

IVANA DUCKINOSKA-MIHAILOVSKA

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

North Macedonia

MAJA JOŠEVSKA-PETRUŠEVSKA

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

North Macedonia

**EFL COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION: USE OF DISCOURSE
MARKERS IN COMPOSITIONS OF MACEDONIAN L1
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

Abstract: The use of discourse markers (DMs), as elements that contribute to the overall cohesion and coherence of a text, is important for effective written communication in English. L2 writing syllabuses teach students the use of DMs in a principled fashion, yet in the field of L2 writing research, there have been contradictory findings – the frequency of use of DMs does not necessarily lead to a higher level of writing quality, particularly in argumentative and expository compositions (Rahimi 2011; Meisuo 2000). In other research studies, however, a strong correlation was found between the use of DMs and higher composition scores (Liu and Braine, 2005).

The aim of the present classroom-based research was twofold: to identify the general cohesive features (the distribution and use of DMs) and to investigate if there is a correlation between the frequency of use of discourse markers and the level of quality of the written compositions in a specific genre, namely the data commentary text-type (description of graphs and charts). To this effect, 34 compositions written by senior Macedonian L1 students at the English Language and Literature Department at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje were analysed. The results of the analyses revealed that contrastive DMs were most frequently used in data commentaries, and secondly, the frequency of DM use did not affect the quality of the written product. It is expected that the findings will enable teachers to make informed and guided choices regarding the shaping of the academic writing syllabus.

Keywords: discourse markers, frequency count, data commentary texts, writing quality

1. Introduction

Ever since Halliday and Hasan introduced the concept of “cohesion” in *Cohesion in English* (1976), their groundbreaking work has given rise to extensive research in the area of discourse cohesion and coherence as manifested in both spoken and written discourse. As far as academic writing is concerned, the appropriate use of cohesion and coherence are thought to be two essential qualities of good writing (Monippally and Pawar 2010).

To produce a coherent and cohesive piece of written discourse, Macedonian L1 university students majoring in English Language and Literature are instructed and taught to use cohesive devices in their Academic Writing classes since the lack or inappropriate use of such devices “would hinder successful communication or might lead to the lack of comprehension” (Rahimi 2011: 68). According to Ghasemi (2013), for a reader to be able to follow any idea in any written text, contextual clues should be used by L2 writers to mark the relationship between the preceding and following piece of message.

Unarguably, such contextual clues are an essential element of communicative competence that should be acquired by L2 learners for effective communication in English, and consequently they are fundamental for our classroom-based research. This paper explores the use of discourse markers (DMs) by L2 students in order to achieve better cohesion and coherence for effective written communication in English, in particular, how the use of DMs affects the quality of writing in English. Additionally, we follow-up on the results by suggesting teaching applications.

2. Literature review

A great number of empirical studies investigating the relationship between cohesion and coherence and writing quality across a variety of text-types and genres have been published, yet the findings have been contradictory. Some have found a direct positive correlation between the frequency of use of DMs and writing quality, while others suggest that the use of a higher number of DMs does not necessarily lead to better cohesion when rating writing quality. The following section examines some key research studies relevant to these issues.

The results of the first group of studies show that no strong positive correlation between the frequency of DM use and writing quality could be found. Meisuo (2000) applied Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) taxonomy in his analysis of 107 expository compositions written by second-year English major students from two Chinese universities. He explored the frequency of use and distance, the relationship between the number of cohesive ties and writing quality, and lastly, the difference

in frequency of use of cohesive ties between highly-rated and poorly-rated essays. His findings showed that Chinese students used lexical devices most frequently (71.7%), followed by conjunctions (17.5%) and reference devices (10.8%). The analysis showed no positive correlation between the number of ties and writing quality, nor any significant difference between highly-rated and poorly-rated texts in the frequency of DM use. In another study, Rahimi (2011), following and further building on Fraser's model (1999), investigated the use of DMs in a total of 112 argumentative and expository texts written by 56 Iranian university students. This study aimed to identify the categories of DMs used, their frequency of use, as well as their influence on writing quality. The results revealed a higher frequency of DM use in argumentative essays than in expository ones. The study also found a text-type specific hierarchy of DM type use, with one common feature: the elaborative DMs were most frequently used in both text-types. Lastly, it was concluded that the effect of using DMs on writing quality of both text-types could not be predicted.

