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## **DISCOURSE MARKERS IN ACADEMIC WRITING IN EFL BY SWEDISH PRE-SERVICE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH**

**Abstract:** *The present paper involves a quantitative investigation of discourse markers identified in academic writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) by pre-service secondary school teachers of English, whose first language (L1) is Swedish. The main focus in the present study is on the role of discourse markers in the pre-service teachers' acquisition of the genre conventions of academic writing in English. The hypothesis in the present investigation is based upon an assumption that academic essays written by the pre-service secondary school teachers of English would be characterised by a quantitative difference involving discourse markers over the period of time, specifically at the start of the semester (i.e., the essay draft) and at the end of the semester (i.e., the final essay). Following this assumption, a quantitative investigation of the pre-service secondary school teachers' academic writing is carried out by means of the software program WordSmith (Scott 2012). The materials of the present study involve the draft essays and the final essays written by the pre-service secondary school teachers in English. The results of the quantitative analysis reveal a tendency to employ DMs associated with the formal register of English in the final essays. These DMs appear to be typically represented by however, furthermore, therefore, etc. These findings are discussed in conjunction with pedagogical implications of teaching academic writing in EFL to the pre-service secondary school teachers of English, whose L1 is Swedish.*

**Keywords:** *academic writing, discourse markers (DMs), EFL, pre-service secondary school teachers*

### **1. Introduction**

This paper involves a quantitative investigation of discourse markers (further in the article - DMs) identified in academic writing in EFL by pre-service secondary school teachers of English, whose L1 is Swedish. Academic writing in EFL combines cognitive, communicative, discursive, and individual features (Negretti and Kuteeva 2011). These features are involved in an EFL student's ability to write in academic

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English. Academic writing in English is critical for EFL tertiary students to be successful in college and their future professional careers (Lim et al. 2016: 32). It is inferred from previous research that future professionals, in particular, future teachers of English, are bound to encounter the critical role of writing in the English language in international professional organisations and networks, such as, for instance, TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), and in the body of professional literature published in English (Cramarenco et al. 2015; Dontcheva-Navratilova 2016). Extending the argument of the role of writing in English in globalised academia, Matthisson (2012: 24) notes that “In a world where the majority of research results are published in English, it is important that students master the conventions of academic writing in English”. However, few EFL university students are adequately equipped with writing skills in English necessary for academic success at tertiary levels (Goldfinch and Hughes 2007). EFL university students often experience problems with academic writing in English ‘due to their unfamiliarity with aspects of academic genre papers, such as lexico-grammatical features, rhetorical functions, and genre structures’ (Liou et al. 2008).

Amongst a range of potential problems associated with the conventions of academic writing in English, previous scholarship emphasises the lack of an adequate repertoire of DMs and their stylistically appropriate usage in academic writing in English by EFL university students (Povolna 2012). Paraphrasing Yeh (2015: 479), it can be argued that an EFL student’s academic writing skills require a conscious development of specific genre knowledge, such as text structures, rhetorical functions and genre appropriate DMs.

The present study seeks to address the issue of the repertoire and the appropriate use of DMs in academic writing in EFL by pre-service secondary school teachers of English (further in the text referred to as participants). It is argued in this study that the usage and the word frequency of DMs in academic texts produced by the participants may provide an indication of the participants’ learning trajectory associated with the acquisition of the conventions of academic writing in English. Following this assumption, the present research involves a quantitative investigation of the DMs frequencies and their occurrence computed by software program WordSmith (Scott 2012).

The novelty of the investigation further described in this article involves the focus on the academic essays written in English by the Swedish L1 participants who will work as specialist teachers of English in the Swedish secondary school educational context. Another novel aspect of the present study is associated with the juxtaposition of the first drafts of the academic essays in English written by the participants at the beginning of the semester with the final academic essays written after the teacher's feedback, and the peer-group feedback provided by the dyadic study group, where the dyad provided feedback and proof-reading of each other's academic essays prior to the final submission of the essays onto the student portal.

In view of the afore-mentioned novel aspects, the present article is structured as follows: First, previous research involving DMs in the genre of academic writing will be outlined. Second, the present study will be introduced. The study involves DMs in academic writing in English by a group of Swedish L1 pre-service secondary school teachers. Third, the conclusions of the present study will be presented in conjunction with the possible didactic implications to EFL academic writing instruction in tertiary educational settings.

