

**THE USE AND TEACHING OF
DISCOURSE MARKERS IN HONG KONG -
STUDENTS' PRODUCTION AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES**

Volume I

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to investigate discourse markers from a functional and attitudinal perspective. Based on the pedagogical sub-corpus from CANCODE and the audio-recordings of class discussion of 49 secondary pupils in Hong Kong, Part I explores the roles discourse markers play in spoken discourse on a contextual basis and compares the different use of discourse markers by British and Hong Kong speakers of English using quantitative and qualitative methods. Discourse markers are found to serve as useful contextual coordinates to structure and organise speech on **interpersonal** (marking shared knowledge, attitudes and responses), **referential** (indicating textual relationships such as cause, contrast, coordination, digression, consequence, etc.), **structural** (summarising opinions, marking sequence, opening and closing of topics, transition and continuation of topics) and **cognitive** (denoting hesitation and thinking process, marking reformulation, self-correction or elaboration, and assessing the listener's knowledge about the utterances) realms, bearing a probabilistic relationship with the various role(s) on a multifunctional dimension in pedagogic discourse. Functionally, non-native speakers are found to display a highly restricted use of discourse markers, especially those interactive ones (e.g. initial *and*, *yeah*, *you know*,), whereas native speakers tend to use discourse markers more for a variety of pragmatic functions.

Part II contains a questionnaire survey (N=132) and an interview study (N=3) of Hong Kong teachers. Reliability test and factor analysis were conducted in the quantitative part. The results indicate a very positive perception of the pragmatic and pedagogic value of discourse markers by the teachers where students at intermediate-advanced level are challenged to acquire them for both receptive and productive

purposes. The findings also reveal teachers' preference to conform to an exonormative speaking model and their less favourable attitude towards the Hong Kong variety. They are not certain regarding the representation of discourse markers in the existing teaching materials and their actual teaching. The study has implications for second language teaching in five areas: (1) introducing discourse markers as a communication strategy; (2) developing learners' linguistic awareness of discourse markers as an instructional strategy; (3) utilising corpus-based research for materials development; (4) equipping teachers with a World English perspective; and (5) creating space for the development of Hong Kong English to prepare learners to communicate in a dynamic linguistic world.

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

A. Transcription for Student Corpus & Interview

Transcription Conventions	Explanations
PUNCTUATION	. A full stop indicates a completed intonation unit. , A comma indicates a continuing intonation unit. ? A question mark indicates a question.
PAUSE	(+) indicates a pause between or within an utterance.
STRESS	WHAT spelling marked in capital letters shows the emphasis or stress within an utterance.
UNINTELLIGIBLE	(?) means the transcriber cannot hear the speaker.
NON-VERBAL FEATURE	(laughter) shows description of non-verbal feature such as laughter.
INTERRUPTED UTTERANCE	+ marks an interrupted utterance. e.g. A: I think I would like+ B: Right. A: +to teach.
OVERLAPPING	[marks the point where an utterance is overlapped by another one. e.g. A: It costs £50 [quite a lot. B: [It's expensive.
UNFININSED WORD/ SINGLE LETTER	= b= tr= indiv=

B. CANCODE Transcription

Transcription Conventions	Explanations
PUNCTUATION	. A full stop indicates a completed intonation unit. ? A question mark indicates a question.
SPEAKER CODE	<1>, <2>, <3>, etc. <M> indicates that the speaker’s identity is unclear, but it is likely to be a male. <F> indicates that the speaker’s identity is unclear, but it is likely to be a female.
INTERRUPTED UTTERANCE	+ marks an interrupted utterance. <i>e.g. <1> I think I would like+ <2> Right. <1> +to teach.</i>
UNFININSED WORD/ SINGLE LETTER	= b= tr= indiv=
UNFINISHED SENTENCE, REPEAT OR FALSE START	<=><\=> <i>e.g. <=> Do you <\=> Do you like this?</i>
GUESS	<H>.....<\H> <i>e.g. <3> I think Poole <H> didn’t that come in with <\H> Bournemouth? <4> Yeah.</i>
UNINTELLIGIBLE	<G?>
TRANSCRIBER’S COMMENTS	<E> ... <\E> e.g. <E> laughs <\E>

To Kwok Leung, Ian & Victoria

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background and nature of the 2-part study with the main research questions and hypotheses cited. There is an outline of each chapter in the final section.

1.1 Background

Discourse markers (henceforth DMs) are frequent in conversation and play a fundamental role in spoken interaction. Recent analyses of corpora of spoken interaction show that they are represented among the top ten word forms (Allwood 1996). While most of the research has been on analysing individual markers (Svartvik 1980, Östman 1981, James 1983, Watt 1987, Andersen 1998) or small sets of markers (Schourup 1985, Erman 1987, Schiffrin 1987, Aijmer 1996, 2002), there has been relatively little literature on the comparative usage between native and non-native speakers. Far less attention has been given to the pedagogical significance they have in a second language classroom. An examination of current speaking and listening materials in Hong Kong (e.g. Pottor 1997, Sutton 1998) suggests that most texts do not highlight this aspect of linguistic usage. Where markers are focussed on as a teaching point in these texts, it is often those items that are frequently used in written texts that are presented (*e.g. and, but, so, therefore*), whereas those that typically occur frequently in spoken language (*e.g. well, you know, and, so, etc.*) are often neglected. This points to a gap in pedagogy where discourse markers should be part of the lexical input in the English syllabus (McCarthy 1998).

Moreover, research on discourse markers in academic discourse has focused mainly on listener perceptions of coherence (Tyler, Jefferies and Davies 1988, Segal, Duchan and Scott 1991, Flowerdew and Tauroza 1995). There is virtually no research especially in ESL countries exploring teachers' perspectives of these discourse-structuring devices. This underexplored area motivates the present study.

1.2 Nature of the Study

The present research focuses primarily on the so far understudied discourse markers in spoken discourse, both from students' production and teachers' perspectives. It also addresses the currently debatable issue of identifying with the native speaker norm in the light of the globalisation of English, and makes special reference to the language situation in Hong Kong. Drawing from results of both qualitative and quantitative surveys, this research proposes a blueprint for the attitude that language teachers should have, and a statement of the pedagogical space that discourse markers should have based on a discoursal syllabus. The study also hopes to assert the needs and preferences for incorporating discourse markers in the Hong Kong classroom.

The research contains two parts:

- Part I A comparative study of the use of discourse markers between British native and Hong Kong non-native speakers of English in pedagogical settings;
- Part II An attitudinal study of the perception of Hong Kong English teachers towards the use and teaching of discourse markers.

All the data involved relate to real world settings. The data used in Part I consists of authentic recordings from CANCODE, a research project on spoken discourse based in the University of Nottingham, and corpus data of 14,000 words from group discussions of 49 intermediate-advanced learners of English in a secondary school in Hong Kong. The data in Part II comprises scores yielded from an attitudinal survey of 132 English teachers towards DMs, as well as 17,000-word interview data which serve to cross-validate the quantitative results and make the context more concrete professionally from an insider point of view. The results bear pedagogic significance and are of direct relevance to teachers, materials writers and curriculum developers in Hong Kong.

1.3 Research Questions

Part I

1. What specific functions do discourse markers serve in spoken interaction?
2. How do Hong Kong non-native speakers of English differ from British native speakers in their use of discourse markers?
3. What contributes to the differences in the use of discourse markers among the two groups of speakers?

Part II

4. What are teachers' perceptions of the role and usage of discourse markers in the curriculum? Do teachers perceive that their students can understand a spoken discourse better with knowledge/awareness of discourse markers? What are the effective ways of introducing discourse markers into a language class?

5. To what extent should discourse markers be represented in the teaching of spoken discourse, as a reception clue or a production agent, or both?
6. Do teachers expect their students to be taught to speak like a native? Are they exonormative or endonormative regarding the speaking norm?

1.4 Outline of the Study

The present research is divided into two parts. Part I contains Chapter II to IV. Chapter II includes an examination of the English language as a dominant language from an ideological and pedagogical dimension, and a literature review of corpus linguistics and discourse markers. Chapter III describes the research methodology and theoretical framework of the study. Chapter IV presents the general functions of DMs as observed from CANCODE and the student data based on the established framework in Chapter III and reports the results of the comparative use of discourse markers between Hong Kong and British speakers of English. It also includes a detailed analysis of the different use of initial *and*, *yeah* and *you know* between the two groups of speakers.

Part II is devoted to an attitudinal survey of Hong Kong teachers towards discourse markers which consists of a quantitative and a qualitative survey. Chapter V is a background study of the linguistic profile in Hong Kong and discusses the emergence of Hong Kong English. Chapter VI presents the methodology, results and interpretation of data from the 132 questionnaires. Chapter VII reports the methodology, results and discussion of three semi-structured in-depth telephone interviews. Finally, Chapter VIII summarises the results of the two-part study and outlines the strengths and limitations of

the research design. Then it concludes with the implications for teaching and avenues for further research.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

From the macro-world of English gaining dominance in the ¹periphery-English countries (termed after Phillipson 1992b) since the era of colonialism to the micro-world of language teaching in the classroom, teaching English as a second or foreign language involves not only pedagogic and linguistic issues. What happens in the classroom is inextricably connected with the ideological and cultural dimensions. In Section 2.1, I will examine the dominance of English macroscopically on ideological, linguistic and pedagogic dimensions. On the ideological side, there is a brief look at the origin of Standard English and a discussion of the variety for international communication. On the pedagogical side, there are different thoughts relating to the model of real English to be used in the classroom. From ideology to pedagogy, debates over the current innovative idea of incorporating authentic and corpus-based English in the classroom are examined, together with a discussion of the appropriate pedagogy to be used.

