentations and

interpersonal markers had a very low level of occurrences compared to occurrences of textual ones used by the participants and the occurrences of interpersonal ones used by the native speakers.

Limited opportunities in EFL contexts for exposure to naturalistic language use can be the main reasons for learners' inadequate use of interpersonal discourse markers. Textual discourse markers are overtly taught in foreign language classrooms starting from low levels. Hays (1992) also noted that the reason for the acquisition of ideational discourse markers is the explicit teaching of them, however, other markers used for interactive purposes require more exposure to authentic language use. Moreover, the sample dialogues in coursebooks were criticised by several researchers for displaying unnatural language use lacking discourse moves (Carter, 1998; Conrad, 2000). Müller (2005) also analysed some German coursebooks in terms of representations of certain discourse markers and claimed that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the frequencies of the discourse markers in the research corpus and their representations in the coursebooks. The researcher noted that "well" was highly represented in coursebooks at beginner and advanced levels and it was also more frequently used by German speakers while representations of "you know" and "like" were inadequate and the use of these markers by German speakers was lower and more restricted. Müller (2005) also questioned the effect of teachers' language use since most of the teachers in Germany were non-native speakers of English, and they did not necessarily have experience of living in an English-speaking country. The situation is quite similar to Turkey since most of the teachers in Turkey are also non-native speakers of English, and most of the time they do not have an opportunity to spend some time in an English-speaking country. As role models for language use, their native-like use of language should be investigated in terms of the use of discourse markers and other pragmatic tools. Zorluer Özer and Okan (2018) analysed two Turkish and two native English instructors' lectures in terms of the use of discourse markers and compared the use of discourse markers by native and non-native English language instructors in terms of variety and frequency. The findings of the study revealed that Turkish EFL instructors used a relatively small variety of discourse markers with a total number of 29 markers compared to native teachers who used 37 different discourse markers in total. The results also showed that they employed discourse markers in the class less frequently than native instructors did

and overused and underused some markers compared to native instructors. In conclusion, teachers' language use and coursebooks should be further investigated to get a better understanding of the use of discourse markers by foreign language learners.

5.2 Conclusion

The present study was carried out to examine the English discourse markers used by Turkish university students in the speaking exam and to investigate the relationship between their use of discourse markers and their speaking scores and proficiency exam scores. The results revealed that Turkish learners employed a large variety of discourse markers although the most frequently used ones were mostly conjunctions such as "and", "because", "but" and "so", and they constituted more than half of the total sum of the markers. The most frequently used interpersonal marker was "I think" which was highly overused by the participants, and it was followed by "yes" and "like". "I mean" and "you know" which are two of the most common discourse markers in the spoken discourse of native speakers had a low number of occurrences in the learner data set of this study. Also, "well" which is another common spoken marker had extremely rare instances in the data.

The correlation tests did not show any significant relationships between the use of discourse markers and students' speaking scores. Many factors such as issues related to the test-taking setting, and overuse of discourse markers by low proficiency learners as hesitation markers and fillers might have had an impact on the results. The findings also did not demonstrate any correlations between students' use of discourse markers and their English proficiency, meaning that the total number of discourse markers used by the high proficiency learners was not significantly higher than the number of markers used by low level learners. The results also demonstrated that Turkish students used textual discourse markers significantly more frequently than interpersonal discourse markers, which overlaps with the findings of previous studies.

In conclusion, it is expected that the findings and implications of this study would contribute to the investigation of interlanguage pragmatics of learners and improvement of English teaching practice and design of the curricula for Turkish learners of English.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

The present study was conducted in an EFL context, thus, the main sources of language input for most of the participants were coursebooks, and in-class input and interaction, mainly teacher talk. However, coursebooks' representativeness of authentic language has always been a controversial issue. It has been put forward by several researchers that the dialogues in coursebooks are unnatural samples of real language use lacking authenticity. Carter (1998) noted that the language in the coursebooks illustrates unrealistically ideal interactions where all interlocutors take turns without any interruption and any simultaneous utterances, almost always speak in complete sentences, fluently without any pauses or hesitations, and converse with others in cooperation and paying attention to social etiquette. Thus, although these dialogues are perfect examples of grammatical structures and theme-related lexicon, naturally they lack discourse-level elements of the target language such as ellipsis, backchannelling, hedges, and discourse markers, and thus might lead to a deficiency in pragmatics of the target language.

As the studies of discourse analysis got developed and prevalent in the field of linguistics and language teaching, they had an impact on teaching of L2 speaking. Tyler (1992) asserted that studies of discourse analysis proved that "the listener's understanding is affected not only by pronunciation and grammar but also discourse-level patterns of language use" (p. 713). However, realisation of the importance of authentic language use and the results of studies of corpora and discourse analysis did not change language teaching dramatically at once. The pace of the progress was rather slow, and even in the early years of the 21st century, the findings of the corpus research and the studies of discourse analysis did not find a significant place in coursebooks and in language classrooms. Conrad (2000) pinpointed that "if the majority of grammar books are an accurate indication, most grammar teaching unaffected to any significant extent by the advances brought corpus linguistics" (p. 556). Moreover, the style and structures of spoken language might have also been regarded as not sophisticated enough to be worth teaching, and thus, most coursebooks adopted mostly the style of written language in the examples of spoken discourse as well. McCarthy (2000) noted that "some of the structural options frequently found in natural data are ignored or underplayed in language teaching (especially those found in spoken data, which are often dismissed as degraded or bad 'style'), probably owing to the continued dominance of standards taken from the written code" (p. 51). Lam