### 1.1. An Outline of Previous Research Involving DMs in the Genre of Academic Writing

There are several approaches to the definition of DMs, e.g. pragmatic, functional, and structural. For instance, in light of the pragmatic approach DMs are theorised to involve particles and structures that are used in locating the utterance in an interpersonal and interactive dimension, in connecting and structuring phrasal, inter-phrasal and extra-phrasal elements in discourse (Bazzanella 2006:456). DMs are deemed to involve a word or phrase, e.g. a conjunction, adverbial, comment clause, or interjection (Aijmer 2002; Redeker 1991), which do not have propositional meanings (Aijmer 2002). Whilst DMs lack denotative aspects of lexical meaning, they, nevertheless, possess connotative meaning (Megela 2014:17). Viewing DMs from a functional approach, Jones and Carter (2014:40) define DMs as lexical items or phrases, which are i) optional, ii) multifunctional, iii) not drawn from one grammatical class and are not a closed grammatical class, iv) have a procedural but not propositional

meaning, and v) function at referential, interpersonal, structural, and cognitive levels. The present study follows the definition of DMs by Fraser (2015), who regards DMs as typically occurring in S2 sentence-initial position in a S1-S2 combination, and signaling a semantic relationship between the two sentences.

It should be mentioned that whilst the role of DMs has largely been explored on the four language skills (Jones and Carter 2014; Loewen 2014), there is a growing tendency to study DMs in academic writing in English (Kapranov forthcoming; Povolná 2012; Šimčikaitė 2012). In academic writing, every text is written to be both understood and accepted (Hyland 2007:267). Arguably, the acceptance of an academic text written in English by EFL learners critically depends on its conformity to the genre of academic writing. According to Hyland (2004:4), genre is regarded as “a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations”. A widely accepted view of the term ‘genre’ involves the notion of a staged goal-oriented social process associated with the cultural purpose of a text (Eggins 2004; Martin and White 2005). Genre is deemed to designate the realisation of discursive activity in terms of recurrent textual patterns (Homerberg 2011:33).

Central to the present research is the definition of genre as a class of communicative events with a shared set of purposes, i.e. the rationale for the genre, which is associated with the constrained choices of content, structure and style (Swales 1990:58). The definition of genre by Swales (1990) has gained currency in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) studies (Paltridge 2014). Guided by the above-mentioned view of genre, the genre of academic writing is defined as:

“the written form of academic communication characterised by its exact definition of topics and clear way of linguistic expression; by its intellectual mode of presentation; by the use of carefully chosen vocabulary including an acceptable portion of defined terms of the sublanguage; by a certain preference given to the accepted means of expression; and by a logical use of graphic illustrations and figures” (Laar 1997:131).

In the context of academic ESP and EFL writing, genre refers to a class of communicative events or textual types, such as

academic essays, research articles, theses and dissertations (Lazar and Ellis 2010; Paltridge 2014). As indicated by Hyland (2008:543), the concept of genre can be successfully applied to the teaching of academic writing in many contexts, since it illuminates the constraints of social contexts on language use. Whilst each genre possesses its own fields of language characteristic (Andrew and Romova 2012), the genre of academic writing is associated with complex ways of thinking about the content and, consequently, it is significantly different from everyday language (Gee 2004:3). Ellis et al. (1998) suggest that the students' genre awareness facilitates the composition of academic texts, as well as the correct and genre-appropriate use of conjunctions, connectivity, and topic shifts in the texts. Following this line of argument, the genre conventions in academic writing are marked by the presence of genre-specific features, for instance DMs therefore, aforementioned, subsequently, etc., which are typically associated with the formal register of the English language usage. This contention is echoed by previous research, for instance Kapranov (forthcoming) indicates that academic writing in English by the pre-service primary school teachers is marked by the presence of informal and formal DMs. In particular, it has been found that informal DMs tend to be associated with the mid-course essays (e.g., like, OK, besides), whilst the DMs in the corpus of the final course essays written by the same participants are characterised by a more formal register, e.g. hence, initially, thereafter, thereby, etc. (Kapranov forthcoming).