Section 2.2 deals with what happens in the classroom. It examines a dialogue taken from a junior secondary textbook and illustrates how inauthentic spoken discourse in current

¹ The periphery-English countries are of two types: 1) countries which require English as an international language (Scandinavia, Japan), and 2) countries on which English was imposed in colonial times, and where the language has been successfully transplanted and still serves a range of intranational purpose (India and Nigeria) (Phillipson 1992b: 17). The periphery-English countries correspond to Kachru's (1985: 12) 'expanding' and 'outer' circles.

teaching materials is in comparison with the real language. It is followed by a detailed literature review on the nature of corpus linguistics and its contribution to language teachers and learners. The final section presents an overview of the definitions and some influential past research related to discourse markers. This establishes the background for the 2-part study regarding students' production of discourse markers (Chapter III-IV) and teachers' perspective towards them (Chapters VI-VII).

2.1 English as a Dominant Language

2.1.1 Ideological Dimension

2.1.1.1 The Standard English debate

2.1.1.1.1 History of Standard English

Standard English had its origin in the Victorian era and was consolidated in the period between the wars, especially with the publication of the Oxford English Dictionary in 1928 (Pennycook 1994). Standard British English was originally based on the dialects of the eastern Midland countries. The emergence of London as the political and economic centre of the country encouraged the growth of London English. Following that was the important role printing played in facilitating the dissemination of a single, standard norm across most of the country. The process of standardisation was then reinforced by the codification and prescription of standard English in the eighteenth century, which according to Carter (1994), was a geographical and historical accident. He claims that '[t]he development of a standard coincided with an elaboration of standard English, resulting in the dialect of standard English having a much more varied range of functions and uses than is usual for other dialects' (Carter 1994: 21). Standardising English was

seen as an attempt to centralise control over education, language, printing, reading and possibly thought (Pennycook 1994).

2.1.1.1.2 Globalisation of English

The spread of English and ELT has played an important role in the world, from global politics to people's everyday lives, as a result of colonialism, international interdependence, revolution in technology, transport, communication and commerce (Phillipson 1992b). English functions as a gatekeeper to positions of prestige in a society, whether it is for further education, employment or privileged social positions, as witnessed in places such as India, Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines, etc. Furthermore, English serves as an international gatekeeper for movement between countries, especially for refugees wishing to move to English-speaking countries. Its dominant position in the world is also revealed in the domains of media, popular culture, international academic relations, and other forms of international information transfer.

A widespread view holds that the spread of English is natural, neutral and beneficial, basically as a result of global force. However, the phenomenon is also described as a form of Anglicist 'linguistic imperialism' which operates when 'the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (Phillipson 1992b). Phillipson does not regard the worldwide spread of English as an accident, but claims that it has been deliberate British and American government policy since the mid-1950s to establish English as a universal second language so as to protect and promote capitalist interests as well as to achieve their political purposes. Taking a similar but less

critical stance, Pennycook (1994) claims that given the broader inequitable relationships in the world because of the colonial origin of the English language, people have little choice but to demand access to English. It can be said that the spread of English is inherently expansionist, resulting in its superior position. As a result, other languages may have the risk of being displaced and replaced and many indigenous cultures marginalised. Nevertheless, Phillipson (1992b) upholds the idea that English needs to be seen as one language in a multicultural framework, both internationally and within each core English-speaking country.

The prioritising of English has been prevalent in the post-colonial age and the influence of the English language has been asserted in the domains of teaching, teacher training and research. For instance, the British Council established as an agent for nurturing the teaching of English worldwide and as a centre for the promotion of English carries the mission ‘to promote an enduring understanding and appreciation of Britain in other countries through cultural, educational, and technical co-operation’ (Annual Report 1984/85, quoted in Phillipson 1992b: 140). This has reinforced the dominant position of English. The British Council can be regarded as an institution supportive of British commercial and political interests through its collaboration with the BBC, its conduct of research and conferences, holding training courses, supplying books and conducting exams and inspections, etc. (Pennycook 1994).

The spread of English has given rise to different varieties of the language. The great grammarian Randolph Quirk insists on the preeminence of British Standard English. To suggest that there can be different standards of English is something ‘misleading, if not

entirely false' (Quirk 1988: 234). However, he is criticised by Kachru (1990) for having ignored the sociolinguistic and pragmatic realities of the large range of contexts in which English is used as a second and foreign language. The debate over different forms of Englishes raises the issue of linguistic and pedagogic standards and the underlying question of who has the power to impose a particular norm.

2.1.1.2 The variety for international communication

Given the global use of English internationally (about 450 million users of English as a native language, 350 million of English users as a second language and 100 million to a billion users of English as a foreign language, with the majority using it as a lingua franca (Crystal 1997)), there arises the question of which variety of English should be used for international communication. Logically, it should be a form which possesses the qualities of clear communication and widespread intelligibility. Standard British English, according to Widdowson (1994), is a superposed variety which is socially sanctioned for institutional use in areas like education, administration, business and is therefore particularly well suited to written communication. Furthermore, he claims that conformity to convention is necessary in order to maintain its institutional stability:

‘Standard English, then, is not simply a means of communication but the symbolic possession of a particular community, expressive of its identity, its conventions, and values. As such it needs to be carefully preserved, for to undermine standards of English is to undermine what it stands for: the security of this community and its institutions. Thus, it tends to be the communal rather than the communicative features of standard English that are most jealously protected: its grammar and spelling.’
(Widdowson 1994: 381)

It is a reality that the global spread of English has given rise to different varieties of English. Which model of English should we use then in the classroom? Is ‘American

English', 'Canadian English' or 'Australian English' equally acceptable in the classroom? Searle (1983) argues that in view of the power and history of English, students must be helped to master standard British English rather than the non-standard forms but at the same time, it is important for learners to have a good understanding of the relative importance of different standards of English at local, national and international levels. He suggests teaching the standard form critically so that students are aware of how such forms have developed and how they are linked to central norms of linguistic and cultural appropriacy. He also proposes that students should have access to those forms of the language that are of particular significance in particular discourses. This is echoed by Pennycook (1994) who points out that we should first make sure that students have access to those standard forms of the language that are linked to social and economic prestige; second, we need a good understanding of the status and possibilities presented by different standards; third, they need to focus on those parts of the language that are significant in particular discourses; and finally, students need to be encouraged to find ways of using the language that they feel are expressive of their own needs and desires (Pennycook 1994: 317-8).

Given that standard British English is the international language in educational settings, it is inevitably the form we have to use in most classrooms, especially in written communication. But of course other language varieties should not be regarded as deficient or sub-standard, and the needs of the learners should be prioritised in order to facilitate the expression of their own experience, both in terms of the 'classroom culture' and the 'culture outside the classroom' (Prodromou 2001). Whilst there is less controversy over the written form, the variety for spoken language is more debatable.

Crystal (2001) envisages that the WSSF (World Spoken Standard Form) will replace Standard English which will then be spoken by a minority of speakers. In approaching this complicated issue, we can look inwardly to the language needs of every region and decide which form should be employed. If international intelligibility is required by the learners, then the model adopted should be for international communication. If learning English is only for local or national use, then the local or national variants should be encouraged. However, it is such a controversial issue that it cannot be resolved by a simple ‘either-or’ answer.

2.1.2 Pedagogical Dimension

2.1.2.1 Real English in the classroom

Another controversial issue arising in the ELT field is whether ‘real English’ should be used in the classroom. Real English means authentic, natural language (Carter 1998). Arguing against the practical value of this kind of real English, Prodromou (1998) raises the point that a piece of authentic material can fail to generate the desired teaching outcome in the classroom simply because the messages embedded in the teaching materials and the pedagogy involved are culturally and ideologically inappropriate. Likewise, Widdowson (1996) puts forward the idea that some learning materials are not authentic for learners who belong to another community. As such, they do not have the necessary knowledge of the contextual conditions which would enable them to authenticate the language in native-speaker terms. He argues that contexts will only be meaningful for learners if they are constructed in the classroom with reference to the learners’ first language experience and culture (Widdowson 1996).

However, many scholars consider that including real, naturally-occurring, corpus-based English in the English syllabus to be very valuable (Carter and McCarthy 1997, Leech 1997, Biber *et al.* 1998, Hunston and Francis 1999). Analysis using the spoken data from the CANCODE corpus (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) based at Nottingham University suggests significant differences between real language and textbook language. Corpus examples from CANCODE demonstrate that the kinds of grammatical choices that speakers and writers make often depend on contextual features (Hughes and McCarthy 1998). Unfortunately the pedagogic reality is that ‘rather than the dialogue taking precedence over the linguistic features to be learnt, the language teaching points take precedence over the reality of the dialogue’ (Carter 1998: 46). To address the cultural elements existing in ‘real English’, Prodromou (2001) suggests that a discovery-based language awareness component should be incorporated in the teaching syllabus in order to develop learners’ sensitivity to language and to enhance cultural understanding.

Taking a similar perspective to Widdowson (1996), Prodromou (1996b) claims that it is those contextual features in the immediate situation (the interlocutors, their relationship, the purpose of their communication, the place of communication, their previous knowledge, their shared assumptions, the micro-culture of the society, and the broader macro-culture of the society) that shape the linguistic choices the speakers make and give natural discourse its vitality and meaning. But if this natural discourse is taken out of its original context and transplanted into another context, another time and place, like a textbook, it will lose its authenticity. He also argues that one cannot speak like the British in an informal context unless one shares the interpersonal and cultural assumptions of that culture. Likewise, Cook (1998) argues that foreign learners may not need native-like

English nor need to learn those infrequent words or expression which are most powerful, natural, and most communicatively effective. Contrary to this, Carter and McCarthy (1996) argue that if real English is not included in classroom materials, then the ‘power’ of the native speaker may never be properly challenged because the beauty of authentic English lies in the richness of its vocabulary and idioms, its cultural allusions and its variety of style. They claim that the real challenge is in fact to provide descriptions and to develop materials which can serve the teachers in all situations, so that they can decide how real English can best be taught.

