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<b>Article:</b>	<b>A Comparative Functional Analysis of Discourse Markers in the Native and the Non-Native English Newspaper Business Corpus</b>
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### Abstract

The current study explores the functional nature of Discourse Markers (DMs) in the newspaper business corpus. DMs function as cohesive devices which, additionally, carry pragmatic and semantic meanings present in both the written and the spoken discourse. The focus of this study is to comparatively highlight the differences in the functions of DMs in the business discourse of the native and the non-native newspapers. The study has employed Fung's (2003) multi-categorical comprehensive framework of DMs. The framework functionally divides DMs into interpersonal, cognitive, structural, and referential categories. These major categories have further been divided into many subcategories of DMs. Based on this comprehensive framework; the current study identifies different functional DMs and compares them for their quantitative and qualitative differences in use. For the analysis of this study, a corpus of one million words was collected from the native business newspapers (The Daily Mail and The Telegraph) and the non-native business newspapers (The Dawn, The Business Recorder, The Nation and Daily Times). Data analysis shows that the most frequently used functional categories of DMs among the native writers are referential and structural, while the least frequently used functional category is cognitive. On the other hand, non-native Pakistani writers make more use of functional DMs of referential, structural and cognitive categories, while the least frequently used functional category is interpersonal. This quantitative difference in the use of DMs makes the native business corpus more coherent and interactive than that of the non-native business corpus. It is expected that the findings of the study may help understand the differences of textuality in the native and the non-native newspaper corpus. It is also expected that the findings of the current study can assist curriculum developers and ESL instructors in developing better teaching materials for second language learners.

**Keywords:** Discourse Markers, Business Discourse, Functional Categories of DMs

## Introduction

This research focuses on the use of Discourse Markers (DMs) in newspaper discourse that mediates the interaction between the text, the writer, and the reader. It compares the differential use of DMs in Pakistani and British Newspaper business corpora. The study underlies that communication is not just about exchanging goods and information but about the attitudes, assumptions, and personalities of those involved in a communication.

Newspaper discourse is related to print media. It is unique to do work in it because it demands readers who purify the information from it and it is easily accessible to everyone. Newspaper discourse can be studied as “some of the most adequate examples of persuasive writing in all countries, setting standards for written persuasion” (Connor, 1996, p. 143).

## What are Discourse Markers?

The use of Discourse markers (DMs) is very frequent in our daily talks. DMs are present in many languages and are used in daily conversation to provide the hearer's proper understanding. They are not only used to develop smooth communication but are also used to achieve discourse coherence in written and spoken discourse. Instead of their crucial part in the production of text, they are grammatically optional in the sentence and semantically empty (Brinton, 1996). DMs are considered as essential linguistic elements which function to connect text units and construct coherence in the discourse (Blakemore, 2004).

## Objectives of the study

The current study seeks to attain the following objectives:

1. To highlight the functional DMs in the newspaper business corpora of the native and the non-native English newspapers.
2. To study the native and the non-native newspaper business corpora for the use of different DMs performing interpersonal, referential, cognitive, structural functions.

## Literature Review

In the 70s, great research interest has been observed in the domain of DMs, especially in the interpretation and creation of spoken discourse. Many studies on DMs explore the individual markers (Watts 1987, Anderson 1998, Schiffrin 1986, James 1983, Ostman 1981, Svartvik 1980). Also, some studies deal with the small sets of DMs (Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup 1985, Aijmer, 1996; Erman, 1987).

However, ‘Discourse Markers’ are termed in different ways in the previous researches such as “Semantic conjuncts” (Quirk et al. 1985), “Pragmatic expressions” (Erman 1987), “Discourse Particles” (Schourup 1985), “Sentence connectives” (Halliday & Hassan 1976), and “Discourse operators” (Redeker 1991), etc. As identified by Zarei (2013, 108), the most famous term among all these terms is Discourse Markers.

The disagreement upon the terminology of DMs and the ambiguous status of DMs reflects the multiple research interest and difficulties for dealing with them in theoretical terms.

DMs play different functions according to their contexts. Various approaches have been presented by different researchers on the notion of DMs. The most important propositions are from SFG developed by Halliday and Hassan (1973). A lot of work has done in the functional area of DMs is employed in the classification of language functions (interpersonal, textual and ideational) by Halliday (1973). The coherence model presented by Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1987) proposed a grammatical Perspective model; Blakemore (1992) developed the Relevance theory from pragmatics.

Fraser (1999, p. 946) claims that DMs are utterances that are taken from the different grammatical classes such as conjunctions, prepositional or adverbial phrases. He (1999) further claims that DMs have procedural meaning rather than conceptual meaning. Fraser (1999) classified DMs into separate four categories of “inferential markers”, “topic change markers”, “contrastive markers” and “elaborative markers”.