A similar analysis of the types of DMs frequently used and the correlation between the use of such markers and writing quality was performed by Modhish (2012). Fifty expository essays written by Yemeni learners majoring in English were investigated with respect to the abovementioned questions. The findings revealed a rather limited repertoire of DM use, yet the participants overused elaborative markers. No strong positive correlation between the DM use and writing quality was found. However, the study showed that the students who could use topic relating markers correctly and appropriately wrote higher quality essays.

The second group of studies also investigated such a correlation, but their results suggest otherwise. Liu and Braine (2005), applying Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory as framework for their study, aimed to identify the general features of cohesion in 50 argumentative essays of Chinese non-English major undergraduates, the cohesion related problems, and the relationship between the number of such devices used and writing quality. Their results showed that the most commonly used type of cohesive devices were lexical devices (55.6%), followed by reference devices (29.8%) and conjunctions (14.6%). They also found, contrary to findings claimed by other researchers (e.g., Meisuo, 2000), the high essay score correlated to the number of lexical devices and the total number of cohesive devices used. Finally, they established type specific problems concerned with the use of reference devices and lexical cohesion.

Similar results were obtained by Jalilifar (2008), who analysed 598 descriptive compositions written by 90 Iranian English major students. Interestingly, there was an equal distribution of the participants according to their educational experience; they all belonged to one of the following three groups: junior, senior and graduate students. This consequently conditioned their language proficiency level, and the results respectively revealed a positive relationship between the language

proficiency level and the rate of DM use. Further, it was found that the larger the number of appropriately used DMs, the higher the writing quality.

Looking at the Macedonian context, some studies which deal with certain aspects of the use of DMs in academic written discourse by Macedonian EFL learners also provide the theoretical background to this paper. The contrastive analysis of the use of cohesive devices in academic written discourse and literary studies in English and Macedonian revealed that textual cohesive devices are less frequently used in Macedonian, which can be partly attributed to the lack of attention they receive in Macedonian for establishing cohesion. However, their use was higher in literary studies rather than in social sciences in both languages, which points to the fact that the genre does affect the use and range of textual cohesive devices (Trajchevski, 2021). In a somewhat similar vein, Stojanovska-Ilievska (2018) explored the use of logical connectors in the academic writing of Macedonian learners of English. She aimed to discover the frequency of their use, as well as the different types of problems students face when trying to use them in a given context. The results revealed that Macedonian students tended to overuse logical connectors. Still, they used a rather limited range of logical connectors and relied heavily on the ones they were familiar with. In another research, Bekar (2007) analysed the universal problems faced by three groups of students (native speakers of English, international ESL learners, and Macedonian EFL learners) in their written expression in English; among other things, she came to the following conclusions which are related to cohesion, coherence and writing quality. The results of the analysis of the survey conducted among the students showed that all three groups found *Clarity* (81.4%), defined as a deficiency of coherence, as the greatest difficulty in written expression. Furthermore, the analysis of the students' essays corroborated claims that a cohesive text may be incoherent due to loss of focus, insufficient background knowledge, lack of purpose of writing, and lack of audience awareness. Despite this, the higher-rated essays included remote and mediated cohesion links, and linked new information logically, thus avoiding repetition and redundancy. However, the inadequate use of transition signals or the lack of the same in poor essays is indicative of the fact that students do not grasp the relations of contrast, consequence, and cause and effect.

Most of the studies outlined above explore the use of DMs by non-native speakers of English. Their corpus material ranges from expository and argumentative compositions to descriptive ones. The results concerning the relationship between frequency of DM use and writing quality point to different directions, thus the cohesive features of EFL writings remain an issue that needs to be further investigated.