The genre conventions demanded by academic writing in English involve, amongst other features, DMs, which contribute to the creation of coherent and reader-friendly texts (Loewen 2014). It is inferred from previous research that a cohesive and coherent academic text 'emerges from the distinctive social exigencies associated with a particular genre' (Omizo and Hart-Davidson, 2016:486). Several scholars (Crossley et al. 2016; Khatib 2011; Schiffrin 1987; Tyler and Bro 1992) indicate that the presence of DMs (e.g., however, accordingly, for example) facilitates the coherence of an academic text. Specifically, Crossley and the colleagues (2016:2) indicate that DMs, for instance, because, therefore and consequently, contribute to cohesion in the text by providing linguistic cues that allow the reader to establish connections between the ideas in the text.

This contention appears to be in concert with Jones and Carter (2014:39), who posit that DMs help make discourse coherent. Similarly to Jones and Carter (2014), Tåqvist (2016) indicates that DMs facilitate cohesion and coherence in academic writing by advanced EFL students.

It should be reiterated that academic writing is characterised by a variety of linguistic elements used for cohesion within the text. Among these elements, the use of DMs creates connections between stretches of discourse (House 2013:58). Hence, it can be assumed that DMs in academic writing i) connect, organise and interpret the text with regard to the understanding and values of a particular discourse community (Hyland 2000); and ii) create coherence and structure within a discourse by coordinating speech acts, and propositional contents (Bu 2013:30). This observation is also found in Schiffrin (1987) and Smith-Christmas (2016), who suggest that DMs as sequentially dependent elements of discourse facilitate discursive coherence.

## **2. The Present Study. DMs in Academic Writing in EFL by Swedish Pre-Service Secondary School Teachers**

Based upon the view of genre as a set of constrained choices of structure and style (Swales 1990) and upon the definition of academic writing by Laar (1997), it is assumed in the present study that academic writing in English is associated with a certain set of genre-specific DMs. The usage of formal DMs (e.g. aforementioned, therefore, subsequently, etc.) is deemed to be one of those constraints. Hence, it is argued in the Hypothesis in this study that the usage and the word frequency of DMs in academic texts in English produced by the participants may provide an indication of the participants' learning trajectory associated with the acquisition of the conventions of academic writing in English. Specifically, it is assumed that quantitative difference in DMs usage is bound to occur after a series of feedback interventions resulting in the decrease of informal DMs (e.g. like, you know, well, etc.) and the increase of DMs associated with the formal register of the English language (e.g. aforementioned, therefore, subsequently, etc.). The present study involves the following specific research aims: i) to identify DMs frequencies and their occurrence computed by means of a computer-assisted analysis in software program WordSmith

(Scott 2012) and ii) to juxtapose the to-be-identified DMs in the first essays drafts written prior to the teacher's and the peer-group's feedback with the final academic essays submitted by the participants after the feedback provided by the teacher and the peer-group.

### *2.1. The Context of the Present Study*

The present study is set within the context of the course English II for teaching English in upper secondary schools offered at Stockholm University by the Department of English and the Department of English Education. The course consists of the following course units: Literature and Culture, Linguistic Survey course, Language education, Academic Reading and Writing, and Language Proficiency. The course unit Academic Reading and Writing aims at developing students' competence in reading and writing academic English as well as their genre awareness (further information involving detailed course description is available at [www.english.su.se](http://www.english.su.se)). As a part of this course unit, students are expected to write an academic essay and submit it by the end of the semester.

The students who take the course unit Academic Reading and Writing are taught the IMRAD (i.e., Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) structure of research papers. The students are made aware of the precise and objective language of a scientific article. As far as academic essay is concerned, students are explicitly taught to avoid jargon, omissions, overstatements and distortions. The course unit Academic Reading and Writing typically involves seven seminars with a lecture component in them (i.e., the so called lecture-seminars), which start at the beginning of the semester and finish at the end of the semester. The first four seminars are delivered weekly, and afterwards there is a hiatus of approximately two months between Seminar 4 and Seminar 5 due to the students' practice placements at school. An outline of the course unit is summarised in Table 1 below.