## Research Method

This study is a corpus-based study. A mixed-methods approach is employed for this study. The mixed-methods approach includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It is quantitative in the sense that the researcher counts the frequencies of every functional category of DMs in the native and the non-native business corpora and investigates the functional differences of interpersonal, cognitive, referential and structural DMs in the business corpus of the native and the non-native English newspaper. The result shows the differences in the functional distribution of DMs in numeric form for each category. In terms of qualitative, the researcher analyzes and compares each DM after examining it in its detailed context to find out the differences and similarities in the use of DMs among the corpus of the native and the non-native English newspapers. Furthermore, interpretative techniques are used to understand the occurrence of DMs in different position in a sentence and their certain functions in the native and the non-native business discourse. This qualitative analysis also helps the researcher to point out the pragmatic and functional view of the native and the non-native business English newspaper discourse in the organization of a coherent text and establish a relationship between the reader and the writer.

## Data collection

The data for this research has been collected from native and non-native English business newspaper. In Pakistani English newspapers, there are two newspapers, The Dawn, The Business Recorder, The Daily Times and The Nation. These English newspapers are selected because they are widely read in Pakistan. The native English newspaper data has been selected from the online archives of newspapers. Their names are “The Daily mail” and “The telegraph”. Their links are given below in references. The development of the corpus is only limited to the business section of these native and non-native business newspapers. At least, one million words have been selected for analysis from each newspaper.

## A) Data Analysis Tool

For corpus study, AntConc software has been used to investigate the frequency of the words and to explore the cognitive markers, referential markers, structural markers and interpersonal markers in the native and the non-native business corpora.

## Theoretical Framework

The framework for functional analysis of Discourse Markers is presented by Fung (2003). Fung (2003) has proposed a multi-categorical comprehensive framework of DMs. According to this framework, DMs are categorized as cognitive, referential, interpersonal and structural. Fung (2003) has proposed a list of lexico-grammatical resources which exemplify these functional categories. Furthermore, the researcher over viewed other frameworks of DMs as proposed by Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999), Brinton (1996), Blakemore (1987, 2004), Hyland (2013) and Halliday and Hassan, (1976) and identified more lexico-grammatical resources which were incorporated into Fung’s framework to make it more comprehensive (see table 3.3).

This study tries to find out the functions of discourse markers in business corpus of the native and the non-native English newspapers. This framework for the functional analysis of DMs is selected for the reason that it has the comprehensive categorization of discourse markers. So, the detail of this model is given below:

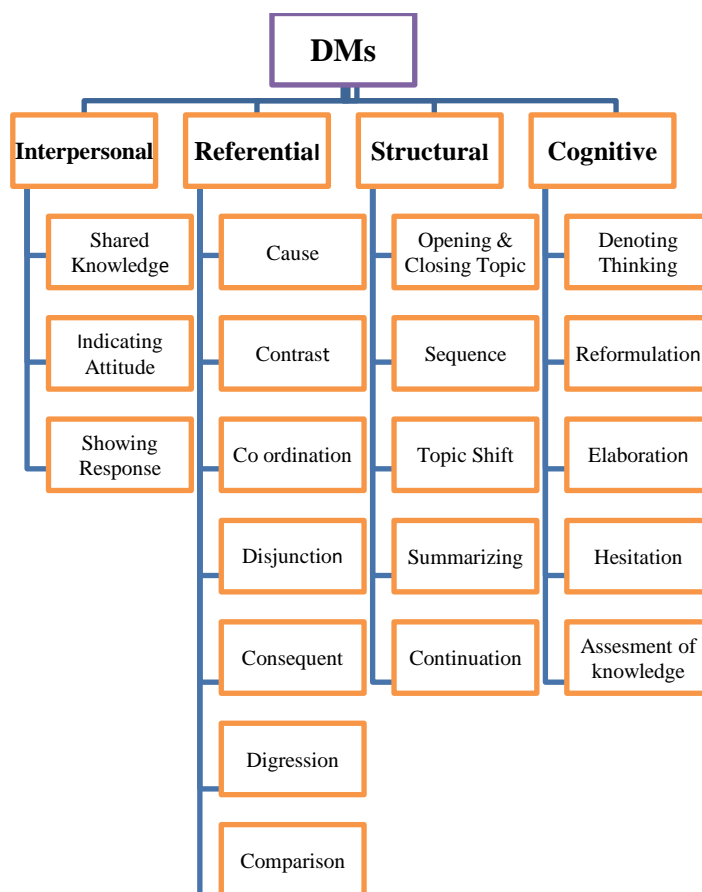
The Discourse Markers were classified on Fung’s (2003) multi-categorical framework. According to this functional classification, DMs are categorized as:

- a) Interpersonal Markers
- b) Referential Markers
- c) Structural Markers
- d) Cognitive Markers

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## Figure-3.1: A Functional diagram of DMs by Fung (2003)

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**Table-3.3: Subcategories of DMs and their Resources**