From a pragmatic point of view, Hughes and McCarthy (1998) state that it will be a frustrating experience for both teachers and learners if authentic English is used indiscriminately in the classroom. They suggest that ‘if the contextually and culturally influenced, interpersonal, idiomatic nature of much authentic language is to be accepted into ELT classrooms internationally... the discourse on which insights are based must not be only that of a particular section of British-English-speaking society’ (Hughes and McCarthy 1998: 284). This accords with Prodromou’s (2001) notion of ‘cultural franca’ which embraces the need for a common ground for micro- and macro-cultures in different varieties of English, based on the syntax and lexis of authority Englishes.

2.1.2.2 From ideology to pedagogy

The past decade has seen increasing interest in the development of corpus-based studies since advances in computer technology have made possible the collection and storage of huge corpora from a variety of sources. Currently, quite a number of spoken and written corpora are available. To name a few, there are the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen (LOB)

Corpus, the London-Lund Corpus (LLC), the COBUILD/Birmingham Corpus, the British National Corpus (BNC), the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE). Biber *et al.* (1998) argue that comprehensive analyses of language use require a corpus-based approach which provides a useful tool for effective investigations in different areas of linguistics. They demonstrate in their book corpus-based studies at lexical, grammatical and discoursal levels, the results of which give insights into designing effective teaching materials and more well-informed dictionaries for language learners at different levels. The merit of such tools is that they describe the way language is used in actual contexts, rather than relying on authors' impressions of meaning and use (Biber *et al.* 1998: 25).

Meanwhile, the pedagogic potential of corpora in the ESL/EFL classroom should not be underestimated. Prodromou (2001) encourages a collaborative approach by applied linguists, teachers and materials developers to define the role of corpora but we cannot ignore the fact that description in corpus analysis is complex and cannot be presented to students all at once. Therefore, the issue remains as to 'what the principles for selection, idealization, and simplification should be' (Cook 1998: 62). It is a long process of experimentation to find out how to turn language description using corpora into a workable pedagogy.

In working out a more useful language syllabus, McCarthy and Carter (1994) propose the development of a discourse syllabus. This advocates the notion of discourse competence on top of communicative competence. This can capture the essence of real English or corpora in the language classroom by focusing on an analysis of linguistic choices based

on contextual clues at a discourse level. McCarthy and Carter remark that description of language is incomplete without taking into consideration levels of discourse such as modes, genres, registers, discourse strategies and the cultural continuum. The value of such an approach is that ‘it never fails to recognise the centrality of grammar and lexis, but suggests a reorganisation of the purposes for learning structures and vocabulary items’ (McCarthy and Carter 1994: 200). The approach is one which encourages habits of observation, noticing or conscious exploration of grammatical forms and functions; making learners aware of the differences between coursebooks and real English.

The ideology involved in ELT should no longer involve the securing of commercial and political interests by the western powers as in the era of colonialism. As English today has grown to be an international language with a mixture of learners acquiring it for different purposes, an appropriate English language methodology should meet the social, cultural and communicative needs of learners. This will enable them to acquire “appropriate” English, ‘to make it a tool for self-expression of their own needs, their own culture and its point of contact with other cultures’ (Prodromou 2001: 602).

2.2 From Inauthentic Textbook Dialogues to Real Language

Amidst the debatable issue in relation to the place of real English in the classroom, we cannot lose sight of the reality that the spoken discourses in most teaching materials are very outdated and they cannot adequately reflect the kind of language that students encounter in everyday situations. The following section includes two sub-sections. The first one is an examination of a dialogue taken from an upper primary textbook. The

second sub-section includes a detailed literature review on the nature of corpus linguistics and examines how it can inform a language teacher and a learner.

2.2.1 *Inauthenticity of textbook language*

Method

The present analysis draws on Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) model for analysing classroom interaction. In their classification (Figure 2.1), the highest hierarchy of a classroom discourse is a *lesson*, consisting of one or more *transactions*. A transaction contains one or more *exchanges* dealing with one single topic. The next unit is *move* which signals the way the speaker starts, carries on and completes an exchange. Moves are realized by *acts* which are the smallest interactive unit to signal what the speaker wishes to communicate. For wider applicability this model has been adopted and adapted to analyse various types of spoken exchanges, for instance, Francis and Hunston (1992) and Stenström (1994) adopt the model for the analysis of everyday conversation.

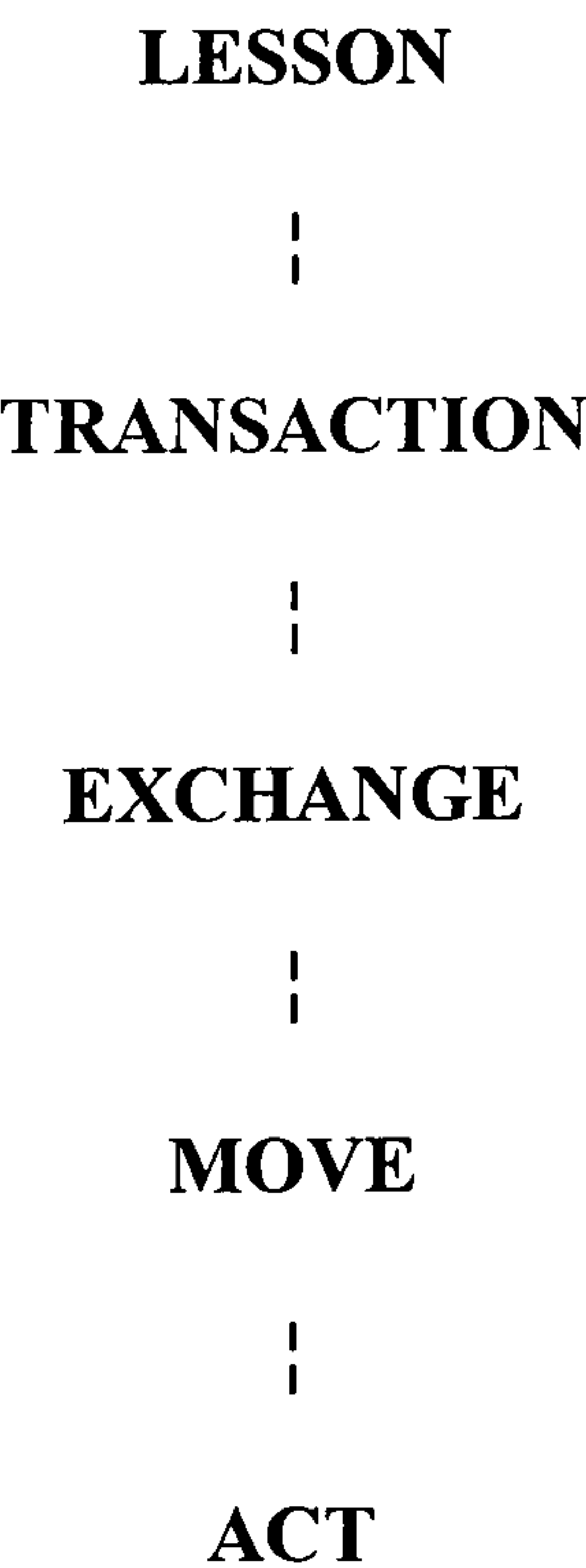


Figure 2.1 **Sinclair & Coulthard’s (1975) System of Analysis of Classroom Discourse**

Following the system of analysis of the Birmingham model, a typical classroom exchange structure consists of an *Initiation (I)* by the teacher, followed by a *Response (R)* from the pupil and then a *Feedback (F)* to the pupil's response from the teacher which functions to evaluate and/or comment upon the response. The structure of all exchanges is specified as I(R)(F). An *Initiation* may be followed by either a *Response* or a *Feedback*. If there is a *Respond*, the *Feedback* is again optional. The most typical classroom exchange, however, consists all the three moves.

<2>	<i>Do you feel confident happy with it?</i>	(I)
<1>	<i>Yes. I feel happier. A lot happier.</i>	(R)
<2>	<i>Yeah. Uh huh.</i>	(F)
<i>(CANCODE data)</i>		

However, Burton (1980) and Berry (1981) challenge the adequacy of the model and point out that the evaluative function of the follow-up move (F) is unusual outside the classroom. Coulthard and Montgomery (1981) also note that problems arose when the system was applied to other data and certain alterations are proposed. To address the problem of delicacy, different versions of revision have been adapted from the original model.

In analysing the textbook dialogues in this section and for the comparative analysis of discourse markers in CANCODE and the student data in Chapter Four, I refer to Stenström's model (1994) of spoken interaction which is derived from Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model of classroom discourse. Different acts in angular brackets, e.g. <accept>, <answer>, <confirm>, etc. have been used to express the communicative

intent of the speakers. An example of a 3-part IRF exchange and their accompanying acts is cited below.

<2>	<i>Do you feel confident happy with it?</i>	<i>I <question></i>
<1>	<i>Yes. I feel happier. A lot happier.</i>	<i>R <opine></i>
<2>	<i>Yeah. Uh huh.</i>	<i>F <acknowledge></i>
<i>(CANCODE data)</i>		

Background

Speakers	A (Anna) – female
	M (Mei Mei) – female
	W (Wu) – male
Power relations	Relatively equal
Goal/Purpose	Making suggestions, exchanging ideas, negotiating and making decisions.
Topic	A’s pen-friend, Stella, is coming to visit Hong Kong. W and M are suggesting to A places in Hong Kong that Stella should visit. The discussion is opened by A who finally manages to decide where to take her friend.

Overall Framework

As indicated in the textbook dialogue (also in Appendix 1), the discussion consists of three parts: opening (L1-4), message (L5-41) and closing (L42-43). In the message part, four transactions can be recognised. The first is a discussion on the places to go in Kowloon (L5-11), followed by a discussion on places to visit in the New Territories (L12-21). The third transaction is about the suggestions for going to Hong Kong Island (L22-30), and finally to Lantau Island (L31-41). The main topic is strictly adhered to,

and begins with two <inform> acts, then with a <request> act to ask for suggestions for places that Stella can visit.