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#	Seminar	Activities
1	Seminar 1	An introductory seminar to academic writing in English. The genre of academic writing in English. The choice of a topic of the academic essay. Explanation of which topics to choose in English linguistics, English literature and/or in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Home assignment for the next seminar: To reflect upon a possible topic of the academic essay.
2	Seminar 2	How to do background reading for an academic essay. Home assignment for the next seminar: To write a summary of two academic articles in English which are relevant to the academic essay. Home assignment for the next seminar: to write the first draft of the academic essays comprised of the title, abstract, key words and the introduction. The minimal word count of the draft is 500 words.
3	Seminar 3	How to write the following parts of an academic essay: Abstract, key words and introduction. An overview of academic vocabulary in English. Home assignment for the next seminar: To bring the first draft to class and to send it to the teacher via e-mail.
4	Seminar 4	How to write the main body of an academic essay: Hypothesis, materials, participants, procedure and methods, results and discussion sections. An overview of academic vocabulary in English. Home assignment for the next seminar: on-going academic essay writing.
5	Seminar 5	Making an academic essay better: The concepts of cohesion and coherence. Home assignment for the next seminar: on-going academic essay writing.
6	Seminar 6	Making an academic essay better: Proof-reading. The convention of the APA style of referencing. Home assignment for the next seminar: To discuss the final draft in a small study group.
7	Seminar 7	Individual oral presentations of the essay. The final version of the essay is due. The minimal word count of the essay is 1500 words exclusive of references and appendices.

Table 1. An Overview of the Course of Academic Writing for Pre-Service Secondary School Teachers of English

As evident from Table 1, the students are expected to write an essay draft of at least 500 words by Seminar 3. The teacher's feedback associated with the essay draft is communicated in writing after Seminar 3. Prior to Seminar 7, the students are expected to proof-read their essays in a small study group, usually comprised of two people. They are asked to provide each other with feedback as far as the final draft of the



essay is concerned. The final essay is due on Seminar 7. On that day the essays are to be submitted on Mondo, the student portal at Stockholm University.

## 2.2. Participants

21 participants (12 females and 9 males) took part in the study. At the time of the study, all of the participants were enrolled in a secondary teachers programme at Stockholm University (Sweden). The participants were asked to fill out a socio-linguistic questionnaire associated with the study. 20 of the participants indicated that Swedish was their L1 and English was a foreign language. One participant identified himself as an unbalanced Swedish/English bilingual, with the stronger language being Swedish. In total, six participants indicated that in addition to Swedish, their stronger L1, they were speakers of other languages. The participants' real names were coded to ensure confidentiality. The codes used in the study involved the abbreviation PSSST, which stood for Pre-Service Secondary School Teacher. The PSSST code was followed by a number from 1 till 21. The socio-linguistic statistics were compiled in Table 2 below:

#	Parti- cipant	Age/ Gender	First Lang.	Second Lang.	Status of English
1.	PSSST1	21/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
2.	PSSST2	22/m	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
3.	PSSST3	21/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
4.	PSSST4	23/m	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
5.	PSSST5	25/m	Swedish	German	Foreign lang.
6.	PSSST6	23/f	Swedish	Romanian	Foreign lang.
7.	PSSST7	22/f	Swedish	Wolof	Foreign lang.
8.	PSSST8	21/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
9.	PSSST9	23/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
10.	PSSST10	22/m	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
11.	PSSST11	26/m	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
12.	PSSST12	23/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
13.	PSSST13	25/m	Swedish	Spanish	Foreign lang.
14.	PSSST14	31/m	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
15.	PSSST15	29/m	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
16.	PSSST16	22/m	Swedish	English	Unbalanced

					Swedish/English bilingual
17.	PSSST17	23/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
18.	PSSST18	24/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
19.	PSSST19	23/f	Swedish	Estonian	Foreign lang.
20.	PSSST20	25/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.
21.	PSSST21	26/f	Swedish	-	Foreign lang.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Socio-Linguistic Background

### 2.3. Materials

The materials of the present study involved i) a corpus of the academic essay drafts submitted by the participants by Seminar 3 and ii) a corpus of the final academic essays submitted by the participants at the end of the semester. The minimal word count for the essay draft was set at 500 words, whilst the minimum number of words in the final academic essay was set at 1500 words. The descriptive statistics of the draft and the final essay data were compiled in Table 2 below.