Interpersonal Markers	Referential Markers	Structural Markers	Cognitive Markers
<p>Referring to Shared knowledge: ok, right, listen, oh you see, you know</p> <p>Showing attitudes: I think, well, obviously, oh, actually, exactly, basically, like, absolutely, to be frank, indeed, clearly, certainly</p> <p>Showing responses: oh, yeah, yes, right/alright, I</p>	<p><b>Cause:</b> because of, due to, for this reason, as a result of, since</p> <p><b>Contrast:</b> nevertheless, but, however, yet on the other hand, by contrast, contrastingly, instead of, contrasting, on one hand, on the contrary, though, whereas, in spite of, conversely, despite this, rather than, regardless, even so, etc</p> <p><b>Coordination:</b> and;</p> <p><b>Disjunction:</b> or</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b> as a</p>	<p><b>Opening and closing of topics:</b> well, let's start, so, ok/okay, right/alright, let me conclude the discussion; well, as regards, first of all, let's discuss, to begin with, to start with, with reference to, in this case, in light of this, in this sense, to start with, etc.</p> <p><b>Sequence:</b> next, first, second, then, now, finally; secondly, lastly, firstly, equally, once, before, since,</p>	<p><b>Denoting thinking process:</b> I think, I know, I believe, I see, I wonder</p> <p><b>Reformulation/Self-correction:</b> to put it in another way, I mean, I want to say; that is to say, that is, specifically, in other words, well, you know, like, what I mean is</p> <p><b>Elaboration:</b> furthermore, in addition to this, moreover, also, such as, in particular, for instance, to this end, in other words, similarly, likewise, on that basis, etc.</p>

see, oh great, ok/okay, of course, great, no, sure	consequence, as far as, as long as, consequently, so, in such case, resultantly, therefore, then, thus, accordingly, etc <b>Digression:</b> anyway; any how, etc. <b>Comparison:</b> likewise, rather, like, etc.	yet, after, as soon as, eventually, immediately when, quickly, right now, initially <b>Topic shifts:</b> now, so, well, how about, by the way, what about, meanwhile, in the meantime, subsequently, etc. <b>Summarizing opinion:</b> therefore, so, that is why, in the light of this, therefore, of course, actually, in fact, overall, all in all, altogether, to sum up, to summarize this, in short to conclude, etc. <b>Continuation of topics:</b> and, furthermore, so, moreover, etc.	<b>Hesitation:</b> well, sort of; I think, may be, I guess, probably <b>Assessing the knowledge of the listener:</b> you see, you know, as you understand, etc.
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### Data Analysis

The data analyzes the frequency of DMs that are explored through Antconc 3.4.4 software. The results of the investigated linguistic elements are presented in the form of tables and graphs. The analysis is divided into two sections, a) Frequency use of Functional DMs, b) Comparative analysis of frequency use of Sub-categories of Functional DMs. Fung's (2003) framework (see, figure 3.1) is employed for the data analysis. According to Fung's (2003) framework, four major categories of DMs and their sub categories (see resource list, table 3.3) are presented for the functional analysis of DMs in the native and the non-native corpora. The detailed description of the analysis of DMs is given below:

### Functional Categories of DMs in the Native Corpus

According to Fung's (2003) classification of DMs, DMs are categorized into four functional categories: interpersonal, referential, structural and cognitive. The frequencies of these functional categories of DMs in the native corpus are presented in Table 1.

**Table-1: Frequency of DMs Categories in the Native Corpus**

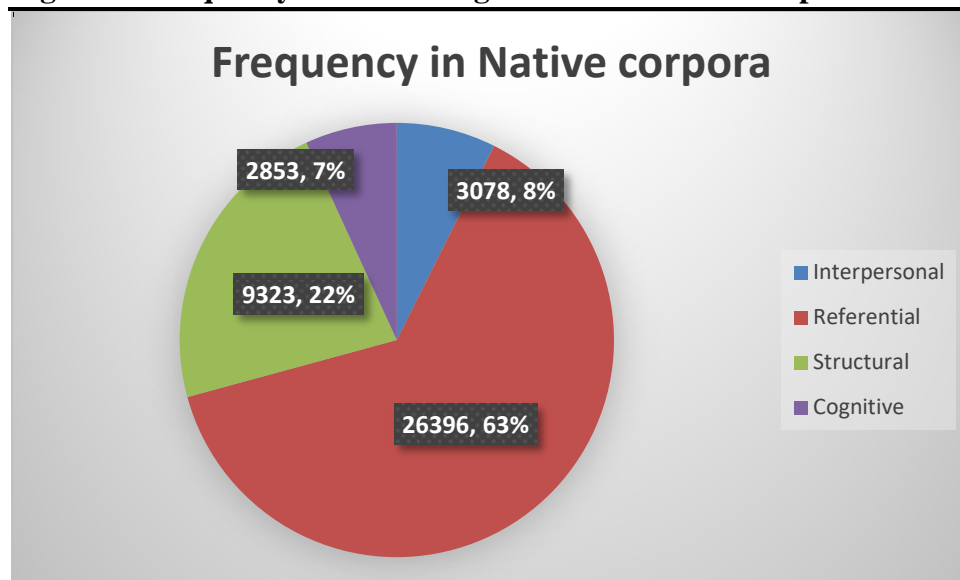
DM categories	Frequency in Native corpus
<b>Interpersonal</b>	3078
<b>Referential</b>	26396
<b>Structural</b>	9323
<b>Cognitive</b>	2853

The table (1) shows the frequency of DMs in the native corpus as analyzed according to Fung's (2003) model for functional categories of DMs. The "referential category" is the most frequently used functional category and its occurrence in the native corpus is 26396.