Transcript

- 1 A: I've got a letter from my pen-friend, Stella. She's coming to visit me next week.
2 What would you suggest Stella does in Hong Kong, Wu?
3 W: I'd suggest she goes to visit places in different areas of Hong Kong.
4 M: That's a good idea. Let's think about the places in Kowloon first.
5 W: OK. If Stella goes to Kowloon City, she can find a lot of restaurants there. She
6 can try different kinds of food – Chinese, Thai, Japanese...
7 M: What about Mong Kok? The clothes in 'Women's Street' are really cheap.
8 W: I'd suggest Stella goes to Tsim Sha Tsui, too. There are three museums, Kowloon
9 Park and a lot of shops there, too. I'm sure Stella will like it.
10 A: Good idea, Wu! I think I'll take Stella to Tsim Sha Tsui because she can learn
11 more about Hong Kong in the Museum of History.
12 M: What about the places in the New Territories? I'll suggest Stella go to Sham
13 Tseng to eat roast goose.
14 W: The Gold Coast is near Sham Tseng. I'd suggest she goes to the beach there after
15 that.
16 M: Does Stella like climbing mountains?
17 A: I think she does.
18 M: Then I'd suggest she goes to Sha Tin. She can find the famous Lion Rock there.
19 She can climb up to the top of the lion's head!
20 A: It's too dangerous, Mei Mei! I think I'll take her to try roast goose in Sham Tseng
21 instead.
22 A: What would you suggest Stella does on Hong Kong Island, Mei Mei?
23 M: I'd suggest Stella goes shopping in Causeway Bay. There's Times Square and a
24 few Japanese department stores there. I'd love to join you, Anna!
25 A: Sure.
26 W: I'd suggest Stella goes up to the Peak. She can see many parts of Hong Kong
27 from the Peak.
28 M: Oh yes! There's big shopping centre on the Peak, too.
29 A: Now I remember. Stella wanted to go up to the Peak. Her uncle visited Hong
30 Kong last year and told her the view from the Peak was beautiful.
31 M: We've talked about the places in Kowloon, the New Territories and Hong Kong
32 Island. What's next?
33 W: Lantau Island – it's Hong Kong's biggest island. I'd suggest Stella goes to Mui
34 Wo. There's a nice hotel there. We can have a barbecue outside the hotel.
35 M: Then she can take a bus from Mui Wo to the Buddha. My family went there last
36 week. It's really huge.
37 W: Will you take Stella to Lamma Island, too, Anna?
38 A: I don't think she has enough time.
39 W: I'd suggest you take her to the reservoir on Lantau, too. You can find very nice
40 walks near the reservoir.

41 A: *Good idea! I'll do more exercise before she comes, so I can enjoy the walks.*
42 *Thank you for your suggestions, Wu and Mei Mei. I'm sure Stella will like Hong*
43 *Kong very much.*

(Source: Keobke, K. 1998. *Listening 6. Oxford Primary Skills Series. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.*)

There is only one occurrence of digression, which is a different, but related, topic (Stenström 1994) about Stella's uncle who once came to Hong Kong and was fascinated by the panoramic view from the Peak (L29-30). Linguistically it is marked by *Now I remember*. The parties then come to a kind of agreement and the dialogue is closed by a termination marker *Thank you for your suggestions (L42)*. No phatic talk or any small talk is identified.

Analysis

The transactions consist mainly of I-R-F and I-R exchanges. The total number of words in the dialogue is 456 and the total number of turns is 26. The distribution of turns are relatively equal, 9 turns for A, 8 turns for W and 9 turns for M respectively. The average number of words per turn is 17.5. It is found that most turns are of comparable length, with the widest range from speaker A, from a one word reply (L25) to the longest turn of 33 words (L41-43). The overall turn distribution indicates that there is no dominant speaker since the total number of words uttered by the three speakers are 153 (Speaker A), 157 (Speaker W), and 146 (Speaker M) respectively.

The discussion among the teenagers is an informal one and no one appears to be the chairperson, so apparently everyone is free to make suggestions and show acceptance or objection. However, not many obvious <object> acts are identified except in L20, raised

by speaker A: *It's too dangerous, Mei Mei!* in reply to M's suggestion to climb up to the top of Lion Rock. All the other ideas are agreed upon cooperatively as in L4, L10, L25, L28 and L41. In real discussion, there should be different opinions, whether it is agreement or disagreement, so that decisions can be made after negotiation.

Discourse markers, as common features of spoken discourse used to organise and hold the turn and to mark boundaries in the discourse (Stenström 1994), are underrepresented in the excerpt. There are only 4 occurrences of discourse markers. For example:

- M: ... *Let's think about the places in Kowloon **first**.*
W: **OK.** *If Stella goes to Kowloon City, she can find a lot of restaurants there. She can try different kinds of food – Chinese, Thai, Japanese...*

First is used as a DM to indicate sequence of events. Another one identified is *OK* which occurs at the beginning of W's turn to mark the boundary between the suggestion by M and the idea raised to express agreement of the previous <suggest> act. There are two other instances of <acknowledge> acts in L10 and L41 marked by *Good idea*. Yet discourse markers of this kind are not as frequent as in a natural piece of spoken discourse.

Throughout the dialogue, there are only two turntakers in L17 and L38 who introduce a turn with *I think* and *I don't think*. The rest of the turns are denoted by well-formed sentences as in most written discourse, a feature very uncommon in authentic conversation. Altogether only two interactional features *Sure* (L25) and *Oh yes* (L28) which indicate a sense of involvement by Speakers A and M are observed. The fact that there are very few interactional signals and discourse markers to indicate that speakers co-construct each other's responses gives a very artificial flavour to the textbook

dialogues. By virtue of the fact that a genre of discussion presupposes elements of thought and evaluation and therefore, it is highly unlikely that characteristic features like hesitations, false starts, repetitions, overlappings, back-channelling, interruptions, repairs, and incomplete utterances, etc. would not be represented at all. Markers like *mhm*, *mm*, *yes* to signal agreement and *yes but*, *well* and *er*, etc. to signal disagreement are not observed. It is unnatural to find that the interlocutors do not get mixed up while speaking, and never hesitate in talk.

Although there is surface cohesion through the use of *Stella* as a vocative, there is minimal cohesion underlying the text. For instance, other cohesive devices like *this*, *that* and *there* are not observed.

- A: *What would you suggest Stella does on Hong Kong Island, Mei Mei?*
M: *I'd suggest Stella goes shopping in Causeway Bay. There's Times Square and a few Japanese department stores there. I'd love to join you, Anna!*
A: *Sure.*
W: *I'd suggest Stella goes up to **the Peak**. She can see many parts of Hong Kong from **the Peak**.*
M: *Oh yes! There's big shopping centre on **the Peak**, too.*
A: *Now I remember. Stella wanted to go up to **the Peak**. Her uncle visited Hong Kong last year and told her the view from **the Peak** was beautiful.*

Proper noun *The Peak* has been repeated in every line towards the end of the transaction which sounds very redundant and unnatural. In fact, face-to-face talk in general need not repeatedly name obvious entities but can simply refer to them in the short hand of pronouns and deictic words such as *that*, *there*, *those ones*, etc. There should be sufficient amount of shared knowledge of the topic of discussion among the interlocutors and explicit language like this is unnecessary. Real speech seldom repeats the same lexicon in this manner.

In terms of the vocabulary, it is even unnatural to have as many as twelve instances of the lemma *suggest*, with eleven instances being used as a verb and one as a noun (the total number of words in the dialogue is 456). A study using data from CANCODE (Carter and McCarthy 1997: 144) has revealed that when people are negotiating and planning in an informal situation, verbs such as *suggest* are unlikely to be used very frequently. Rather it should be used in more formal settings such as debates and meetings. Also modal verb *can* denoting possibility (Quirk and Greenbaum 1989) which acts as a softener for the speaker's suggestions occurs nine times. Grammatically, there are five instances of wh-question constructions like *What would you suggest ____ does ...?* (2), *What about ...* (2) and *What's next?* (1). Constructions like *there is/are* occur three times. The comparatively high frequency of all these words and constructions makes the dialogue look very artificial and repetitive.

Ellipsis, defined as a structure having some missing element which is retrievable from the surrounding text (McCarthy 1991) or from the knowledge which is shared between speakers and hearers (Carter and McCarthy, forthcoming) is a very common feature in spoken discourse. However, it is observed only once in *L17*:

M: Does Stella like climbing mountains?
A: I think she does (ellipsis).

The above-mentioned vocabulary and grammatical features are obviously designed to be the language focus of this piece of dialogue presented as a listening comprehension task. Widdowson (1998) describes these kinds of features as 'language contrived for demonstration purposes'. These recurrent patterns, in some sense, limit the amount of

language exposure for students, and in particular the common types of lexical and grammatical patterns that are characteristic of real speech.

Conclusion

In sum, the present excerpt exemplifies to a certain extent the inauthenticity of textbook dialogues. They differ remarkably from real speech in terms of structure, organisation, interactional features, vocabulary and grammar which mark the spontaneous and interpersonal nature of spoken discourse. They are basically written to enable students to complete a listening task and adhere very much to the written mode. In my experience of language teaching in Hong Kong, this kind of text is typical and is often represented in coursebooks. Of course a larger scale of investigation is required to illustrate the scope of differences and to provide more evidence for the generalisability of this observation. Yet this preliminary analysis illuminates corpus linguistics as a desirable subject discipline in the present language teaching world for bringing models of real language into the classroom. Section 2.22 presents what corpus linguistics is, its advantages, nature and the major kinds of corpora available and discusses how a computer corpus can inform both language teachers and learners. The contrast in language features also points to a detailed investigation – the study of the use of discourse markers, as one form of frequently-occurring interactional features which serve to organise larger stretches of spoken language, between native and non-native speakers of English in Chapter III and IV.