#	Mean Group Values	Draft Essays	Final Essays
1.	Mean number of words	621	2019
2.	Mean number of paragraphs	6	19
3.	Mean number of sentences	25	75

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Corpus of the Draft Essays and the Final Essays

### 2.4. Procedure and Method

The procedure involved the following steps: First, the essays drafts were expected to be sent electronically to the author of the article, who was teaching that course, by Seminar 3. Second, the participants were instructed to send the final essays via email after Seminar 7, when detailed oral feedback was provided by the course teacher and the written feedback by the same teacher was sent to the participants via e-mail. Additionally, after Seminar 7 the participants received both oral and written feedback from their respective peer-group partners.

The methods in the present article followed the methodological guidelines described in Povolna (2012), who investigated the frequency of DMs in academic writing by university students of English by means of the software program WordsSmith (Scott 2012). Following Povolna (2012), the

software program WordSmith (Scott 2012) was deemed to be reliable and suitable for the purposes of the present study.

The frequency and occurrence of DMs in the corpus of the draft and final essays, respectively, were calculated per 1000 words. The cut-off of 1000 words was set to enable cross-comparison between the two sets of data, i.e. the draft and the final essays, respectively.

### 2.5. Results and Discussion

The application of the software program WordSmith (Scott 2012) to the data yielded descriptive statistics involving the occurrence and frequency of DMs per 1000 words. Those statistics were compiled and presented in Table 4.

#	DMs	Occurrence in Draft (per 1000 words)	Frequency in Draft (%) per 1000 words	Occurrence in Final Essay (per 1000 words)	Frequency in Final Essay (%) per 1000 words
1.	Actually	0	0	0,05	0,005
2.	Additionally	0	0	0,5	0,01
3.	And	6,3	1	7	1,1
4.	Alas	0	0	1	0,01
5.	Also	0,6	0,06	1,7	0,2
6.	Although	0	0	0,3	0,03
7.	As	0,6	0,08	3,1	0,4
8.	Assuming	0	0	0,1	0,01
9.	Because	0,1	0,01	0,2	0,02
10.	Besides	0	0	0,1	0,01
11.	But	0,4	0,04	0,7	0,1
12.	Essentially	0	0	0,1	0,01
13.	Finally	0,05	0,004	0,1	0,01
14.	First	0	0	0,1	0,01
15.	Furthermore	0,3	0,03	0,6	0,06
16.	Generally	0,1	0,01	0	0
17.	However	0,5	0,05	2,6	0,4
18.	If	0,4	0,04	0,7	0,1
19.	In addition	0	0	1	0,01
20.	Indeed	0	0	0,2	0,02
21.	It follows	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,02
22.	It seems	0,1	0,01	0,1	0,01
23.	Just	0,1	0,01	0	0
24.	Lastly	0,1	0,01	0	0
25.	Later	0,1	0,01	0	0
26.	Like	0,3	0,03	0	0

27.	Moreover	0,2	0,02	0,1	0,01
28.	Nevertheless	0	0	0,1	0,01
29.	Or	0,8	0,08	2,7	0,4
30.	Possibly	0,1	0,01	0,1	0,01
31.	Presumably	0,1	0,01	0,1	0,01
32.	Probably	0,1	0,01	0	0
33.	Rather	0	0	0,1	0,01
34.	Similarly	0	0	0,1	0,01
35.	So	0,1	0,01	0,1	0,01
36.	Still	0	0	0,1	0,01
37.	Such	0,1	0,01	0,3	0,05
38.	Surprisingly	0	0	0,1	0,01
39.	Then	0,2	0,02	0,3	0,03
40.	Thereafter	0	0	0,1	0,01
41.	Thereby	0	0	0,1	0,01
42.	Therefore	0,6	0,06	1,4	0,1
43.	Though	0,3	0,01	0,3	0,01
44.	Thus	0,1	0,01	0,2	0,1
45.	Usually	0,1	0,01	0	0
46.	Well	0,1	0,01	0	0
46.	Whereas	0,1	0,01	0,1	0,01
47.	Whether	0,1	0,01	0,2	0,02
48.	While	0,4	0,04	0,6	0,06