3. Study design

3.1 Motivation and purpose

Due to insufficient research concerned with how DMs are utilized in the academic written discourse by Macedonian EFL learners, our classroom-based research explored the notion of DM use for achieving better cohesion in data commentaries. Data commentaries (Swales and Feak 2012) are an extremely important aspect of academic writing in many disciplines. They are defined as “in-text commentaries accompanying visual displays of results (tables, figures, etc.) in academic texts” (Eriksson and Nordrum 2018: 500). Being part of our senior EFL students’ Academic Writing curriculum, data commentaries comprise the corpus material for our research, which aims to identify their general cohesive features, and to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: Which DMs are frequently used by Macedonian EFL students in data commentary text types?
- RQ2: Is there a correlation between the frequency of use of DMs and the quality of writing?

3.2 Theoretical framework of the study

In literature, depending on the theoretical framework under which these markers are analyzed, they have been given various labels. Fraser’s list, which is a compilation of terms by various authors, includes the following: cue phrases, discourse connectives, discourse markers, discourse operators, discourse particles, discourse signalling devices, indicating devices, phatic connectives, pragmatic connectives, pragmatic expressions, pragmatic markers, pragmatic operators, pragmatic particles and semantic conjuncts (Fraser 2009). His papers on discourse markers (1999, 2009) are pivotal in the field of DM analysis because he defines, categorises and outlines their syntactic and semantic properties with the sole purpose of enabling researchers better compare their work on DMs with other researchers. DMs are defined as “a pragmatic class, lexical expressions drawn from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases. With certain exceptions, they signal a relationship between the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1. They have a core meaning which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is ‘negotiated’ by the context, both linguistic and conceptual” (Fraser 1999: 950). According to Ghasemi (2013), who investigated and compared the most significant studies dealing with the use of cohesive devices in second language writing, and the relationship between their use

and writing quality, Fraser's taxonomy is believed to be the broadest and most extensive classification system applied in written discourse.

Due to the abovementioned reasons and the fact that the DMs which are subject to our analysis display the properties defined by Fraser, we decided to follow his theory (1999, 2009) as the framework for our analysis. The following three categories of DMs were targeted in our study:

- **Contrastive markers** – they signal that the explicit interpretation of the second clause contrasts with an interpretation of the first clause. E.g., *but, alternatively, although, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, whereas...*
- **Elaborative markers** – they signal a quasi-parallel relationship between the clauses. E.g., *and, above all, by the same token, for instance, likewise, in addition...*
- **Inferential markers** – they signal that the following clause is a conclusion derived from the preceding clause. E.g., *so, accordingly, as a consequence, for this reason, on this condition, therefore, it can be concluded...*

The target words had to establish one of the three relationships: 1) they relate content from the clause they introduce with a previous clause, as in this example from our corpus, *Kent's earnings grew considerably. Similarly, York's earnings rose dramatically*, 2) they combine two independent clauses, e.g., *In the first quarter of 2020, the earning in Lincoln (had) reached 50k ... and in York, the earnings were around 38k*, and 3) they relate the segment of the first clause to the second one, e.g. *While the quarterly earnings of Kent show only an increase from around 45K to just over 50K, the other three chain stores show fluctuations*.

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

A total of 34 ($M = 6$, $F = 28$) senior Macedonian L1 English major students at the Faculty of Philology, at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, took part in this classroom-based research. Their mean age was 22.5. Their English language proficiency level was not formally established as all of them had already passed six mandatory 15-week Modern English Language courses, as well as six Academic Writing courses as part of their syllabus. As a result, their English language proficiency level was between B2 and C1 level according to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). When the study was conducted, all the participants were enrolled in Academic Writing 7, a mandatory course, and were eligible to pass it through a writing portfolio as a means of continuous assessment.

4.2 Materials and procedure

The corpus for this study consisted of the students' writing assignments from the first portfolio task: data commentary text type (see Appendix A). To successfully complete the task, the following steps were performed: drafting, submission, peer review, self-reflection, redrafting, resubmission, feedback by the instructor, and final drafting and submission. Since each draft was given feedback either by their peers or the course instructor, for the purposes of this study, only the first drafts of their submissions were evaluated. The participants completed the drafts at home, while they provided feedback and were given peer feedback in class. They did not receive any specific feedback or comments prior to writing their first draft except for general guidelines for completing the task, nor were they encouraged or discouraged to use DMs by the instructors. The instructors only provided feedback on the second and third (final) version.