2.2.2 Corpus Linguistics

Over the last three decades, the availability of computerised corpora has given rise to a scholarly enterprise called ‘Corpus Linguistics’. Taking advantage of the development of computer technology, corpus linguists can now work with large varieties of texts and seek generalisations about language and language use. In this literature review I attempt

to investigate the nature of corpus linguistics and examine its usefulness with particular reference to English language teaching.

2.2.2.1 What is a corpus?

In the language sciences a corpus is a body of written text or transcribed speech which is stored and accessed electronically to serve some linguistic purpose. According to Biber *et al.* (1998), a corpus is a large and principled collection of natural texts. Sinclair (1996) defines it as ‘a collection of pieces of language, selected and ordered according to explicit linguistic criteria in order to be used as a sample of the language’. Nowadays corpora are basically stored and processed by computer so that comprehensive analyses of language can be performed. The composition of a corpus depends on the area and scope of investigation. A corpus may be chosen to characterise the language of children, a particular variety of a language, or everyday conversation. Yet a distinction is made by Kennedy (1998) between a corpus and a text archive or text database. ‘Whereas a corpus designed for linguistic analysis is normally a systematic, planned and structured compilation of texts, an archive is a text repository, often huge and opportunistically collected, and normally not structured’ (Kennedy 1998: 6). The distinction is made clear by Leech (1991) who precisely pinpoints the fact that a corpus is designed for a particular ‘representative’ function.

2.2.2.2 What is corpus linguistics?

2.2.2.2.1 Advantages of using computers

Corpus linguistics is inextricably linked to the computer, which has introduced incredible speed, total accountability, accurate replicability and statistical reliability (Kennedy

1998). Computers can store and analyse a large database of naturally-occurring discourse which can hardly be dealt with by human brains. Also computers can be used interactively, allowing human analysts to make different linguistic judgements (Biber *et al.* 1998). They enable empirical analyses of the actual patterns of language use on a far more complex scale than is possible without such assistance.

2.2.2.2.2 *Nature of corpus linguistics*

Sinclair (1997), as a proponent of corpus linguistics, claims that the linguistics of the twentieth century has been the linguistics of scarcity of evidence. He asserts that the quality of data has been inadequate for any reliable statements about grammars, vocabulary, usage, semantics, or pragmatics. Therefore, a large corpus is essential to provide a body of evidence as a basis for analysis. As corpus-based studies make extensive use of computers, corpus linguistics is essentially quantitative and empirical in nature so that scientific generalisations can be sought. Aston and Burnard (1998) make the following remarks:

‘...[C]orpus-based research naturally grounds its theorizing in empirical observation rather than in appeals to linguistic intuition or expert knowledge. It thus emphatically rejects one of the major tenets of Chomskian linguistics, namely that the linguist’s introspection provides the only appropriate basis for describing language.’

(Aston and Burnard 1998: 123)

It is along this rationale of corpus linguistics that earlier conclusions on grammars based on intuitions are found inadequate or incorrect (Biber *et al.* 1994). Whilst admitting that corpus linguistics could reach some part of the language other grammars fail to reach, opponents of corpus linguistics like Owen take a cautious stance; Owens makes a counter claim with special reference to COBUILD’s concordance data that total reliance on a

corpus does not necessarily yield better observation (Owen 1993), and essentially, he establishes the importance of intuitive prescription as a desirable aspect of language teaching (Owen 1996).

2.2.2.2.3 *Different kinds of corpora*

The past few decades have witnessed the development of a number of significant corpora. With emphasis gearing towards the spoken corpora, the following section details some of these corpora and draws evaluations from various scholars.

The Lancaster-OSLO/Bergen (LOB) Corpus

The Lancaster-OSLO/Bergen (LOB) Corpus (1970-78), one million words in total, was intended to be a British counterpart to the Brown Corpus. However, it was criticised as being too small to be representative. Although it was underrepresented by today's standard, Johansson (1980) noted:

‘The true representativeness of the LOB Corpus arises from the deliberate attempt to include relevant categories and sub-categories of texts rather than from blind statistical choice. Random sampling simply ensured that, within the stated guidelines, the selection of individual texts was free of the conscious or unconscious influence of personal taste or preference.’

(Johansson 1980: 26, quoted in Kennedy 1998: 28)

The Survey of English Usage (SEU) Corpus & the London-Lund Corpus (LLC)

The most important pre-electronic corpus assembled for grammatical description was the Survey of English Usage (SEU) Corpus founded by Quirk in 1959. As a general corpus, it marked the transition between earlier non-computerised corpus-based description and the development of modern corpus linguistics. The corpus contains one million words and is used as a basis for describing the grammar and usage of educated adult native

speakers of British English. Its characteristic, as well as its shortcoming, lies in its academic and formal orientation. The spoken section was published in electronic form from 1980 as the London-Lund Corpus (LLC), and according to Biber *et al.* (1998), it is by far the biggest and most widely used electronic corpus of spoken English available until the mid-1990s. It contains several kinds of spontaneous and prepared speech like face-to-face conversation and discussion, public conversation, interview and spontaneous commentary such as radio broadcast. However, it has been criticised by Kennedy (1998) that the texts recorded were of speakers who were predominantly highly educated adults, and the informal use of English in daily social life is not adequately represented.

The COBUILD Corpus

Another large corpus is the COBUILD corpus developed at the University of Birmingham, UK in the 1980s. It was initially designed for the compilation of a new English dictionary relevant to the needs of learners, teachers and researchers in contemporary English language. Its components contain a larger proportion of spoken English than the above-mentioned corpora, with 25% spoken and 75% written English. It attempts to capture writers and speakers from different origins such as Britain, America and other regions. The spoken texts include a range of genres such as radio broadcasting, university oral interviews and lectures. The COBUILD was then expanded into a huge corpus called 'The Bank of English', which amounted to 320 million running words in 1997.

The British National Corpus (BNC)

The British National Corpus (BNC) is a general corpus, with a collection of over 400 samples of modern British English. The entire corpus contains 100 million words of text, with 90% from written registers and 10% from spoken registers. It was designed to characterise the state of contemporary British English in its various social and generic uses. A dual approach was adopted to collect the spoken data: a demographic component of informal encounters recorded by a socially-stratified sample of respondents, selected by age group, sex, social class and geographic region; and a context-governed component of more formal encounters (meetings, debates, lectures, seminars, radio programmes), categorised by topic and type of interaction (Aston and Burnard 1998). The BNC has been currently used by lexicographers, computer scientists, linguists, language teachers and learners. Even though the spoken section was already the largest collection of spoken English ever collected, Leech (1993) has noted that the BNC still does not redress the severe imbalance between spoken and written data which has been characteristic of most corpora. In spite of this shortcoming, the BNC is undoubtedly an indispensable basis for the description of British English, and for research on theories of language, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics studies (Kennedy 1998).

Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE)

In reality 'the types of corpora which would most faithfully reflect the principles of language learning would contain as much spoken material as written material' (Leech 1997: 17). Yet owing to the lack of spoken data, the grammar of conversation has received little attention. With the aim of developing a description of spoken English for pedagogical purposes, the CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse

in English) project was established at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom in the 1990s. It is a specialised corpus to investigate informal spoken English and contained 1 million running words when completed in 1996. By 1998 it was expanded to 5 million words. Seeing spoken language as the most important raw material in understanding language in its social context, the CANCODE team uses a genre approach to target the speakers, environments and contexts in which spoken language is produced. Five broad contexts for data collection based on the type of relationship of speakers were identified, namely, *transactional*, *professional*, *pedagogical*, *socialising* and *intimate*. McCarthy (1998: 10-11) defines them according to their generic features:

1. *Transactional relations* involve moves towards satisfying needs in a goal-oriented context outside the professional, socialising or intimate relationships (e.g. everyday service encounters in shops, restaurants, transacting goods, information and services);
2. *Professional relations* are displayed in exchanges between professional colleagues in professional situations (e.g. informal company meetings, staff meetings);
3. *Pedagogical relations* are displayed in talk between teachers and their students and among students (e.g. tutorials, pair and group work);
4. *Socialising relations* exist in most of the day-to-day social and cultural activities (e.g. friends preparing a party, talking with strangers on a train);
5. *Intimate relations* are displayed between family members or close friends in private, non-professional settings (e.g. mother and daughter discuss family matters).

Then three typical goal-types, *information provision*, *collaborative ideas* and *collaborative tasks* were added to each context-type to yield a matrix of fifteen cells to

capture the wide varieties of generic activities in everyday spoken English. McCarthy (1998:10) makes further elaboration of the different goal-types:

1. *Provision of information* is concerned with predominantly uni-directional information-giving (e.g. an enquiry at a tourist information centre);
2. *Collaborative ideas* are concerned with the interactive sharing of thoughts, judgements, opinions and attitudes (e.g. university small-group tutorials)
3. *Collaborative tasks* show speakers interacting with their physical environment (e.g. two people packing a car prior to a journey).

The data collected under the different goal-types enable researchers to compare the linguistic patterns in different settings which can vary from very formal to very informal ones. Though the CANCODE size is also small by today's standard, McCarthy (1998) argues that it is unjustified to judge its size only in relation to the huge written or mixed written and spoken corpora since design features are more important than mere size. He also suggests that a corpus of spoken language for pedagogical purposes should be designed with goal- and context-variation in mind, and should include goals and contexts relevant to language learners. Kennedy (1998) raises the idea that small corpora can still reveal reliable information about the linguistic behaviour of very high frequency function words and grammatical features, and the most frequent content words in specific registers and discourse processes can also be studied effectively. The CANCODE, with spoken data as its sole component, offers to teachers, materials writers and pedagogically-oriented researchers an indispensable tool to explore spoken English; a tool that is relevant to and useful in English language classrooms, especially in connection with the teaching of everyday listening and speaking skills in informal

situations (McCarthy 1998). Therefore, the CANCODE differs from the other corpora in the pedagogic orientation it bears and the contributions it makes to the ELT classroom.