The second frequent category of DMs is “structural category” and its value is 9323. The third widely used category is “interpersonal”. The frequency of interpersonal category is 3078. The least used functional category of DMs is “cognitive” and its frequency is 2853 in the native corpora. The result of the native corpus analysis showed that the “cognitive” and “interpersonal” category has almost the same frequency percentage.

The following Figure (1) shows the frequency differences of the functional categories of DMs in the native corpus.

**Figure-1: Frequency of DMs Categories in the Native Corpus**



#### Functional categories in the Non-Native Corpus

The table.2 presents the functional distribution of the non-native corpus, in accordance with DMs by Fung (2003).

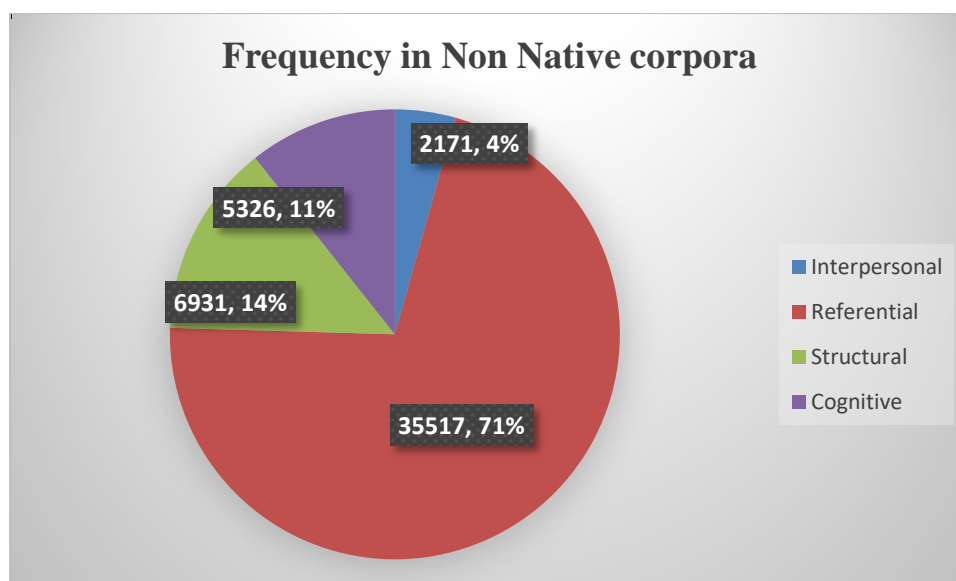
**Table-2: Frequency of DMs Categories in the Non-Native Corpus**

DM categories	Frequency in Non-Native corpus
Interpersonal	2171
Referential	35517
Structural	6931
Cognitive	5326

As it can be seen that the highly used category of DMs in the non-native corpus is “referential” and its frequency is 35517. The second frequent category is “structural” and its frequency is 6931. Similar to the results of the native corpus, the “referential” and “structural” categories are also frequently used categories in the non-native corpus. The third frequent category is the “cognitive” category and its frequency is 5326. And the least frequent category is “interpersonal” with 2171 frequency.

The following Figure (2) shows the frequency differences of the functional categories of DMs in the non- native corpus.

**Figure-4.2: Frequency of DMs Categories in the Non-Native Corpus**



The ‘referential’ and ‘structural’ categories are the most frequent categories in the native and the non-native business corpora. There is a possibility of their high use is that they work on textual level of a discourse.

There is a difference in the frequency of the functional categories of DMs. In the native and the non-native corpora, there is a difference in the frequency rank of “interpersonal” and “cognitive” category. One of the reasons for this difference is that the writers of the native business corpus are more interpersonal to their readers than the non-native writers. Moreover, the cognitive markers are higher in the use in the non-native corpus. There could be a reason that the writers of the non-native business corpus are not confident enough rather they are uncertain about their argument.

These markers are avoided because Fung’s (2003) study is on classroom discourse. The use of ‘cognitive’ and ‘interpersonal’ markers is less in business corpora because these markers are mostly used in the spoken discourse.

### **Comparative Analysis of Functional Categories of DMs in the Native and the Non-Native Data**

This section presents the comparative analysis of four functional categories of DMs which are presented by Fung (2003). The following tables (3, 4, 5 and 6) give a detailed comparative analysis of functional categories of DMs in the native and the non-native corpora.