All the participants' assignments, 34 in total, comprising a corpus of 7,702 words, underwent DM identification by both authors of this study, who acted as assessors as well. Each author first individually identified the correctly used DMs for all participants, and then both authors compared their notes. The identified DMs were categorised according to Fraser's typology (1999, 2009), in one of the following three subclasses: contrastive, elaborative and inferential markers. A total of 219 target words were identified. Then, each text was marked by both authors using IELTS assessment criteria: band descriptor (see Appendix B) and given a grade out of 9, with respect to the criterion: cohesion and coherence. In cases where there was not an overlap of the grade, a mutual consensus was further reached between the two researchers by looking for the closest match from the provided band descriptors.

4.3 Data analysis and results

First, the data analysis focused on the frequency of use of DMs by categories. Then, a quantitative analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics.

The results show that the participants used all three types of DMs with contrastive markers (CDMs) being the most frequently used subclass. Still, even though they contributed to the highest percentage (48.4%), their repertoire was quite limited. The markers *but*, *however*, *on the other hand*, *whereas*, *while/whilst* and *in contrast* comprised 87% of all contrastive DMs occurrences. A similar scenario of a relatively limited repertoire was noticed among the elaborative discourse markers (EDMs), which comprised 38.4% of all DM use. Here, *and* was mostly used (77.4% of all EDM use) as expected to join messages with separate propositional content,

which was the only function of *and* that was considered for analysis, followed by fewer occurrences of *furthermore* (7.1%), and some occasional uses of *also*, *similarly*, (4.8% each), *in addition/ additionally* (2.4%), *moreover*, *that is to say*, *as well as* (1.2% each). The inferential discourse markers (IDMs) were the least commonly used (13.2%). In fact, they mainly appeared in the conclusion to summarise the text. These included *in conclusion* with 66% of all occurrences in this group, while the rest consisted of: *overall* (24.1%), *thus* (6.9%) and *since* (3.4%). Table 1.1 below shows the number of occurrences and relative frequencies of the three types of DMs, while Table 1.2 presents all the DMs that appeared in the corpus listed under the corresponding category.

Table 1.1 Number and relative frequencies of contrastive, elaborative and inferential discourse markers ($N = 219$)

Total	CDMs	EDMs	IDMs
No	106	84	29
%	48.4	38.4	13.2

Table 1.2 Number and relative frequencies of all the discourse markers

CDMs	No	%	EDMs	No	%	IDMs	No	%
while/ whilst	30	28.3	and	65	77.4	in conclusion	19	65.5
but	20	18.9	furthermore	6	7.1	overall	7	24.1
however	13	12.3	also	4	4.8	thus	2	6.9
whereas	11	10.4	similarly	4	4.8	since	1	3.4
on the other hand	10	9.4	in addition	2	2.4			
in contrast (to this/ that)	8	7.5	moreover	1	1.2			
yet...	4	3.8	that is to say	1	1.2			
contrary to the expectations/ this	2	1.9	as well as	1	1.2			
conversely	2	1.9						
in comparison (with this/ that)	2	1.9						
despite (this/that)	1	0.9						
nevertheless	1	0.9						
on the contrary	1	0.9						
opposing to this	1	0.9						
	106			84			29	

Over and above that, this study aimed to determine if the frequency of use of DMs affected the grade given for cohesion and coherence only. For that purpose, Pearson correlation was calculated to measure the relationship between the two

variables in our study: frequency count of DMs and the received grade/ numerical compositional score. Table 1.3 presents the number of correctly used DMs from all three categories and the grade for cohesion and coherence for the student's work.