The International Corpus of English (ICE)

The International Corpus of English (ICE) contains comparable corpora of 1 million words (Greenbaum 1996). It is unique in that it draws on research effort from at least eighteen nations or regions all over the world where English is spoken as a first or second language to develop parallel corpora. Amongst others, Hong Kong is one of the many contributing regions. In order to ensure standardisation and compatibility, the corpora have been compiled using a common design, with a selection of genres from specified categories of spoken (monologues and dialogues) and written data. Each corpus contains about 1 million words and they investigate educated and standard varieties dating from 1990-94. To a certain extent the English of foreign language users has been catered for in the ICLE (the International Corpus of Learner English) which contains essay writings of about ten language backgrounds. The significance of this project lies in the fact that it is the first systematic collection of many national or regional varieties of English (Greenbaum 1996). The provision of parallel corpora that sample the English used in the participating countries forms 'the basis for long-overdue, systematic, and comprehensive descriptions and comparative studies of both formal and functional aspects of world Englishes' (Kennedy 1996: 219). With the availability of first language and second language English, researchers can move from a recording stage of language descriptions of the native variety to a stage where the relative frequency of certain word forms and the meanings and functions of each of these forms can be noted and compared accordingly. This helps explore how far it is legitimate to speak of a common core of

English or of an international written standard (Greenbaum 1996) for truly international communication to take place.

The Hong Kong Corpus of Conversational English (HKCCE)

Since little attempt has been made to date to offer a systematic description of naturally-occurring English conversations involving Chinese (Cantonese) speakers of English, the compilation of the Hong Kong Corpus of Conversational English (HKCCE) by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University took the initiative to record naturally-occurring conversation in a wide variety of locations in Hong Kong, including homes, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, clubs, workplaces, parks, and social gatherings (Cheng and Warren 1999a). The collection has now reached 500,000 words. The special feature of HKCCE having a combination of NS and NNS conversing in similar contexts means that the corpus can serve as a source of intercultural studies. So far research has been conducted research regarding use of discourse markers (Leung 1996), tag questions (Cheng and Warren 2001) and the level of inexplicitness (Cheng and Warren 1999b).

2.2.2.3 What can a computer corpus tell us?

It has to be stressed that corpus linguistics is not a theory of language which stands on its own. As mentioned, corpus linguistics provides evidence for improving better descriptions of the structure and use of an authentic language. Its strength lies in its applicability to empirical investigations in almost any area of linguistics (Biber *et al.* 1998) such as lexicography, grammar, pragmatics, language in gender, author style, register patterns, language acquisition, etc. Other beneficiaries include machine translation, text-to-speech synthesis, content analysis, natural language processing and

speech techniques, etc. Moreover, its contribution to language teaching is ‘to provide quantitative evidence of the distribution of the component parts of the language, as a yardstick against which to evaluate subjective judgements about the goals and content of instruction.’ (Kennedy 1998: 288). The following section gives a brief account of some corpus-based studies at lexical, grammatical and discourse levels, and discusses their usefulness to language teaching, especially to language teachers and learners.

Word level

A useful computer application of corpus analysis is using the frequency list, which shows the frequency of occurrence of words that make up the texts in the corpus. It can also generate language units other than words, thus providing a very powerful tool for carrying out an initial survey of a corpus and exploring its main linguistic features. By utilising this tool, the general profile of the words making up the texts can be revealed and further investigation of certain words can be pursued. For example, McCarthy and Carter (1997) made use of frequency word list to examine important differences in the vocabulary to be found in spoken and written language. One interesting difference they found from the fifty most frequent words from 330,000 words of Cambridge International Corpus written data and 330,000 words of CANCODE spoken data is that the written data is made up of mainly function words (pronouns, determiners, prepositions, modal verbs, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, etc.), but the spoken list, other than being made up of these basic function words, includes a number of lexical words such as *know*, *well*, *got*, *think*, *right*. The reason for the frequency of these words is their combination with other words like *I*, *you* (*I think*, *you know*) to function to organise the discourse. Note that *well* and *right* function mainly as discourse markers in the data.

Moreover, it is useful to compare the frequency of a word relative to other related words, and this can inform us of how different words are used and help us to identify common and uncommon words (Biber *et al.* 1998). It is also helpful to compare the findings with the corresponding entries in a list compiled from a large general corpus (Barnbrook 1996) and to explore the similarities and differences in word distribution so as to highlight any anomalies. The information about corpus lexicons can inform teachers of the kinds of words students will most likely encounter.

Another tool we can use is the concordancing technique. It allows us to search for specific target words in their original textual environments, and provides an exhaustive list of the occurrences of the word in context and the statistical tendency of words to co-occur. The most standard concordance type is called KWIC display (Key Word in Context) which highlights the chosen keyword in the centre with its surrounding context on each side. Here are 17 lines extracted using MircoConcord (Scott and Johns 1986) for the word *so* from my collection of classroom discussion data in Hong Kong:

of our decision. Jo: Too poor. D: And so eh do we all agree with that? Jo: No.
 your suggestion is better than me. E: So eh how about Barbie doll? Oh Angela
 see the Hong Kong programe in China. So eh I think the TV programme can promo
 igh level puzzle and also low level. So eh if in high level puzzle can give t
 they think that it's quite bored. F: So eh the the price will be about \$200(+
 ay many pictures that you can choose, so eh the variety is very yeah very grea
 t we can set the price higher. V: Yes so eh where where should we manufacture
 t because he said it's very expensive so I argue that nowadays computer price..
 nd. I always disagree with his ideas so I don't have anything to say. T: Ok.
 use Wilson said that computer is good so I I... W: Ah cheap is not equal to go
 the children who is who are about 10, so I I don't think it's difficult to pro
 f money. G: Mixed colour yeah (+). So I suggest eh software soft sometimes
 r the eh 3, 3 to 8 years old girls eh so I think ah they may ah they may like
 n they have inexpensive labour force, so I think both of them are quite good.
 eople would come together and play it so I think it is best. E: How about yo
 or boys not all age of people. E: Yes so I think my suggestion is more suitable
 sed on popular films or TV programmes so I think that Linsaid tortoise will se

Figure 2.2 Sample “Key Word in Context” (KWIC) Concordance Listings for *So*

Since all of the same keyword in the database is indexed, this technique can reveal different senses or meanings associated with the searched word with great processing efficiency and allows the researchers to scan for lines, observe and distinguish context patterns. Therefore, this facilitates analysis of lexical collocations and colligations. Other than the word context, the KWIC can display sentence context, paragraph context and the whole text context. According to Biber *et al.* (1998), concordancing remains the most widely-used technique associated with learner-focused exploratory interaction. Through the concordancing technique, subtle language phenomena such as phraseology can be observed and a learner can discover regularities in use that tend to remain unobserved when the same words or phrases are met in their normal contexts (cf illustration of the use of concordancing technique in demonstrating the phrasal patterns of the confusable pair *interesting* and *interested* in Hunston 2002).

Grammar level

Many researchers have undertaken research on grammar based on large corpora and have investigated the patterned ways in which native speakers use the grammatical resources of a language. Hunston and Francis (1999) advocate the notion of ‘pattern grammar’ which challenges the traditional view that grammar and lexis are separate entities. Francis and Sinclair (1994) raise the important role of corpus-driven grammatical description and explanation in showing the interdependence of grammar and meaning. Biber *et al.* (1998) illustrate that there are important and systematic patterns of use associated with grammatical features at all levels across registers, such as morphological features (e.g. academic prose has more nominalisations than fiction and speech, suggesting that this register focuses more on abstract states, processes, and objects),

grammatical classes (e.g. in comparing noun-verb ratios across registers, academic prose were found to contain more nouns whereas fiction or spoken data contains more action verbs) and syntactic constructions (that-clauses are more common in conversation and there are more to-clauses in academic prose). They believe that knowledge of these patterns is crucial for developing communicative competence in a language.

However, most ESL textbooks do not provide reliable information about appropriate language use. For instance, Mindt (1997) found that *will* and *would* have different semantic profiles and suggests that they should be treated separately in pedagogic grammars. Also he found that most future time reference in conversational English is indicated by *will* and other modal verbs (Mindt 2000). Aston and Burnard (1998) report research undertaken by Grabowski and Mindt (1995) who used the Brown and LOB corpora to create a list of irregular verbs ordered according to frequency, and argued that by following this order in syllabus design, teaching could achieve maximum yield for student's effort, irrespective of when the learning process is broken off. All the evidence informs language teachers of how they could profitably invest efforts in the ELT classroom.

Discourse level

It is comparatively difficult to track discourse characteristics using computers as language characteristics usually extend across sentence boundaries. But Biber *et al.* (1998) claim that it is possible to develop and use interactive computer programmes to achieve the task. These analyses, according to them, map the discourse patterns through texts, and can be used to compare texts, to find the typical patterns for a register, or to see

how a particular text compares to the general pattern for the register, etc. The applicability of these devices, in fact, depends on how user-friendly the software is and how competent the researcher who commands the programme.

Various types of analysis on the discoursal level have been conducted by different researchers. Through examining the English get-passive using CANCODE, Carter and McCarthy (1999) establish the benefit of having intuitions supported by facts in the description for an interpersonal grammar of English based on corpus evidence. In an attempt to understand the nature of non-restrictive *which*-clauses in spoken English, Tao and McCarthy (2001) examined 692 occurrences of this clause type using British and American spoken English data and presented a concordance-based analysis of co-textual and contextual factors using a relational database. They conclude that *which*-clauses in conversational discourse function mainly as an evaluative device, expressing the speaker's opinions, attitudes and commentaries, which is socially-sensitive to the interaction between interlocutors. Aijmer (1987) conducted a systematic investigation of the different use of *oh* and *ah* using 170,000-word data from the London-Lund Corpus of spoken British English. Through extensive contexts she analyses their grammatical and pragmatic functions and elicits information about intonation and collocations. Based on corpus evidence (Aijmer 2002), she further shows that the core meaning of *oh* and *ah* is 'surprise' which carry discourse functions in the textual and interpersonal domains. Some of her other findings, to name a few, include reporting the use of *now* as a topic changer on textual and affective levels; the use of *just* as an attitudinal particle which bears an important function as a rhetorical strategy in argumentative texts; the use of *sort of* as an 'adjuster' for the discrepancy between what is said and what is represented in the

world; and the use of *actually* as an expectation marker to express an attitude to an unexpected event.