Table 4. The Mean Occurrence and Frequency of DMs in the Draft and Final Essays per Group

As evident from the data summarised in Table 4, there is a group of DMs that are associated exclusively with the essay drafts and are not identified in the final essays. These DMs are generally, just, lastly, later, like, probably, usually and well. In contrast to the aforementioned DMs, the results of the present quantitative analysis reveal that there is another group of DMs associated only with the final essays, for instance, actually, additionally, alas, although, assuming, besides, essentially, first, in addition, indeed, nevertheless, rather, similarly, still, surprisingly, thereafter, and thereby. As seen in Table 4, however, there is yet another group of DMs which exhibit stable distributions across the sets of the essay drafts and the final essays, respectively, for example it seems, possibly, presumably, so, and whereas.

It has been assumed in the hypothesis that quantitative difference in DMs usage would occur after a series of feedback interventions resulting in the decrease of informal DMs and the increase of DMs associated with the formal register of the English language. The findings summarised in Table 4 have revealed the

dynamics of DMs usage contrasted between the set of essay drafts data and the final essays data. Specifically, the results of the quantitative data analysis in the software program WordSmith (Scott 2012) appear to support the hypothesis as far as the increase of the usage of formal DMs is concerned. It should be noted that the increase is not statistically significant. A pair-sampled t-test has been conducted on the mean values of DMs occurrence and the results of the test have indicated that they are not statistically significant. Whilst no statistically significant results are reported, it is, nevertheless, possible to observe the participants' tendency to employ DMs associated with the formal register of English in the final essays. These DMs appear to be typically represented by however, furthermore, therefore, etc.

It follows from the present findings that the participants tend to over-use some of the formal DMs in their final essays. This observation is exemplified by Excerpt 1, which is marked by a rather excessive presence of the DMs however and therefore, respectively:

(1) Lalander and Johansson (2007) refer to the construction of what is essentially feminine and what is essentially masculine as an everyday discourse. Current research indicates that men and women use language differently (Lalander & Johansson, 2007). However, de Klerk (1990) suggests that the usage of slang might be a distinction of speech used by men and female. De Klerk (1990) also indicates that there is a common stereotype that males are slang-users while females try to avoid slang. However, de Klerk (1990) posits that although slang is more frequently used by male, the gap between the amounts of slang words between males and females are likely to reach a more even balance and therefore leaving the notion of slang as a male dominated domain as a notion of the past. Therefore, this essay will argue that the use of slang is no longer a male dominated domain. Slang is frequently used among males as females to an equal extent and use of slang is determined by social context in order to further establish a belonging to certain groups in which a language containing slang words is being sustained (de Klerk, 1992). (Participant PSSST10, male)

The overuse of DMs by EFL university students has been previously observed by Povolna (2012) and Šimčikaitė (2012), who report an over-extensive usage of DMs in academic writing in English by the university students. The present findings also

lend support to the study by Martinez (2002), where an overuse of DMs by EFL university students is discussed. It should be mentioned that similar findings concerning the overuse of DMs by the EFL pre-service primary school teachers are reported in Kapranov (forthcoming). In particular, it has been found that the future teachers of English at primary schools who are enrolled at Stockholm University overuse DMs in their academic essays.

Whilst the overuse of DMs associated with the formal register can be regarded as a problem, it is suggestive of the participants' awareness of the genre requirements of academic writing in English. This assumption can be partially supported by the decrease of the use of informal DMs by the participants. The overuse of the formal DMs with the concurrent decrease of the informal DMs can be taken to indicate that the participants' genre awareness has increased. Arguably, their genre awareness has not mapped onto well-balanced and well-written academic essays, but it, nevertheless, indicates a learning curve the participants have been experiencing from their first essay draft until the final essay submission.

This observation is supported by the present data. For instance, participant PSSST16 uses DMs and (1 %), and then (0.1%) in the draft, but in the final essay the participant expands the repertoire of DMs and includes then (0.3%), besides (0.3%), therefore (0.2%), and alas (0.1%). The appearance of DMs therefore and alas in the final essay can be attributed to the participant's attempt to exhibit awareness of the elevated style of the English language. This assumption is supported by the participant's usage of the DM alas, which is normally associated with formal or poetic styles of writing in English. Whilst the use of alas is too poetic for an academic essay in linguistics and EFL didactics, it is, nevertheless, indicative of the participant's attempt to conform to the style conventions of academic writing.