Table 1.3 The frequency count of all correctly used discourse markers and the grade assigned for each composition

	Frequency count of <u>correctly</u> used DMs	Grade
Student 1	6	6
Student 2	8	8
Student 3	4	7
Student 4	4	6
Student 5	8	8
Student 6	7	5
Student 7	4	6
Student 8	6	4
Student 9	6	4
Student 10	8	8
Student 11	9	5
Student 12	8	7
Student 13	2	5
Student 14	5	7
Student 15	9	6
Student 16	4	5
Student 17	6	9
Student 18	5	5
Student 19	11	6
Student 20	4	6
Student 21	4	6
Student 22	3	8
Student 23	4	6
Student 24	7	5
Student 25	7	7
Student 26	4	8
Student 27	9	5
Student 28	9	6
Student 29	9	8

Student 30	5	5
Student 31	8	7
Student 32	9	8
Student 33	8	7
Student 34	9	5
Total	219	

Figure 1.1 below shows the calculation for the correlation between the frequency count of DMs and the received grade. With correlation being significant at below 0.05 level, the results show that there is no statistically significant correlation ($p = .108$), indicating that a higher number of discourse markers in the data commentary text does not lead to a higher grade. Figure 1.2 also visually represents the absence of positive correlation between the tested variables.

Correlations

		count	grade
count	Pearson Correlation	1	.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.543
	N	34	34
grade	Pearson Correlation	.108	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.543	
	N	34	34

Figure 1.1 Pearson correlation coefficient using SPSS between the frequency count of discourse markers and the received grade

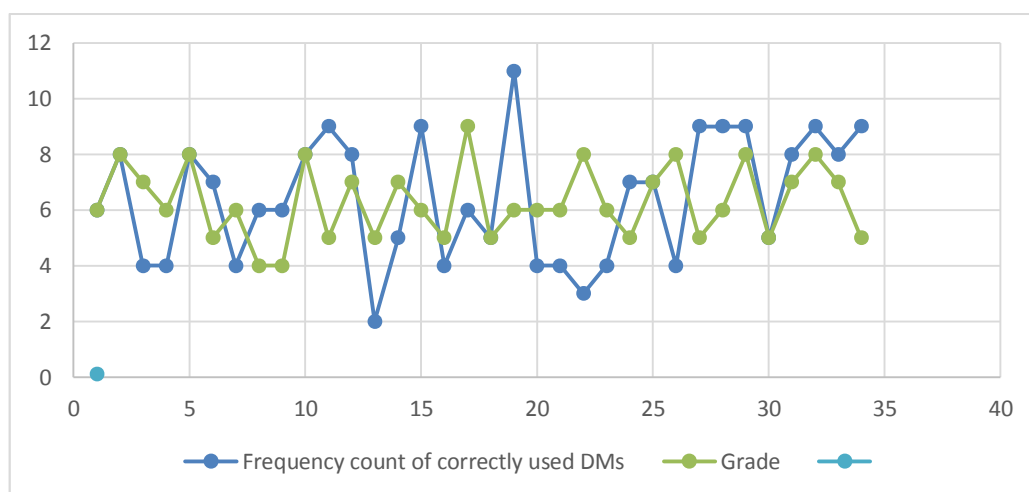


Figure 1.2 Line chart showing the correlation between the two tested variables

It is evident from the tables and figures above that the contrastive DM category was the most commonly used one, though all three categories were characterised by a narrow range of DMs. Moreover, for the data commentary task type in our study, no statistically positive correlation was established regarding the frequency of DM use and writing quality.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present classroom-based research was defined as twofold: first, to identify which subcategories of DMs are most frequently used in the data commentary text type, and secondly, to investigate if there is any correlation between the frequency of use of DMs and the level of quality of the written compositions. The framework that we used for our study was based on Fraser's taxonomy of DMs (1999, 2009), which identifies three main categories of DMs: contrastive, elaborative, and inferential.

The results revealed that the contrastive markers were the most common. Previous research has shown that in argumentative and expository writing tasks, the elaborative markers were more present as they help establish a parallel relationship between different ideas in the written discourse (Rahimi 2011; Modhish 2012). Also, different academic contexts, e.g., literary studies and social sciences, seem to require different types of cohesive devices (Trajchevski, 2021). Such findings lead us to consider the nature of the task. In our study, the task required drawing similarities and differences where possible, so the contrastive markers were most frequently used (48.4%), followed by the elaborative ones (38.4%). This can be attributed to the fact that the participants mainly focused on contrasting the given data. Not surprisingly, the inferential DMs were the least used since they only appeared in the summary part; therefore, most of the participants opted for using such makers only in that part of the task to signal conclusion.