(2010) compared the frequency and uses of the discourse marker “well” in an international corpus of spoken English and a textbook database and analysed the data by dividing them into two different types of texts, namely, discussions and presentations. The analysis revealed significant discrepancies in the use of the discourse marker between the two data sets in terms of frequency, position, and function. While “well” has a higher rate of occurrences in discussions in textbooks when compared to the corpus data, it is rarely presented in presentations in textbooks although it has at least five times higher occurrences in presentations in the corpus data. Moreover, while almost ninety percent of the instances of “well” appeared in the initial position in the textbooks, 58 percent of the instances in the corpus occurred in initial and 38 percent of them occurred in medial positions in the corpus data. In terms of discourse functions, some main and minor functions such as framing and linking are not presented in textbooks whereas responsive use of the marker is overly presented. The findings of the study indicated that considering the significance of discourse markers in the attainment of pragmatic competence, coursebooks should present a more naturalistic and comprehensive use of discourse markers in terms of frequency and variety of functions. Therefore, coursebooks as one of the main sources for EFL students might limit their exposure to the authentic target language, especially in terms of spoken discourse, and thus hinder their development of pragmatic competence.

The results of the present study revealed that students utilized textual discourse markers that are explicitly taught in coursebooks more than interpersonal discourse markers. Interpersonal discourse markers frequently used by native speakers of English, such as “you know”, “I mean”, and “like” did not have a high rate of occurrences in the data set. This indicates a need for a better evaluation of the coursebooks and an improved curriculum which includes opportunities for students to engage in authentic language use. Since EFL learners’ production of language outside the school is limited, more opportunities should be created for students. These could be extracurricular activities such as games or group discussions where students can engage in informal language outside the classroom since discourse markers tend to occur more in informal language. The design of classroom activities can also be re-evaluated, more real-life tasks can be designed and the amounts of pair and group work in class time can be increased to create more opportunities for students to have natural interaction. Brillanceau (2005) emphasized the importance of

decreasing teacher involvement in in-class tasks so that students can have more opportunities to engage in spontaneous conversations and noted that when time allocations are made for pair and group work, some extra time should be allocated for students' negotiation of meaning and informal conversations rather than just giving sufficient time to complete the tasks. Creating some space for casual conversations can encourage students to produce authentic language which entails discourse moves such as hedging, backchanneling, self-repair, turn-taking, and face-saving and thus utilize more discourse markers.

Furthermore, another main source of input in the target language for an EFL learner is teacher talk considering that they are most exposed to it in the classroom. Cook (2008) pinpointed that "about 70 percent of the utterances in most classrooms come from the teacher" (p. 156). Thus, teachers' use of discourse markers is of utmost importance for students' acquisition of these items. Vickov and Jakupcevic (2017) analysed the use of discourse markers by non-native EFL teachers in Croatia working in primary and secondary schools. Although the results revealed the use of a good variety of discourse markers, the most frequently used four markers, namely, "ok", "so", "and" and "mhm/aha" which can be mostly related to classroom language constituted fifty percent of the data. Öztürk (2018) also carried out a study with Turkish pre-service EFL teachers and compared their use of discourse markers with the use of native speakers, and a discrepancy in frequency and the variety of functions were found between the two groups. The researcher underlined the importance of raising pre-service teachers' awareness of different genres in spoken and written discourse and the variety of functions and uses of discourse markers in these different genres and referred to a need for some changes at teacher education level regarding the curricula of ELT programmes at universities. Moreover, with regard to the findings of their study which displayed a low level of variety and frequency in the use of discourse markers by Turkish EFL teachers compared to native teachers, Zorluel Özer and Okan (2018) suggested that corpus-based activities which involve analysis of authentic data should be included in the curricula of ELT programmes to raise pre-service teachers' awareness of discourse markers and to train them on the usage of authentic language data in classrooms. Furthermore, Liao's (2009) study with Chinese teaching assistants also revealed that participants' use of discourse markers changed according to the identity that

they wanted to present and the type of interactions in which they were involved. In classroom discussions, teaching assistants preferred to present a professional identity and employed fewer discourse markers. Therefore, as a role model for the target language use and as a source of language input, EFL teachers should pay attention to the use of discourse markers more and create opportunities for spontaneous conversations to engage in with their students in which the variety of discourse markers can be enhanced. Daily conversations can set better examples of spoken language and foster incidental learning.

As put forward by Jaworski (1998), "pragmatic competence is an aspect of communicative competence and refers to the ability to communicate appropriately in particular contexts of use" (p. 249). Acquiring the pragmatics of a foreign language is of utmost importance to engage in effective communication appropriately without causing any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the language since pragmatics is "concerned with people's intentions, assumptions, beliefs, goals and the kinds of actions they perform while using language" (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000, p.19). Acquisition of grammatical structures and vocabulary of a foreign language would not be sufficient alone for a learner to engage in socially and culturally acceptable interactions in various contexts. However, Romero Trillo (2002) advocated that developing pragmatic competence is rather challenging in a formal education environment which does not provide students with natural contexts for language use. Although discourse markers are seen as important elements of pragmatics of a language and acquisition of them is vital to develop pragmatic competence for language learners, it is rather a neglected area in foreign language teaching curricula, materials, and practice. When limitations of EFL context are taken into consideration, as mentioned above necessary adjustments and adaptations to curricula and classroom interactions and activities should be made to create more opportunities for students to develop their pragmatic competence and to raise their awareness of features of spoken discourse.