As far as the participants' genre awareness is concerned, it should be emphasised that academic genres require both extensive practice and explicit instruction (Correa and Echeverri 2017:50). Concurring with previous scholarship (Correa and Echeverri 2017; Kostrova and Kulinich 2015; Negretti and Kuteeva 2011), the present analysis of EFL academic writing reveals problems in their lingua-pragmatic and didactic aspects. Specifically, these problems are manifested by some of the participants' draft essays, where the presence of the genre-

appropriate DMs is concurrent with the informal DMs. For instance, in the participant's PSSST13 draft essay neutral and formal DMs and, as, however, usually, therefore, thus are used simultaneously with more informal DMs, e.g. just, like, and so.

Echoing Correa and Echeverri (2017), it can be postulated that enhancing an EFL student's academic writing skills requires further development of specific genre knowledge, such as the genre appropriate usage of DMs. Following the corrective feedback interventions by the course teacher and the small student group, the final essay by the participant PSSST13 is marked by the presence of stylistically neutral and formal DMs in contrast to the first draft, e.g. and, but, however, therefore, such, and thus. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the presence of neutral style DMs, especially and, forms a characteristic feature of the majority of the final essays. A typical example of the final essay is provided in Excerpt 2, where the formal DM therefore appears to be embedded into stylistically neutral DMs and, and as:

(2) The definition of bilingual is broad and the definition of bilingualism in this report is, therefore, defined as being bilingual from birth. Being bilingual from birth means that before the baby is born it will learn to recognize the two languages being spoken by its mother or/and father (Kluger, 2013) and the brain of a bilingual child is "proven to be more flexible" (Kluger, 2013) which indicates that bilingual children have references from two languages to explain themselves. An additional previous study (Kapa & Colombo, 2013) defines bilingualism in "early childhood bilingualism" (Kapa & Colombo, 2013: 235) when the children become bilingual between birth and the age of three, and "later childhood bilingualism" (Kapa & Colombo, 2013: 235) as becoming bilingual after the age of three. (Participant PSSST 18, male)

The frequent occurrence of and, as well as of but and as in the final essays can be indicative of the participants' writing strategies. These strategies involve semi-parallel relationships between the sentences (e.g., and), a comparison based upon the preceding sentence (e.g., as), and the contrast with the previous sentence (e.g., but). These findings lend support to Martinez (2002), who analyses academic essays by seven Spanish L1

university students of English and reports the usage of DMs analogous to the present findings.

### **3. Conclusions and Didactic Implications**

The present paper involves a quantitative investigation of DMs identified in EFL academic writing by pre-service secondary school teachers of English, whose L1 is Swedish. The focus of the study involves the role of DMs in the acquisition of the genre conventions of academic writing in English by the pre-service secondary school teachers of English. Guided by the view of genre as a set of constraints to be met by the novice writer, this study has examined a learning curve undertaken by the participants in their endeavor to master the style appropriate usage of DMs in their academic writing. The usage of DMs by the participants has been contrasted across two sets of academic writing tasks, the academic essay drafts and the final academic essays.

The identification of DMs by the software program WordSmith (Scott 2012) has revealed a tendency to employ the formal register DMs in the final essays (e.g., however, furthermore, therefore, while, etc.). This tendency is concurrent with the decline in informal DMs (like, usually, just, etc.). Additionally, the present data analysis has revealed that the formal register DMs appear to be embedded into the frequently used neutral style DMs (and, as, but, or).

Based upon the present findings, it seems possible to formulate the following didactic implications, which might be relevant to the teaching of academic writing in English to the pre-service secondary teachers of English: First, the corrective feedback interventions by the course teacher should be supplemented by the corrective feedback by the small student group to ensure the genre appropriate usage of DMs in academic essay writing. Second, the awareness of the genre appropriate DMs in academic writing should be raised concurrently with cautioning EFL students about the excessive usage of formal register DMs. Third, the students should be provided with an essay template with a list of DMs associated with scientific writing in English to facilitate the style-appropriate academic essay writing.



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