However, the findings revealed that the participants used a relatively limited repertoire regardless of the type of DM. Similar results were obtained by Stojanovska-Ilievska (2018), who found that Macedonian students tend to have a limited range of logical connectors in essays and ascribed this trend to students' preference for a connector they are familiar with. Also, in argumentative and expository essays, Iranian EFL learners used *and* significantly more than the other in the same category (Rahimi 2011), which was also the case in our study as well, while in another study (Modhish 2012), the overuse of *and* and *also* in expository writing by Yemeni EFL learners was attributed to the learners' transfer from their L1 and their reluctance to experiment with a less familiar DM. This approach to using a limited variety warrants the need for emphasising the importance of using a variety of DMs in academic writing in the EFL classroom.

The study also intended to determine if there is any correlation between the frequency of use of DMs and the quality of the composition. With the correlation being insignificant ($p = .108$), we found that the higher use of DMs did not lead to a higher grade for cohesion and coherence. Other studies with different L1 learners and text types have also come to similar findings (Meisuo 2000; Modhish 2012; Rahimi 2011). They concluded that the use of DMs is not always indicative of a well-written composition, nor a discriminating factor regarding its quality. Thus, it appears that the quality and variety of DMs, rather than their quantity, can be a determining factor for a cohesive and coherent text.

6. Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study have highlighted the importance of DMs for better cohesion and coherence in academic writing, as well as the disadvantage of overusing them. They also have some pedagogical implications for the teaching of DMs in the EFL classroom.

The first step should be to familiarise learners with the concepts of cohesion and coherence and their importance in academic writing. Learners' awareness of these can be raised by working on a sentence level first (cohesion), before moving to a paragraph level (coherence). Students can be encouraged to think of cohesion as a nice adhesive tool between words and sentences, before moving to a paragraph level, where they need to ensure that there is a good progression of ideas that are clear and easy to understand.

Being easily recognizable, DMs are a learners' first choice to establish a relationship between two clauses, and learners might end up overusing them, thus overburdening the text and having a detrimental effect on writing quality, which has proven to be the case with Macedonian EFL learners. According to Stojanovska-Ilievska (2018), such overuse of connectors can be attributed to students' misconception that a higher use of DMs can lead to better coherence, and hence a higher grade.

For that reason, learners can be introduced to samples of data commentary text types (as well as other text types) and encouraged to search for DMs while having the following questions in mind: *How often are DMs used? What is their frequency of use? What is their purpose? Is every relationship of contrast, similarity or conclusion marked by an overt DM?* Such questions can shape learners' thinking process about the use and role of DMs in an EFL discourse.

Still, considering that DMs cannot be solely responsible for the text quality (Rahimi 2011), students should be familiarised with other devices contributing to better cohesion and coherence, such as: reference words, synonyms, substitution, ellipsis. Therefore, once the stage of practising DMs has been completed, other

cohesive devices can be introduced. Using the same samples mentioned for the first step, learners should be encouraged to look for examples of the other cohesive devices and reflect on their role as facilitators in the written discourse. Learners can be also asked to consider various cohesive devices to link two clauses. For example:

- (1) a. *Students fear academic writing.*
- b. *Students procrastinate completing their writing assignments.*

One of the few possible ways to connect these two clauses is by using a DM, reference word and substitution. For example:

- (2) *Students fear academic writing.*
As a result, they procrastinate doing it.
- ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

DM referencing substitution referencing

Normally seen as a more challenging task by students, academic writing can be broken down into manageable parts by addressing its various aspects, some of which is cohesion and coherence. Should learners understand the crucial role DMs play, alongside other cohesive devices, writing will not be seen as a strenuous classroom activity, but an opportunity to explore different ways of relating ideas.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to provide an account of the types of DMs used in data commentary text types by Macedonian EFL learners and add another piece to the whole picture of how their use affects writing quality. We established that different DMs are used depending on the type of writing assignment, and that their use is not always a clear indicator of the quality of writing. Still, it must be pointed out that the current study has two main limitations. First, the sample was small; future research should consider a bigger sample to check if similar results are obtained. Second, the target feature in our study were DMs only, so future research should consider what effect the use of other cohesive devices has on writing quality.