5.4 Limitations

The present study was based on the analysis of spoken discourse; hence this brings certain limitations related to data collection and analysis. Composing a research corpus of spoken discourse and making it available for analysis is a laborious process which requires

manual transcription and interpretation. The corpus for this study was composed of 90 students' talks in a speaking exam with a total word count of 28346. Meyer (2002) notes that as a general rule, the bigger the size of the research corpus, the better it is for the analysis and reliability of the results. However, Biber (1993) emphasizes the issue of representativeness over sample size: "sample size is not the most important consideration in selecting a representative sample; rather, a thorough definition of the target population and decisions concerning the method of sampling are prior considerations. Representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population" (p. 243). Although this study can be regarded as a small-scale corpus study, the participants are a heterogenous group of university students who study in various departments in a state university, coming from different cities, not a group from a specific department, thus the sample constitutes a good representative of Turkish adult learners of English.

Furthermore, the genre, type, and context of the tasks can also affect the use and frequency of discourse markers. Although the questions of the speaking exam are not related to any academic field specifically and do not require the use of formal language, the test-taking setting is not necessarily regarded as an informal context by the students. As Müller (2005) states discourse markers are employed more frequently in informal contexts of language use. Although the jury members tried to calm down the students and have a little chat at the beginning to help them with their exam anxiety, most of the students were not used to taking speaking exams, and this situation might increase their affective filter. Anxiety and nervousness can affect students' speaking performance and also their use of discourse markers. Some students tend to use more discourse markers as fillers and hesitation markers when they have a high level of anxiety.

One of the limitations of the study was the variety of the questions included in the speaking exam. Each pair in different time slots was addressed a different set of questions. Although they did not require any specialized knowledge, the topic range of the speaking examination was quite large and diverse, and the questions were related to different topics such as family relations, technology, travel, gender roles in family and society, and students' own life experience and preferences. Sample questions retrieved from the transcripts were given below to illustrate the topic range of questions.

"What is your favourite national/religious holiday? Why?"

"What are the advantages of living away from your family as a university student?"

"What can be done to prevent violence against animals?"

"How does technology affect human relationships?"

"What superpower would you like to have for one day and why?

These questions were not developed according to the themes and structures specifically covered in the coursebook, but they were all designed to assess a certain level of language proficiency based on GSE outcomes. Even though they were designed to have the same level of difficulty since they were written based on the same range of outcomes, they required different use of language, different grammatical structures, and ranges of vocabulary. Moreover, students might find some questions more challenging subjectively since they might not appeal to their interests, or some questions could be considered as easier since they have more life experiences or opinions on that topic to share. Therefore, non-standardisation of the questions might affect students' speaking performance, length of speech, and thus the use of discourse markers.

Another issue related to the nature of the study and especially the data collection methods is the number of instructors grading students' speaking performance. The data did not come from a corpus specifically created and an assessment process designed for this study. The learner data set was compiled from the recordings of a speaking exam that was carried out as a part of school curriculum. All the students took the exam in concurrent sessions on the same day which means several juries took part in the assessment. The data came from ten juries which equal to twenty instructors. All the evaluations were carried out based on the same criteria which were used in the school for more than five years and all the jury members were experienced instructors who took part in the conduct of this exam for several years. Although instructors in the same jury had an opportunity to negotiate with each other before the final grading, there still could be slight differences among juries resulting from subjectivity. This might have had an impact on the results of the correlation test between speaking scores of the students and their use of discourse markers.

Furthermore, the speaking exam had two parts including individual questions and a discussion part. In the first part, jury members' interactions with students were limited, they were not supposed to paraphrase any questions, explain their own opinions, or have discussions with students, they were only supposed to read the question again if the student

did not understand it and try to encourage students to produce more language with questions and phrases such as “anything else”, “what else”. However, slight differences were noticed in the jury members’ interactions with students regarding their comments on students’ answers and naturally their reactions while listening to students. In the second part, students had a discussion with their partners on a given topic, and the level of interaction between the two pairs could be affected by their proficiency, anxiety levels, and their willingness to participate in the discussion. All these factors might affect students’ speaking performance and their use of discourse markers.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The methodology, findings, and implications of this study open up promising domains of inquiry related to the use of discourse markers by language learners. First of all, with 90 participants and 28346 total word count, this study can be regarded as a small-scale corpus study, thus replication of the study with a larger learner data set can increase the generalisability of the results. The findings of the study showed the frequency of discourse markers used by intermediate level students. Further studies focusing on the comparison of discourse markers used by students at different levels of proficiency can provide insight into the acquisition of discourse markers and the interlanguage pragmatics of learners. The present study was conducted with university students, thus, further research which investigates the use of discourse markers by learners from different age groups and backgrounds can display a broader picture of the use of discourse markers by Turkish learners of English. Moreover, studies focusing on the comparison of the use of discourse markers by young learners and adult learners can also shed light on the pragmatic fossilization in Turkish speakers of English as exemplified by Romero Trillo’s (2002) study with Spanish young and adult learners of English.

Furthermore, the corpus data for this study was gathered in a test-taking setting, and there was a time limit since the schedule for the speaking exam was arranged in 15-minute slots. The setting and the time limit might have restricted students’ speaking performance. Since this was an exam situation, different questions were asked to each pair and several instructors were involved in grading as jury members. Hence, a more informal interview setting can be arranged for the data collection. Also, the same set of questions should be

addressed to each participant, and performances of all the participants should be evaluated by the same graders. Discourse markers are more frequently employed in informal discourse and students might feel more relaxed in an interview setting without any formal restrictions or time limits. With a low affective filter, knowing that there will not be any consequences affecting their academic grades in the end, students might perform better at interviews, and this might give more reliable and conclusive results regarding their speaking performance and use of discourse markers. The use of same set of questions and the evaluation by the same graders also increase the reliability of the results.