#### **A) Interpersonal Category**

The first category is interpersonal category. This functional category includes such markers which create closeness and relationship between the participants and build solidarity between the interlocutors. DMs make the conversations very communicative, involving, informal and interactive. The use of these words (ok, oh, right, you know, you see, oh great etc.) create interpersonal style. There are many studies on the use of interpersonal markers e.g. (Brinton, 1996), (Kopple, 1985), (Aijmer, 2002), (Castro, 2009) and (Hyland, 2005, 2013). This category is further sub divided into three sub categories:

- i. Marked shared knowledge
- ii. Indicating attitude
- iii. Showing Response

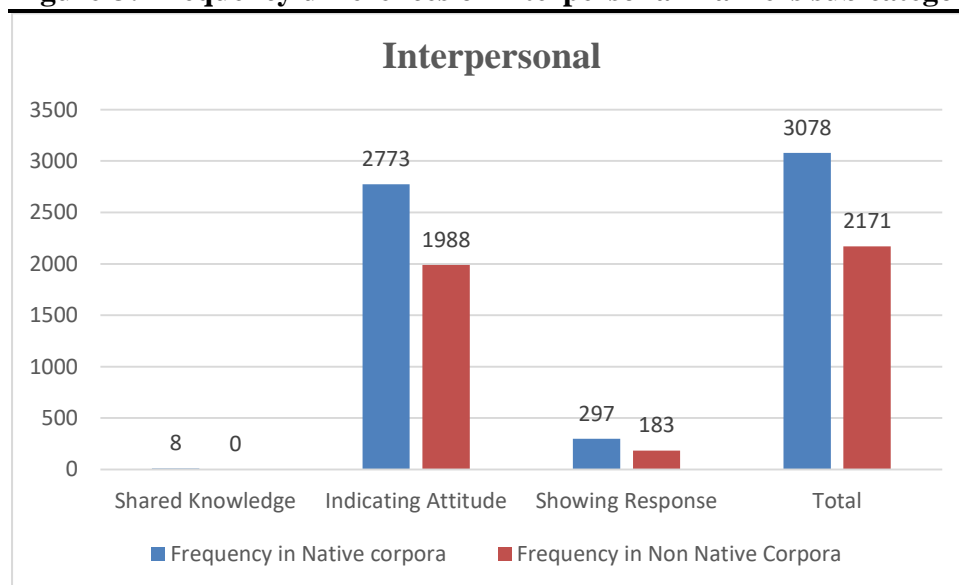
The following table highlights the overall frequency of the sub categories of interpersonal markers in the native and the non-native business corpora.



**Table-3: Frequency of Interpersonal markers sub categories**

Interpersonal Category			
Business Corpora	Shared knowledge	Indicating attitude	Showing response
Native corpora	8	2773	297
Non-native corpora	0	1988	183

The figure no. 3 shows the difference in the use of Interpersonal DMs in the native and the non-native business corpora.

**Figure-3: Frequency differences of Interpersonal markers sub categories**

#### a) Discussion

The less use of interpersonal markers in the non-native corpora is due to the informality of language. They might be less in use in business corpus because they are employed from Fung's (2003) framework and her work is on spoken discourse.

Interpersonal DMs are higher in use in the native corpora than the non-native. The use of interpersonal markers makes the language informal and neutral. Buysee (2011, p.479) states that the use of interpersonal markers is "even up to the point of downright stigmatization". In the researchers' opinion, the native business writers used interpersonal markers very frequently to show closeness with their readers. It shows that the focus of native business newspaper writers on establishing the relationship with their readers. The domain of interpersonal includes these DMs (*you know*, *OK*, *right* and *see*) that are used by the writers to involve the readers in the discourse processes to develop solidarity between the participants.

#### B) Referential category

Referential markers express semantic relationship between the segments of discourse. Referential DMs work on a textual level and show a connection between the prior and ongoing discourse. These markers mostly found in written discourse so that Fung (2003) carried most of the markers from other studies e.g. (Haliday, 1976, Quirk et al. 1985, Fraser, 1990). Referential category further subdivided in to seven sub categorize:

- i. Cause
- ii. Contrast
- iii. Disjunction

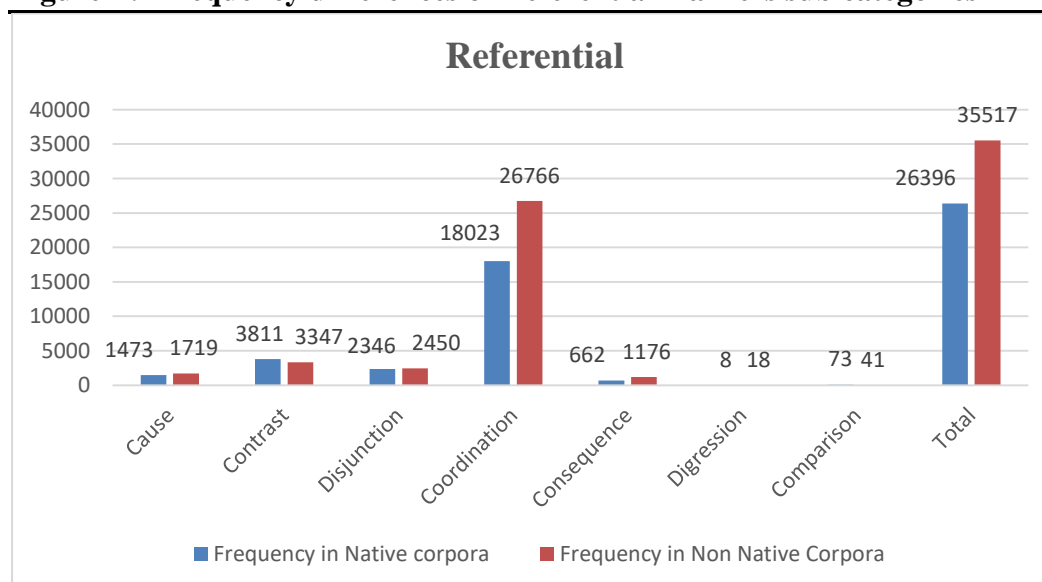
- iv. Coordination
- v. Consequence
- vi. Digression
- vii. Comparison