Nevertheless, the current study and its results have important pedagogical implications. They highlight the importance of having a systematic approach to teaching DMs, along other cohesive devices in the EFL classroom, which should not be seen only as an embellishment for a more decorative writing style, but crucial elements that add to its cohesion and coherence.

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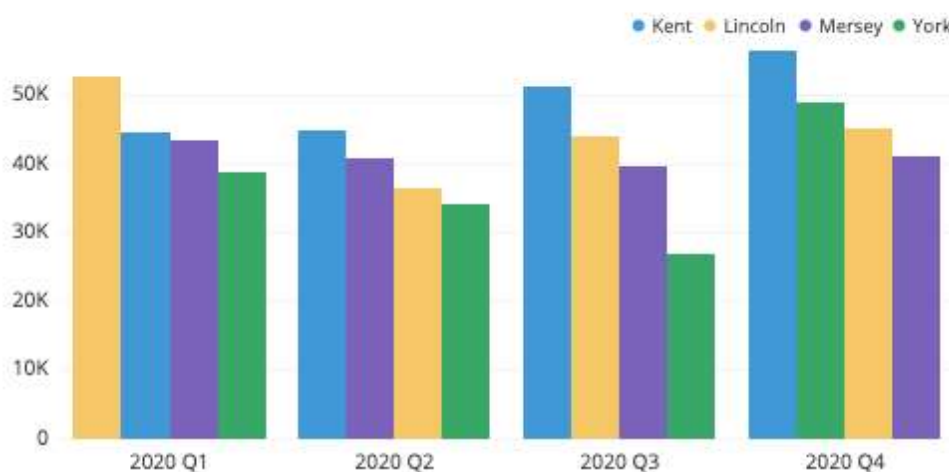
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Appendix A

Data commentary task:

The graph below shows quarterly earnings in thousands of pounds across four chain stores over a year. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features and trends. You should write between 200-250 words.

New Revenue



<https://chartio.com/assets/dfd59f/tutorials/charts/grouped-bar-charts/c1fde6017511bbef7ba9bb245a113c07f8ff32173a7c0d742a4e1eac1930a3c5/grouped-bar-example-1.png>

Appendix B

<https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/writing-band-descriptors-task-1.ashx?la=en>

IELTS™

WRITING TASK 1: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Task achievement	Coherence and cohesion	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully satisfies all the requirements of the task clearly presents a fully developed response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention skillfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers all requirements of the task sufficiently presents, highlights and illustrates key features/ bullet points clearly and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sequences information and ideas logically manages all aspects of cohesion well uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures the majority of sentences are error-free makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> covers the requirements of the task (A) presents a clear overview of main trends, differences or stages (GT) presents a clear purpose, with the tone consistent and appropriate clearly presents and highlights key features/bullet points but could be more fully extended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-over-use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of complex structures produces frequent error-free sentences has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> addresses the requirements of the task (A) presents an overview with information appropriately selected (GT) presents a purpose that is generally clear; there may be inconsistencies in tone presents and adequately highlights key features/ bullet points but details may be irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places (A) recounts detail mechanically with no clear overview; there may be no data to support the description (GT) may present a purpose for the letter that is unclear at times; the tone may be variable and sometimes inappropriate presents, but inadequately covers, key features/ bullet points; there may be a tendency to focus on details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a limited range of structures attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts to address the task but does not cover all key features/bullet points; the format may be inappropriate (GT) fails to clearly explain the purpose of the letter; the tone may be inappropriate may confuse key features/bullet points with detail; parts may be unclear, irrelevant, repetitive or inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task has limited control of word formation and/or spelling errors may cause strain for the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to address the task, which may have been completely misunderstood presents limited ideas which may be largely irrelevant/repetitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not organise ideas logically may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling errors may severely distort the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer is barely related to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has very little control of organisational features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answer is completely unrelated to the task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to communicate any message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can only use a few isolated words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot use sentence forms at all
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend does not attempt the task in any way writes a totally memorised response 			