An investigation by Altenberg (1990) studying a 50,000-word sample from the LLC found a total of 4516 discourse items which have fundamental pragmatic functions in speech for planning and structuring interactive discourse, for softening or intensifying what is being said and for providing feedback through backchannelling. For example, *well* is a discourse marker ranked as the fourteenth most frequent lexical item in conversation (Svartvik 1992), yet the word is rarely or never used in this sense in written English. Altenberg (1990) points out that *well* is a device used to maintain social relationships or as a hesitation device to give the speaker time to plan and keep a turn in an interaction. Corpus findings also indicate that the pragmatic functions of *well* includes polite disagreement, qualified refusal, reinforcement, modification, indirect and partial answers, and delaying tactics (cf. Kennedy 1998: 176).

So far I have demonstrated with examples how dissemination of findings from corpus-based studies can inform language teaching. There are other areas of use of corpora like the creation of new dictionaries and grammars for learners. The authoritative Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (Quirk *et al.* 1985) and the Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (Sinclair 1987) were compiled on a basis of computer corpora. Up to date, four new editions of dictionaries were completed, namely, the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1st ed.) (2003), the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (3rd ed.) (2001), the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (new ed.) (2003) and the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

of Contemporary English (6th ed.) (2000), all of which have corpus-based evidence as their selling point. Moreover, corpus-based evidence can improve the development of educational materials. For instance, the lexical syllabus developed by Willis (1990) indicates frequency information of words and provides an important empirical input to language learning materials; the Grammar Patterns series (Francis *et al.* 1996, 1998) based on the grammar codings used in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary focus on the association between pattern and meaning. Corpora can help the design of classroom activities, for instance, using concordance listings, editing corpus extracts and constructing role-play cards based on useful phrases.

2.2.3 Conclusion

The use of computerised corpora as a basis for language description and for various other applications has revolutionised the study of language. Its effect on the ELT classroom is beyond doubt. To teachers, the availability of distributional information on aspects of language use offers them relevant information on pedagogical priorities. To learners, hands-on experience with data from corpora elevates their position from passive recipients to active researchers of the language, thus modifying the traditional role of teacher as an authority figure in the classroom (Aston and Burnard 1998) to that of a facilitator. The survey in Chapter III makes use of frequency counts, a function available in the computer software to track and compare the relative frequency and quantitative representation of discourse markers in the student corpus and CANCODE. The information yielded serves as a starting point for a detailed qualitative investigation in Section 4.2.2.2.

2.3 Discourse markers

Since the 1970s there has been wide research interest in the field of discourse markers (hereafter DMs), notably a growing interest in the production and comprehension of spoken discourse. There are studies of DMs which deal with individual markers (Svartvik 1980, Östman 1981, James 1983, Schiffrin 1986, Watts 1987, Andersen 1998) and also studies which deal with small sets of DMs (Schourup 1985, Erman 1987, Schiffrin 1987, Aijmer 1996). However, there is no general agreement upon the terminology. They are labelled respectively as sentence connectives (Halliday and Hasan 1976), discourse particles (Schourup 1985), semantic conjuncts (Quirk *et al.* 1985), pragmatic expressions (Erman 1987) and discourse operators (Redeker 1991), etc. The list of lexical items that may count as DMs varies as well (Stenström 1998). The multiplicity of terminology and the doubtful status of DMs reflect the diverse research interests, and analytical categories, as well as the difficulties of accounting for them adequately in theoretical terms. ‘Discourse markers’ is employed in the present study because of its widespread usage and its broad variety of applications. One common agreed quality of this set of markers is that they are linguistic expressions which generally do not affect the propositional content of utterances in which they occur. In the following sections, I will present an overview of the definitions of DMs, then outline some of the influential past research, and discuss the characteristics of DMs with disagreement and controversy cited. These reviews will be concluded by my own definition of and criteria established for the status of DMs as defined in this thesis.

2.3.1 Definitions

Schiffrin (1987: 31) defines DMs as ‘sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk’, with ‘sequential dependence’ indicating that the markers work on the discourse level. Levinson (1983) refers to them as expressions which indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. Stenström (1994: 13) treats DMs as textual devices, which are elements ‘used to organize and hold the turn and to mark boundaries in the discourse’. According to Redeker (1991), DMs (which are labelled discourse operators) are words or phrases that are uttered with the primary function of bringing to the listener’s attention a particular kind of linkage of the upcoming utterance with the immediate discourse context (Redeker 1991: 1168). In the same vein, Fraser (1999) offers a finer specification and defines DMs as:

‘... a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. With certain exceptions, they signal a relationship between the interpretations of 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: 931)

His demarcation identifies two types of DMs. The first type relates the explicit interpretation conveyed by S2 with some aspect associated with the segment, S1, whereas the second type refers to those that relate the topic of S2 to that of S1. That means that the related utterances are not necessarily adjacent to each other. In sum, discourse markers serve to signal the pragmatic or discoursal role of the speaker’s utterance, and dynamically shape it to the ongoing exchange (Biber *et al.* 1999).

Other proponents of coherence-based models of discourse like Risselada and Spooren (1998) define DMs as ‘natural language expressions whose primary function is to

facilitate the process of interpreting the coherence relation(s) between a particular unit of discourse and other, surrounding units and/or aspects of the communicative situation' (Risselada and Spooren 1998: 132). As such, different word classes, like adverbs, connectors and parenthetical expressions are included as categories of discourse markers.

2.3.2 Past Literature

2.3.2.1 *Tripartite model*

Despite the fact that there are no clear and consistent definitions of what DMs are and how they function, it is useful to have an overview of DMs in past literature. The first and most detailed effort is by Schourup (1985). By using both recorded conversation and introspective data, he identifies a core use of *like*, *well* and *y'know* (which he calls discourse particles). But he argues that they carry different functions despite the fact that they have a core use which might remain constant through all the routine functions of the item (Schourup 1985: 12). He develops a tripartite model for the analysis of conversational discourse in which 'three worlds of the speaker' are represented:

Private world: that is, the covert thinking of the speaker, what that speaker has presently in mind but has not yet disclosed;

Shared world: that is, what is on display as talk and other behaviours by both the speaker and hearer;

Other world: that is, the covert thinking of other interlocutors, which is inaccessible to the speaker.

He calls each of the discourse particles under study an 'evincive' which means:

'... a linguistic item that indicates that at the moment at which it is said the speaker is engaged in, or has just then been engaged in, thinking; the evincive

item indicates that this thinking is now occurring or has just now occurred but does not completely specify its content.'

(Schourup 1985: 18)

Therefore, evincives are tied to the moment of speaking which marks the presence of 'unspoken' or 'undisclosed' thought (Schourup 1985: 19). Moreover, they perform two important functions. One is to establish the conversational relevance, but not the details, of undisclosed thinking by the speaker; the other is to mark the real time moment of occurrence of that thinking in order to establish the timeliness of a speaker's reaction (Schourup 1985: 21). Therefore, the evincive items enable speakers to express the importance of what they have in mind at a particular point in conversation, without fully displaying their thinking.

2.3.2.2 Discourse coherence model

The second most thorough research effort is found in Schiffrin (1987) who defines DMs as 'sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk' (Schiffrin 1987: 31). They are 'sequentially dependent' in that the units of talk prior to and following a discourse marker determine the type of marker to be used and are indicative of the kinds of social and pragmatic meaning a speaker has inferred or is required to offer. In her work, she presents an empirical analysis of the functions of eleven DMs (*and, because, but, I mean, now, oh, or, so, then, well, and y'know*) based on a theory of discourse coherence. She maintains that coherence is constructed through relations between adjacent units in discourse. Innovatively she posits a discourse model by locating them on five planes of talk.

On the first plane, propositions expressed by speakers bear cohesive and referential relations to form an *ideational structure*. On the second plane, co-interactants carry out speech acts within their turns at talk and form an *action structure*. On the third plane, utterances combine to form turn sequences which follow the constraints required for the mechanics of conversational exchange, therefore creating an *exchange structure* in which speakers regulate turns at talk in terms of reciprocity and relevance. On the fourth plane, Schifffrin considers the speaker-hearer and speaker-utterance relations which form the *participation framework*. Finally, on the fifth plane, the *information state* reflects the ongoing organisation and management of participants' relevant knowledge and meta-knowledge.

In her interpretation, DMs are linguistic, paralinguistic, or non-verbal elements that signal relations between units of talk by virtue of their semantic and syntactic properties, and most importantly, by virtue of their sequential position as initial or terminal brackets demarcating discourse units (Schifffrin 1987: 35-40). Specifically, Schifffrin proposes that the markers in her study serve as contextual coordinates for utterances by locating them on one or more planes of talk. First, they index adjacent utterances to the speaker and/or hearer. Second, they index adjacent utterances to prior and/or subsequent discourse. Her central view of DMs is that they serve as a kind of 'discourse glue' (Fraser 1990) since coherence is the result of an integration of different components of talk constructed through relations between adjacent discourse units (Schifffrin 1987: 24). She sets the specific conditions as criteria for an expression to be used as a marker:

'It has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence. It has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance. It has to have a range of prosodic contours e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction. It has to be able to

operate at both local and global levels of discourse, and on different planes of discourse. This means that it either has to have no meaning, a vague meaning, or to be reflexive (of the language, of the speaker).'
(Schiffrin 1987: 328)

Schiffrin (1987) emphasises that DMs may indicate a semantic and/or pragmatic meaning and claims that through DMs, a speaker may build up a position, or point of view, or express elements of support and evaluation within a turn at talk. For example, s/he may establish two successive supports for a position connected sequentially by *and*, or s/he may signal the shift from a position to a support for that position by *because*. By using *y'know*, a speaker can signal a transition from one particular information state to another when s/he believes the hearer should adopt with respect to the information provided. Therefore, on top of the semantic meaning a DM may denote, an implicit meaning denoted can be accounted for from a pragmatic dimension in which DMs may signify relations between whole stretches of text. This global role bears similarity to the '*mental model-deictic shift*' view proposed by Segal *et al.* (1991) who suggest that as listeners or readers propose a stretch of text, they interpret it according to a particular frame of reference or mental model. That is, when a particular stretch of discourse is processed, the current mental model can either be continued or discontinued. So the role of DMs is to signal whether an upcoming stretch of text is to be interpreted as continuous or discontinuous with the current stretch.