The following table (4) displays the total occurrence of sub categories in the native and the non-native business corpora.

**Table-4: Frequency of Referential markers sub categories**

Referential Category							
Business Corpora	Cause	Contrast	Disjunction	Coordination	Consequence	Digression	Comparison
Native corpora	1473	3811	2346	18023	662	8	73
Non-native corpora	1719	3347	2450	26766	1176	18	41

**Figure-4: Frequency differences of Referential markers sub categories**



#### a) Discussion

Referential DMs are frequently used in both business corpora. It leads to the conclusion that referential DMs which help to bind together a piece of writing are highly useful for the coherence of business newspaper corpus. The non-native business newspaper writers used referential markers more frequently than the native writers. They use referential markers to make their writing coherent and smooth. Through DMs, they give complete sense to business newspaper text for a better understanding of their readers. While on the other hand, the non-native business news writers used referential markers not as much of other categories.

The functional subcategory 'Coordination' is the highly used category in both business corpora and in this subcategory, the most frequent DM is 'and'.

#### A) Structural category

In this domain, DMs give information about the processes in which coherent pieces of the talk are connected to each other. They direct the discourse in progress. The presence of these markers may influence the topic of discussion and highlights a change and link between

topics. They also work on the textual level of discourse. This category includes further sub-categories like:

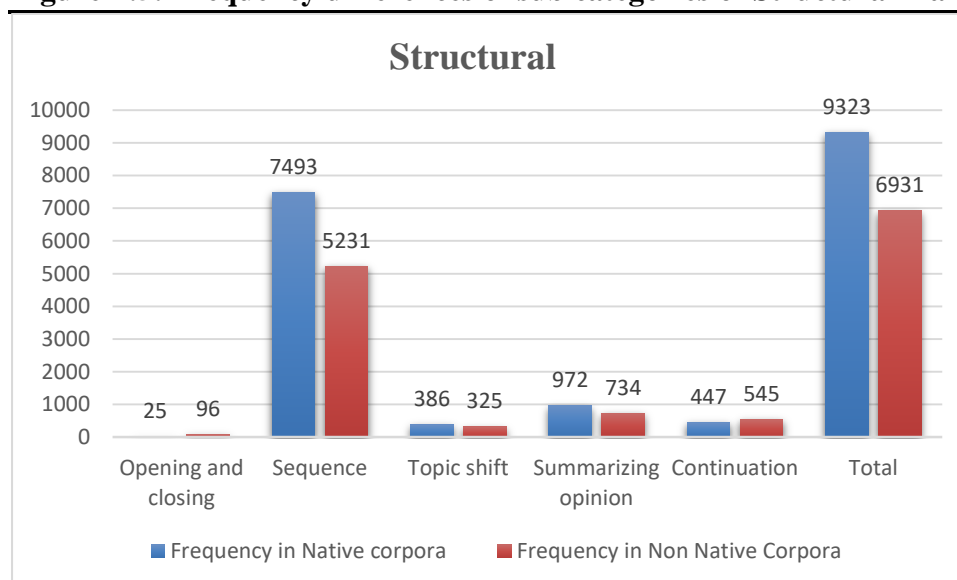
- i. Opening and closing of topic
- ii. Sequence
- iii. Topic shift
- iv. Summarizing of topic
- v. Continuation of topic

The given table (5) presents the frequency of structural sub categories in the native and the non-native corpora.

**Table-5: Frequency of Structural markers sub categories**

<b>Structural Category</b>					
<b>Business Corpora</b>	<b>Opening and closing</b>	<b>Sequence</b>	<b>Topic shift</b>	<b>Summarizing of topic</b>	<b>Continuation of topic</b>
<b>Native corpora</b>	25	7493	386	972	447
<b>Non-native corpora</b>	96	5231	325	734	545

**Figure-4.5: Frequency differences of sub categories of Structural markers**



#### a) Discussion

In the above analysis of Structural Markers, “sequence of the topic” is the most frequently used subcategory and the least frequently used subcategory is “opening and closing of the topic” in both corpora. Most of the ‘Topic shifts’ and ‘Opening and Closing markers’ are not used in business corpora because these markers are more appropriate for spoken discourse.