The genre and type of activity can affect the use of discourse markers. As stated by several researchers, discourse markers tend to occur more frequently in informal contexts and dialogic discourse (Louwerse & Mitchell, 2003; Müller, 2005). Although the exam had a paired format and a discussion part in which two pairs were supposed to interact with each other, the first part of the exam in which individual questions were addressed to each student can be considered relatively dialogic compared to presentations or speeches since they had the limited opportunity to interact with the jury members, the quality of the interaction can be questioned. Thus, learners' use of discourse markers in different types of activities such as problem-solving activities, group discussions, various task completions, and role plays which belong to different genres in spoken discourse and which require different registers and levels of formality should be investigated. The type and frequency of discourse markers employed during these tasks can change according to the level of interaction and formality.

Further research can also be extended to functional analysis of specific discourse markers. Appropriateness of the markers employed by the participants was not investigated in this study, thus, functional analysis of the markers can provide insight into the learners' awareness of various pragmatic functions of discourse markers. There are only few studies focusing on the comparison of the use of certain discourse markers by native speakers and Turkish learners of English (Aşık, 2012; Öztürk, 2018). Hence, there is further need for research focusing on the analysis of functions of the discourse markers employed by native speakers and Turkish speakers to gain a better understanding of Turkish learners' mastery of usage of discourse markers and their awareness of use of discourse markers for interactive purposes. Moreover, learners' L1 can also affect the use of discourse markers in

the target language. Existence of L1 equivalences of certain discourse markers can affect the frequency of use and the functions that the markers fulfil. Thus, cross-linguistic studies regarding the use of discourse markers can explain the L1 transfer in terms of the use of discourse markers.

In relation to the implications of this study mentioned in previous sections, further studies should be conducted to investigate the frequency and functions of discourse markers in classroom language and teacher talk. EFL context is rather disadvantageous for language learners regarding the exposure to the natural language and having the opportunity to practice the language. As one of the main sources of language input, investigation of the teacher talk and classroom language is needed since it can provide a better picture of the language that students are exposed to in the learning environment and thus a better understanding of how students acquire discourse markers. Another recommendation for further research related to the implications of this study is the investigation of the representation of discourse markers in coursebooks which can also explain students' overuse or underuse of certain markers.

Furthermore, experimental studies focusing on the effects of explicit teaching of discourse markers also need to be undertaken since the findings of these studies help teaching practitioners, especially in the EFL contexts to empower language learners to attain pragmatic competence. Incorporation of discourse markers into foreign language curricula should be investigated. Further research is also needed to examine the effects of pedagogical interventions and modifications to classroom activities to enhance the use of discourse markers. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings and implications of this study can provide foreign language teaching practitioners, and curriculum designers with additional insight into the contribution of the use of discourse markers to the communicative competence of the learners and bring about more research focusing on the various aspects of the use of discourse markers and foreign language acquisition.

REFERENCES

Aijmer, K. (2002). *English discourse particles: Evidence from a corpus*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Andersen, G. (2001). *Pragmatic markers and sociolinguistic variation: A relevance theoretic approach to the language of adolescents*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Arya, T. (2020). Exploring discourse marker use in Thai university students' conversations. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 13 (1), 247-267.

Asik, A. (2012). *Discourse markers and spoken English: nonnative use in the Turkish EFL setting.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ankara: Gazi University, Institute Of Educational Sciences.

Atkinson, J. M., & Heritage, J. (Eds.). (1984). *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge University Press.

Bialystok, E., & Hakuta, K. (1994). *In other words*: *The science and psychology of second-language acquisition.* New York: Basic Books.

Biber, D. (1993). Representativeness in corpus design. *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 8 (4), 243-257.

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., Finegan, E., & Quirk, R. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English* (Vol. 2). London: Longman.

Blakemore, D. (1987). *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Blakemore, D. (1992). *Understanding utterances: An introduction to pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Blakemore, D. (2002). *Relevance and linguistic meaning: The semantics and pragmatics of discourse markers.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Boxer, D. (1993). Complaints as positive strategies: what the learner needs to know. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27 (2), 277-299.

Brillanceau, D. (2005). Spontaneous conversations: A window into learners' autonomy. *Focus on Basics: Connecting Research and Practice*, 8 (A), 22–25.

Brinton, L. J. 1990. The development of discourse markers in English. In J. Fisiak (Ed.), Historical linguistics and philology, (pp. 45-71). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brinton, L. J. (1996). *Pragmatic markers in English: Grammaticalization and discourse functions.* Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brown, G. R., & Yule, G. (1986). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge University Press.

Bu, J. (2013). A study of the acquisition of discourse markers by Chinese learners of English. *International Journal of English Studies,* 13 (1), 29-50.

Buysse, L. (2012). *So* as a multifunctional discourse marker in native and learner speech. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44 (13), 1764-1782.

Carter, R. (1998). Orders of reality: CANCODE, communication, and culture. *ELT Journal, 52*(1), 43-56.

Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge Grammar of English: A Comprehensive Guide. Spoken and Written English.* Cambridge University Press.

Castro, C. M. C. (2009). The use and functions of discourse markers in EFL classroom interaction. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, (11), 57-77.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching: A guide for language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.

Chaudron, C., & Richards, J. C. (1986). the effect of discourse markers on the comprehension of lectures. *Applied Linguistics*, 7 (2), 113–127.

Conrad, S. (2000). Will corpus linguistics revolutionize grammar teaching in the 21st century?. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34 (3), 548-560.

Cook, V. (2008). *Second language learning and language teaching* (4th ed). Hodder Education, an Hachette UK Company.

Diskin, C. (2017). The use of the discourse-pragmatic marker ‘like’ by native and nonnative speakers of English in Ireland. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 120, 144-157.

Erman, B. (2001). Pragmatic markers revisited with a focus on *you know* in adult and adolescent talk. *Journal of Pragmatics,* 33, 1337-1359.

Evison, J. (2010). What are the basics of analysing a corpus?. In *The Routledge handbook of corpus linguistics* (pp. 122-135). Routledge.

Farahani, M. V., & Ghane, Z. (2022). Unpacking the function (s) of discourse markers in academic spoken English: a corpus-based study. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 1-22.

Fischer, K. (2006). Towards an understanding of the spectrum of approaches to discourse particles: Introduction to the volume. In K. Fischer (Ed.), *Approaches to discourse particles* (pp. 1-20). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Fox Tree, J. E. (2006). Placing like in telling stories. *Discourse Studies*, 8 (6), 723-743.

Fraser, B. (1988). Types of English discourse markers. *Acta Linguistica Hungarica,* 38 (1-4), 19-33.

Fraser, B. (1990). An approach to discourse markers. *Journal of Pragmatics,* 14, 383-395.

Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers in English?. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 931-952.

Fraser, B. (2006). On the conceptual-procedural distinction. *Style,* 40 (1-2), 24-32.

Fraser, B. (2015). The combining of Discourse Markers–A beginning. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 86, 48-53.

Fuller, J. M. (2003a). The influence of speaker roles on discourse marker use. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35, 23-45.

Fuller, J. M. (2003b). Use of the discourse marker like in interviews. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7 (3), 365-377.

Fung, L. and Carter, R. (2007). Discourse markers and spoken English: Native and learner use in pedagogic settings. *Applied Linguistics*, 28 (3), 410-439.

Götz, S. (2013). *Fluency in native and nonnative English speech* (Vol. 53). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Hansen, M. B. M. (1997). Alors and donc in spoken French: A reanalysis. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 28 (2), 153–187.

Hays, P. R. (1992). Discourse markers and L2 acquisition. *Papers in Applied Linguistics-Michigan*, 7, 24-34.

Hellermann, J. and Vergun, A. (2007). Language which is not taught: The discourse marker use of beginning adult learners of English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39 (1), 157-179.

House, J. (2009). Subjectivity in English as Lingua Franca discourse: The case of you know. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 6 (2). 171-193.

Huang, L. F. (2011). *Discourse markers in spoken English: A corpus study of native speakers and Chinese non-native speakers.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

Jaworski, A. (1998). Pragmatic competence. In K. Johnson and H. Johnson (Eds.), *Encyclopedic dictionary of applied linguistics* (p. 249). Oxford: Blackwell.

Jucker, A. H. 1993. The discourse marker well: A relevance-theoretical account. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 19, 435-452.

Jucker, A. H., & Ziv, Y. (1998). Discourse markers: Introduction. In A. H. Jucker & Y. Ziv (Eds.), *Discourse markers: Descriptions and theory* (pp. 1-12). Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Jung, J. Y. (2009). *Discourse markers in contrast: but, actually and well in native-nonnative English conversations between friends*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. the USA: Columbia University, Teachers College.

Kecskes, I. (2014). *Intercultural Pragmatics*. OUP USA.

Knott, A., & Dale, R. (1994). Using linguistic phenomena to motivate a set of coherence relations. *Discourse processes*, 18 (1), 35-62.

Lam, P. W. (2010). Discourse particles in corpus data and textbooks: The case of well. *Applied Linguistics*, 31 (2), 260-281.

Lamiroy, B. (1994). Pragmatic connectives and L2 acquisition: The case of French and Dutch. *Pragmatics*, 4 (2), 183-201.

Lenk, U. (1998a). Discourse markers and global coherence in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30 (2), 245-257.

Lenk, U. (1998b). Marking discourse coherence. Function of discourse markers in spoken English. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Levinson, S.C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Liao, S. (2009). Variation in the use of discourse markers by Chinese teaching assistants in the US. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41 (7), 1313-1328.

Louwerse, M. M., & Mitchell, H. H. (2003). Toward a taxonomy of a set of discourse markers in dialog: A theoretical and computational linguistic account. *Discourse Processes*, 35 (3), 199-239.

Liu, B. (2013). Effect of first language on the use of English discourse markers by L1 Chinese speakers of English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 45 (1), 149-172.

Macaulay, R. (2002). You know, it depends. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34 (6), 749-767.

Maschler, Y. (1994). Metalanguaging and discourse markers in bilingual conversation. *Language in Society*, 23 (3), 325–366.

Maschler, Y. (1998). Rotsè lishmoa kéta?'wanna hear something weird/funny [lit.'a segment']?': The discourse markers segmenting Israeli Hebrew talk-in-interaction. *Discourse markers: Description and theory*, 13-60.

McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*. Cambridge University Press.

Mei, W. (2012). *A Corpus-based comparative study of pragmatic markers: 'I mean' and 'you know' in native and non-native conversation.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Liverpool: University of Liverpool.