The result also revealed that the structural markers are higher in use in the native corpus than the non-native corpus. There is a possibility that the native business newspaper writers are more aware of the important role of these markers in the making of fluent and meaningful text. Structural markers help the reader for a better comprehension of the text.

#### B) Cognitive category

In this category, DMs inform us about the mental state of the speaker in the interaction. They can also be used as retarder and helps the speaker to retrieve the

information. They are related to the understanding of the topic. The cognitive categories further divided into sub categorize:

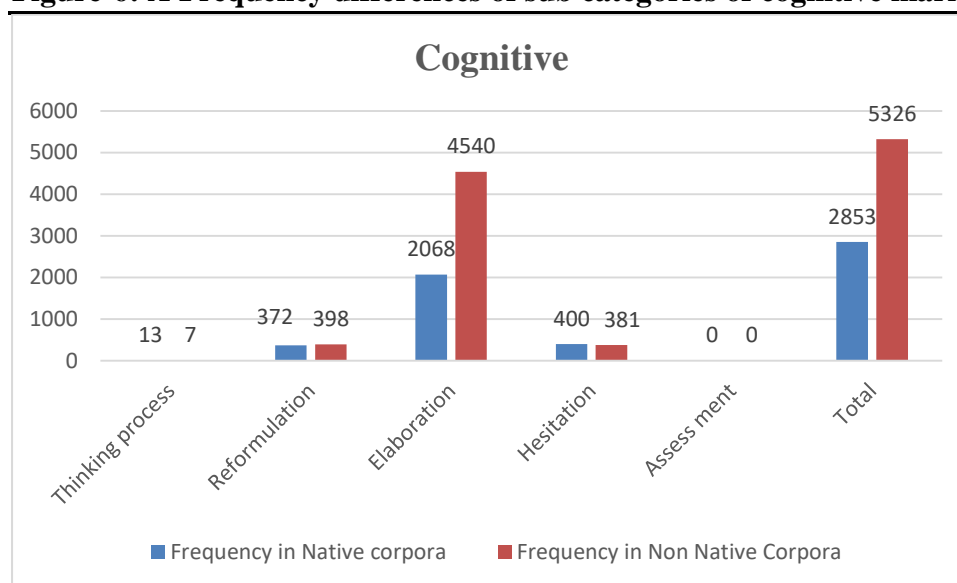
- i. Denoting the process of thinking
- ii. Elaboration
- iii. Hesitation
- iv. Reformulation
- v. Assessment of the listener's knowledge

The given table (6) shows the frequency of cognitive sub-categories in the native and the non-native corpora.

**Table-6: Frequency of Cognitive markers sub categories**

Cognitive Category					
Business Corpora	Thinking process	Reformulation	Elaboration	Hesitation	Assessment
Native corpora	13	372	2068	400	0
Non-native corpora	7	398	4540	381	0

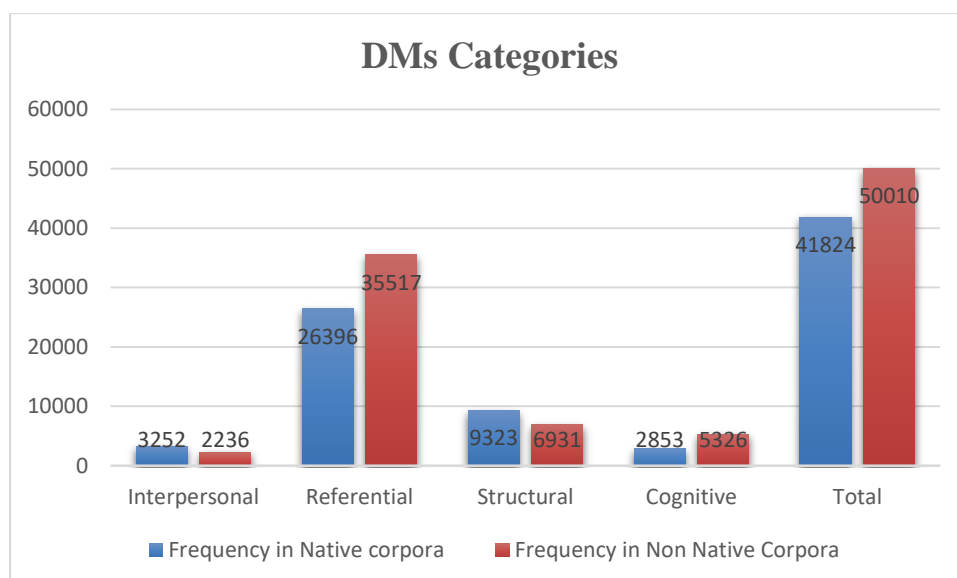
**Figure-6: A Frequency differences of sub categories of cognitive markers**



#### a) Discussion

The use of cognitive markers represents the writer's cognitive process. The cognitive markers are the most frequent in the non-native corpus than the native corpus. The results showed that the hesitation markers are the least used markers. There could be a reason that the writer tends to use those markers which show his confidence and certainty. So, they can achieve their objective which is persuading their readers. In this way, the use of cognitive DMs makes the text more comprehensible. The Assessment and Denoting thinking process markers have very little use in business corpora because the model (Fung, 2003) used for this current study is applicable for spoken discourse. In the light of this, these types of markers mostly occur in face to face interaction.