Meyer, C. F. (2002). *English Corpus Linguistics: An Introduction. Studies in English Language*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Mishra, P., Pandey, C. M., Singh, U., Gupta, A., Sahu, C., & Keshri, A. (2019). Descriptive statistics and normality tests for statistical data. *Annals of Cardiac Anaesthesia*, 22 (1), 67-72.

Müller, S. (2005). *Discourse markers in native and non-native English discourse*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Olynyk, M., d'Anglejan, A. and Sankoff, D. (1987). A quantitative and qualitative analysis of speech markers in the native and second language speech of bilinguals. *Applied Psycholinguistics,* 8 (2), 121-136.

Östman, J.-O. (1982). The symbiotic relationship between pragmatic particles and impromptu speech. In N. Erik Enkvist (Ed.), *Impromptu speech: A symposium* (pp. 147-177). Åbo: The research Institute of the Åbo Akademi Foundation.

Öztürk, Y. (2018). *Discourse markers in native and non-native spoken English: a corpus-based comparison of Turkish and British University students' employment of discourse markers in informal interviews*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. Eskişehir: Anadolu University, Graduate School of Educational Sciences.

Polat, B. (2011). Investigating acquisition of discourse markers through a developmental learner corpus. *Journal of Pragmatics,* 43*, 3745-3756.*

Redeker, G. (1990). Ideational and pragmatic markers of discourse structure. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 367-381.

Redeker, G. (1991). Linguistic markers of discourse structure. *Linguistics*, 29, 1139-1172.

Romero-Trillo, J. (2002). The pragmatic fossilization of discourse markers in non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 769-784.

Sankoff, G., Thibault, P., Nagy, N., Blondeau, H., Fonollosa, M. and Gagnon, L. (1997). Variation in the use of discourse markers in a language contact situation. *Language Variation and Change*, 9 (2), 191-217.

Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schourup, L. (1985). *Common discourse particles in English conversation*. New York: Garland

Schourup, L. (1999) Discourse markers. *Lingua*, 107, 227-265.

Shimada, K. (2014). Contrastive interlanguage analysis of discourse markers used by non-native and native English speakers. *JALT Journal*, 36 (1), 47-67.

Siepmann, D. (2005). *Discourse markers across languages: A contrastive study of second-level discourse markers in native and non-native text with implications for general and pedagogic lexicography*. Routledge.

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1996). *Relevance: Communication and cognition* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Svartvik, J. 1980. *Well* in conversation. In Greenbaum, S., G. Leech and J. Svartvik (Eds.), *Studies in English linguistics for Randolph Quirk* (pp. 167-177). London: Longman.

Şahin Kızıl, A. (2021). Discourse markers in learner speech: a corpus based comparative study. *Dil Eğitimi ve Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 7 (1), 1-16.

Taboada, M. (2006). Discourse markers as signals (or not) of rhetorical relations. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38 (4), 567-592.

Tannen, B. (1981). New York Jewish conversational style. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 31, 133-149.

Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4 (2), 91-112.

Tyler, A. (1992). Discourse structure and the perception of incoherence in international teaching assistants' spoken discourse. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26 (4), 713-729.

Vickov, G., & Jakupcevic, E. (2017). Discourse markers in non-native EFL teacher talk. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 7 (4), 649-671.

Wei, M. (2009). *A comparative study of the oral proficiency of Chinese learners of English: A discourse marker perspective*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University.

Williams, J. (1992). Planning, discourse marking, and the comprehensibility of international teaching assistants. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26 (4), 693-711.

Wilson, D., & Sperber, D. (1993). Linguistic form and relevance. *Lingua*, 90 (1-2), 1-25.

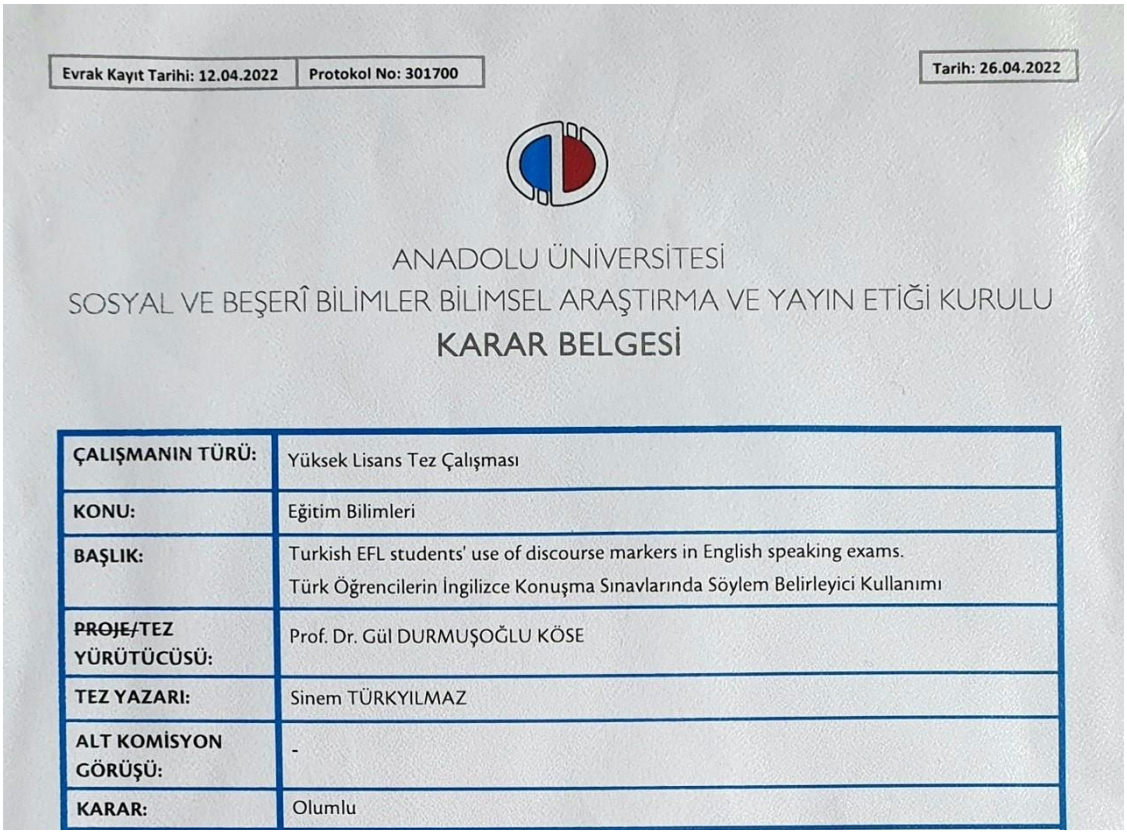
Wooffitt, R. (2005). *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: A Comparative and Critical Introduction* (First). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Yang, L. (2006). Integrating prosodic and contextual cues in the interpretation of discourse markers. In K. Fischer (Ed.), *Approaches to discourse particles* (265–298). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Zorluel Özer, H. and Okan, Z. (2018). Discourse markers in EFL classrooms: A corpus-driven research. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 14 (1), 50-66.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX-1 Research Ethics Committee Approval