**Figure-7: Distribution of DMs Categories in the native and non-native business corpora**



The total result shows that the non-native writers used more DMs than the native writers. The most frequently used markers are 'referential markers'. They are highly used markers in both corpora. In the researchers' opinion, the high usage of 'referential markers' indicates that these markers are involved in the creation of meaningful and smooth text. They provide coherence to business discourse. As it was stated by Ismail (2012, p. 1275), referential markers have pragmatic functions and are "essential to the persuasive effect" of the text.

The interpersonal category is less in use in both corpora because they might be more appropriate for spoken discourse than written. There is a meaningful difference between all functional categories of the native and the non-native business corpora. The difference in frequencies shows the writer's different style of writing.

### Conclusion

This current comparative study attempts to investigate the functions of DMs in the native and the non-native business corpora. It also focuses on the differences in the use of DMs in Native and Non-Native English newspaper Business corpora. This study employs Fung's (2003) framework for the analysis of data. Fung's model was appropriate for spoken discourse, so for the analysis of business newspaper corpus, the researcher has borrowed some more DMs from other studies by Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999), Brinton (1996), Blakemore (1987, 2004), Hyland (2013) and Halliday and Hassan, (1976). The data is analyzed quantitatively. First, it identifies the frequency differences of DMs in both corpora through 'AntConc' software. After finding the frequency of DMs, functional categories of DMs are presented in the form of tables and graphs. In Native corpus, the frequency of 'Interpersonal, 3078', 'Referential, 26396', 'Structural, 9323' and 'Cognitive, 2853'. In Non-Native corpus, the frequency of 'Interpersonal, 2171', 'Referential, 35517', 'Structural, 6931' and 'Cognitive, 5326'. The quantitative analysis of both corpora showed that the use of DMs is higher in the non-native corpus than native corpus. While analyzing the data, the researcher also found that some DMs (ok, right, oh, I see, I think, you know, like, so, well) perform more than one function in different functional categories of DMs. This analysis also explicates that most of the DMs are not present in both corpora. These markers don't occur even a single time. They might be absent because of the applicability of Fung's (2003) model is for spoken discourse.

The other objective of the study is to find out the functions of DMs. In business newspaper corpora, DMs perform various functions. DMs are considered multifunctional.

They can occur in different positions. Aijmer (2002) stated that DMs are very flexible. Mostly DMs occur at the initial position of a sentence in the native and the non-native corpora. Initially is a distinctive feature of DMs. The least frequent position is a final position where DMs are considered as comments.

Then, there is a comparative analysis of DMs and subcategories of DMs in the native and the non-native corpora. The results of this study reveal that there are considerable differences in the distribution of DMs in both corpora. The most frequently used functional category of DMs is the 'referential category' in both corpora. The reason for its high usage is that referential DMs work at the textual level and they mostly occur in the written discourse. In the non-native corpus, the least frequently used functional category is the 'interpersonal category'. Interpersonal markers might be avoided by the non-native writers due to their informal style of communication as they mostly occur in spoken discourse. In the native corpora, the less used functional category is the 'cognitive category'. Probably, the reason is that the writers of the native business corpus are more certain and assured about their arguments.

The result indicates that there are also some similarities and differences in the use of DMs in the native and the non-native corpora. This study is also helpful in the understanding of the role of DMs in organizing a cohesive and meaningful business discourse. DMs are present in every genre type and they have a various function. They belong to different grammatical categories like verb, adverb, interjection and adjective. They are very essential for the coherence of the text. They bind different parts of the discourse. DMs work as glue.

### **Research Implications**

The most significant point of this study is that the investigation of DMs in Newspaper business discourse is less explored and unique area. The concept of DMs is new in the field of text analysis. It is investigated from different structural and functional perspectives but it still intrigues many researchers who are working in the field of linguistic. The investigation of DMs in business discourse is expected to give new impetus to the existing research in the field. Moreover, there are very few studies done in comparative usage of DMs between native and non-native English. It also provides a considerable baseline for other comparative studies in other genres.

The current study can be helpful for the students of ESL and EFL learners and teachers in understanding the organization of coherent writing and speech. They can use this model of DMs in any other particular genre and can do further study in the business genre. The study supplies new ways to investigate the use of DMs in different contexts for the development of DMs. Pedagogically; it is expected to help in designing syllabuses and improving the teaching methods. The editors and writers of business corpora can use DMs to make their writings more informative and attractive. The business newspaper engages its readers in it.

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