Evrak Kayıt Tarihi: 12.04.2022 | Protokol No: 301700

Tarih: 26.04.2022

ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERÎ BİLİMLER BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU
KARAR BELGESİ

ÇALIŞMANIN TÜRÜ:	Yüksek Lisans Tez Çalışması
KONU:	Eğitim Bilimleri
BAŞLIK:	Turkish EFL students' use of discourse markers in English speaking exams. Türk Öğrencilerin İngilizce Konuşma Sınavlarında Söylem Belirleyici Kullanımı
~~PROJE~~/TEZ YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ:	Prof. Dr. Gül DURMUŞOĞLU KÖSE
TEZ YAZARI:	Sinem TÜRKYILMAZ
ALT KOMİSYON GÖRÜŞÜ:	-
KARAR:	Olumlu

APPENDIX- 2 Transcription Conventions

The transcription symbols used here are common to conversation analytic research, and were developed by Gail Jefferson. The following symbols are used in the data.

(0.5)	The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.
(.)	A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates pause in the talk less then two tenths of a second.
˙hh	A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath. The more 'h's, the longer the in-breath.
hh	An 'h' indicates an out-breath. The more 'h's the longer the breath.
(( ))	A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity. For example ((*banging sound*))
-	A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
:::	Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
( )	Empty parentheses/brackets indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
(guess)	The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear fragment.
.	A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
Under	Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
↑↓	Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.
CAPITALS	With the exception of proper nouns, capital letters indicate a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
° °	Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
Thaght	A 'gh' indicates that word in which it is placed had a guttural pronunciation.
> <	'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.

=	The 'equals' sign indicates contiguous utterances.
[	Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech
]	indicate the onset (and end) of a spate of overlapping talk.

A more detailed description of these transcription symbols can be found in Atkinson and Heritage (1984: ix–xvi).

APPENDIX- 3 A Sample Transcript

(For the sake of confidentiality, all names were replaced with pseudonyms)

(S1: John, S2: Nancy, J1: Kate, J2: Monica)

J2: Can I see your ID card?

J1: Can I take yours?

J1: Okay, thank you. Allright John. Please sign next to your names.

J1: And good morning, how are you?

S1: I am fine, thank you teacher, and you?

J2: We are fine, thank you, so my name is Kate and this is my collegue Monica. So John, let's start with you, before the exam can you introduce yourself briefly?

S1: My name is John. I am nineteen years old. I am from Bursa and my department is business

J2: administration

S1: Yes

J2: Okay, thank you. Nancy.

S2: My name is Nancy. I am twenty years old. My department is electronic engineering.

J2: Engineering. Where are you from?

S2: A…….

J2: Okay, so there are two parts in the exam. In the first part, we will ask each of you two questions in turn. And John, now it is your turn, your first question. How would your life change without the internet? Explain in detail. How would your life change without the internet?

S1: Internet uh it's very important and I think it changed the world but if uh internet don't we don't reach the internet ,I think world can be difficult for peoples and erm we can't learn everythings I think, it is good and innovation is can be very low in the world and I think internet very comfortable for research a:nd this, internet, nowadays really need to internet.

J2: mhm mhm

S1: For example we can make our our job interview in the internet or work and travel interview. It is really good for communication. We can talk to peoples on the world. It is very important for me I think, and if it is not here I think it is so bad for world.

J2: Okay, thank you John and Nancy, your first question. What is the worst news you have heard recently?

S2: ºworst newsº I think for me, in my life?

J2: mhm mhm, recently

S2: Recently, my class was online

J2: mhm mhm

S2: One of my friend was covid firstly and then she was good but our teacher's daughter was covid and our lessons have to be online and I hate online lessons because uh wake up and I have to dress up and but I am at home a::nd I have to attend the class and I learn, I don't learn anything from online classes and that's awful for me.

J2: So, how long did it take?

S2: Two or twenty days

J2: mhm mhm

S2: I miss my friends and anything got from them and I miss my teacher of course. I love my class.

J1: What a good student

((All giggle))

J2: Okay, thank you Nancy. John your second question. How do eating habits affect people's health? How do eating habits affect people's health? Explain in detail.

S1: Eating habits is different other cultures and uh eating habits uh effective people's life, for example uhm one man who eat meat can be angry and nervous but uh if uh people's eat vegetables and fruits I think they can be peaceful lifestyle ºand itº they love, we can see the other cultures eat habits and they they ambitious situations. It is all

J2: Any other examples

S1: I am thinking but

J2: Okay

S1: Maybe, it is important I think. They they affect people's life, eating habits it's different.

J2: Okay, thank you John. Nancy, what are the advantages of living in a small city? Explain in detail.

S2: I think the best advantage is easy transportation because everything is next to each other a::nd then it is not crowded a:nd it's not it doesn't have it doesn't noisy it's calm

and you can breathe its clean air. Erm, I think small city is doesn't have much pollution, you and other ºthingº a:::nd everyone know each other and people our friends, everyone and everyone smile each other and me erm and small city is I was living a small city and A…….. is small city. I know all of my neighbours and they help me every time and my family and my sister, I also help them always because we always know each other but in a big city you can't do that and people don't trust anyone (excuse but), ºit isº

J2: Okay, that's enough

J1: Okay

J2: Thank you very much.

J1: Now it is time for the second part guys. In this part, we will give both of you a statement and a related picture, okay? And you will discuss it in detail in about two or three minutes. You can either agree or disagree with your partner, that's okay. You will have one minute to think about it when I share your statement with you, okay. For the recording now I will share it with you. It says senior citizens older than seventy should not be allowed to drive. Do you agree or disagree? For one minute you can think about it, when you are ready you can start.

((a minute later))

J2: Ready?

J1: You can keep it and turn to each other please.

S2: Do you agree or disagree?

S1: I think seventy citizens senior can be drive?

S2: Why?

S1: Because maybe they can healthy person and they can drive the car but what we eh we can't we don't say illegal I think, ºit isº erm

S2: Okay, I think they shouldn't because in generally in Turkey over over seventy peoples are don't doesn't don't think clearly. My grandfather, she he he can distracted easily and he: can get tired easily and they also have a lot of health problems and I think it is not good for old ones

S1: But for example they need to go anywhere but they don't want to use public transportation and I think they must do drive their cars

S2: Yes, you are right, but you are right maybe they they they need it but you child or grandson granddaughter help them can help them

S1: I think maybe he is he is a lonely man

S2: Poor

S1: Yeah

S2: I don't know what should he do?

S1: Maybe they don't have any friends or family member

S2: He can use taxi

S1: Yes, taxi but they don't like taxi ((giggle)) or their transportation

S2: Okay, you are right, but it is not (pause). They need help I, they can't use on your own on their own

J2: Okay, thank you, that's all

J1: Can I take it back?

J2: Have a nice day

J1: Bye bye

S1: Thank you

APPENDIX- 4 Sample Questions of The Speaking Exam

(Yeterlik sınavı, retrieved from https://ydyo.anadolu.edu.tr/ders-materyalleri/yeterlik-sinavi, retrieval date: 14.12.2022)

Part A (Individual Talk)

Section 1:

* How did you study for the University Entrance Exam? Explain.

* Who is your favourite member of the family? Why? Give your reasons.

Section 2:

* What is the biggest problem in the education system in Turkey? Why? Explain.

* What can be done to stop bad habits? Give details.

Part B

Animals should be used in scientific experiments. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Why not?

APPENDIX-5 The AUSFL Speaking Criteria

AUSFL Speaking Exam Criteria

Components	**Descriptors**	**Grades**
Content	Addresses the topic with a wide range of details (explanations and/or exemplifications).	**5**
	Has some components of 3 and some components of 5	**4**
	Addresses the topic with moderate details with a few repetitions and/or some points are considered irrelevant.	**3**
	Has some components of 1 and some components of 3	**2**
	Is unable to include most of the details; and/or most details are irrelevant and/or mostly repeated.	**1**
Fluency	Speaks smoothly with little hesitation.	**3**
	Has some components of 1 and some components of 3	**2**
	Hesitates too often when speaking.	**1**
Grammatical Competence	Uses a wide variety of language forms appropriately and accurately.	**5**
	Has some components of 3 and some components of 5	**4**
	Uses a moderate variety of language forms; and/or there are a few inaccuracies.	**3**
	Has some components of 1 and some components of 3	**2**
	Uses almost all language forms inaccurately; and/or shows no variety.	**1**
Lexical Competence	Uses a wide variety of vocabulary appropriately and accurately (word choice and word forms) with proper pronunciation.	**5**
	Has some components of 3 and some components of 5	**4**
	Uses a moderate variety of vocabulary; and/or there are a few inaccuracies and mispronunciations.	**3**
	Has some components of 1 and some components of 3	**2**
	Uses almost all vocabulary items inaccurately and shows no variety and/or mispronounces many words.	**1**
Interaction	Mostly attempts to develop the interaction and/or mostly keeps the interaction going.	**2**
	Develops the interaction with participation and interaction.	**1**
	Establishes no interaction and/or refuses to talk.	**0**

APPENDIX- 6 Correlation matrix of the students' proficiency exam scores and speaking scores

Correlations

			Speaking scores	Overall proficiency scores
Spearman's rho	Speaking scores	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,620**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	90	90
	Overall proficiency scores	Correlation Coefficient	,620**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	90	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).