However, Schiffrin's model was criticised by Fraser (1999) as very broad in what counts as a DM. Based on the criteria he proposes (see below), *now*, *I mean*, *y'know* are not DMs. Also, her analysis is restricted to only casual conversation and insufficient attention has been given to text type which is an important clue to the function of DMs.

Moreover, Redeker (1991) criticises the fact that no criteria have been given for the inclusion of particular markers in Schiffrin's definition of DMs, and that two components of the five planes, namely, the *information structure* and the *participation framework*, are not on a par with the other three planes because they are related to cognitions and attitudes which are better seen as 'contributing indirectly to coherence by motivating the speaker's choices at the pragmatic planes' (Redeker 1991: 1162). She states the notion that there is a need for a broader framework that embraces all connective expressions, and therefore, she proposes a revision of Schiffrin's model.

In her revised model, Redeker proposes three components of coherence: *ideational structure*, *rhetorical structure*, and *sequential structure* which are rough equivalents of Schiffrin's (1987) *ideational* and *action* structures and an extended variant of her *exchange* structure. It is stressed that an utterance always participates in all three components, but usually one will dominate, and appears to be the most relevant linkage to the context (Redeker 1991: 1162). In her view, two discourse units are considered related:

Ideationally, if their utterance in the given context entails the speaker's commitment to the existence of that relation in the world the discourse describes. Examples are temporal sequence, elaboration, cause, reason, consequence, etc.

Rhetorically, if the strongest relation is not between the propositions expressed but between the illocutionary intentions they convey.

Sequentially, if there is a paratactic relation or hypotactic relation between only loosely related discourse segments. A paratactic sequential relation is a transition between topics that either follows a pre-planned list or is locally occasioned. Hypotactic sequential

relations are those leading into or out of a commentary, correction, paraphrase, aside, digression, or interruption segment (Redeker 1991: 1168).

She elaborates the idea that the discourse operators offer different kinds of contributions to the above three components. Signals of sequential transitions, for example, presumably guide the listener's attention by suggesting that the issues addressed in the current context should be closed or temporarily displaced. Discourse operators with the rhetorical component express or create illocutionary relations and contribute to the listener's conception of the discourse purpose. The ideational relations are expressed through discourse operators as a result of the speaker's conception of what the interlocutors know and what they are likely to infer.

2.3.2.3 Grammatical-pragmatic model

Another detailed exploration is by Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999) who approached DMs from a grammatical-pragmatic perspective. He initially labelled DMs as 'pragmatic formatives' (Fraser 1987) but later called them pragmatic markers (Fraser 1996). His work mainly focuses on what DMs are and what their grammatical status is. Slightly different from Schiffrin's (1987) definition who includes non-linguistic DMs such as *oh*, Fraser limits DMs to only linguistic expressions which signal a relationship that the speaker intends between the utterance a DM introduces and the foregoing utterance. Moreover, as mentioned previously, these DMs have a core meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual. By procedural, it specifies how the segment a DM introduces is to be interpreted relative to the prior segment (Fraser 1999: 944). So a DM, which determines how propositional representations are to be manipulated (Blakemore 1992),

does not encode a concept of any kind but a procedure, ‘a way of guiding, or constraining, the inferential phase of comprehension’ (Wilson 1991: 10). In this sense, DMs are seen to carry meaning which cannot be brought to consciousness (Andersen 1998: 163).

According to Fraser (1996: 187-188), there are four classes of DMs:

1. *Topical change markers*

- a. *I don't think we can go tomorrow. It's David birthday. **Incidentally**, when is your birthday?*
- b. ***Speaking of Marsha**, where is she these days?*

Incidentally and *Speaking of Marsha* signal respectively that the utterance following constitutes a departure from the current topic. Other markers include *back to my original point*, *before I forget*, *by the way*, *put another way*, *returning to my point*, etc. This distinction marks off relationships of utterances not just on a ‘local’ level, but also on a ‘global’ aspect. Schiffrin (1987) mentions this possibility, but has not discussed DMs of this kind. Yet Quirk *et al.* (1985) classify the use of *incidentally*, *now* as transitional markers at discoursal level and indicate that these conjuncts serve to shift attention to another topic or a temporally related event, with *now* usually occupying a discourse-initial position (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 636, 639). However, there is no equivalent term for this kind of relation in Halliday and Hasan (1976).

2. *Contrastive markers*

- a. A: *We can go now, children.*
B: ***But** we haven't finished our game yet.*
- b. *Jane is here. **However**, she isn't going to stay.*

DMs ***But*** and ***However*** signal respectively that the utterance following is ‘either a denial or a contrast of some proposition associated with the preceding discourse’ (Fraser 1996: 187). Other contrastive markers include: *all the same, anyway, despite (this/that), even so, however, in any case/rate/event, in spite of (this/that), nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, though, yet, etc.* Quirk *et al.* (1985: 635-639) classify a set of conjuncts as contrastive: *reformulatory (rather, more accurately, alternatively, in other words), replacive (again, rather, on the other hand), antithetic (in contrast, conversely, on the contrary, in comparison), and concessive (anyway, however, nevertheless, though, yet, after all)*. They present either contrastive words or contrastive matter in relation to what has preceded. To put it more simply, Halliday and Hasan label this group of conjunctive relations as *adversative (yet, though, but, however, nevertheless, despite this)* whose basic meaning is ‘contrary to expectation’ (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 250).

3. *Elaborative markers*

This class of markers signals that the utterance following constitutes a refinement of the preceding discourse. For example:

- a. *I think you should cool off a little. **In other words**, sit down and wait a little bit.*
- b. *He did it. **What is more**, he enjoyed doing it.*

Other elaborative markers include *above all, alternatively, and, besides, by the same token, for example/instance, further (more), in addition, in fact, moreover, otherwise, etc.*

Quirk *et al.* (1985: 636) classify this set of conjuncts as *additive* which help to convey the idea of an integral relation. They are further sub-divided into *equative conjuncts (equally, likewise, similarly, by the same token)* and *reinforcing conjuncts (also, moreover, in addition, above all, on top of it all)*. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 242) also

refer to this class of conjunctives as *additive* in which three subcategories are distinguished: *additive* (*and, and also*), *negative* (*nor, and ... not*), and *alternative* (*or, or else, alternatively*).

4. *Inferential markers*

These are expressions which signal that the force of the utterance is a conclusion which follows from the preceding discourse.

- a. *Mary went home. **After all**, she was sick.*
- b. *A: Marsha is away for the weekend.
B: **So**, she won't be available Saturday.*

Other inferential markers are, for instance, *accordingly, as a consequence, as a result, hence, of course, then, therefore, thus, etc.* Quirk *et al.* (1985) also categorise a class of common conjuncts as *inferential markers* (*else, otherwise, in other words, in that case*) but distinguish a group of *resultive markers* (*so, accordingly, consequently, therefore, as a result*). Their claim, like Fraser's, is that inferential conjuncts indicate a conclusion based on logic and supposition. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 243) regard some conjunctive elements as casual, which includes categories of *casual general* (*so, then therefore, consequently*), and *casual specific* which are further divided into relations of reason (*for this reason, on account of this*), result (*as a result, in consequence*), and purpose (*for this purpose, with this in mind*).

2.3.2.4 *Relevance theory model*

A further recent study is in Blakemore (1987, 1992) who discusses *and, after all, you see, but, moreover, furthermore* (which are labelled 'discourse connectives'). Based on the framework of Sperber and Wilson (1986), she claims that discourse connectives are

used to indicate how the relevance of one discourse segment is dependent on another. That is, they ‘impose constraints on relevance in virtue of the inferential connections they express’ (Blakemore 1987: 141).

In her relevance theory model, hearers are seen as attempting to determine how the utterance achieves relevance to themselves and how the theory entitles the addressee to assume that an utterance comes with a guarantee of its own optimal relevance (Schourup 1999). In her literature, Blakemore (1992) distinguishes three types of discourse connectives. The first type includes those which introduce contextual implications e.g. *so, therefore*. The second is those that may strengthen an existing assumption by providing better evidence e.g. *after all, moreover, furthermore, also, indeed*, etc. The last type is those that introduce denials, e.g. *however, still, nevertheless, but*, etc.

Along the same line of thought as Fraser, Blakemore suggests that discourse connectives do not contribute to a representational meaning, but have only a procedural meaning, which encodes instructions for processing propositional representations of the utterances (Blakemore 1992).

2.3.2.5 *Speech-act adverbial model*

Another research effort is found in Aijmer (1996) who is interested in a kind of subgroup of markers referred to as *speech-act adverbials* or *illocutionary adverbials* since most of them have the grammatical function of adverbials (Aijmer 1996: 204). She argues that DMs are words which have a large indexical potentiality, and as a result of grammaticalisation these words bear discourse functions on the textual and interpersonal

level (Aijmer 2002). She also claims that the function of DMs must be described in terms of larger discourse contexts and regards DMs as functioning to integrate utterances into the flow of conversation and to instruct the hearer about how their interpretation is affected by the context. For example, *I mean* is used to signal the following unit of talk as an explanation or clarification of what has been said. From a deictic orientation, she classifies DMs into four dimensions: *speaker-oriented* (e.g. *I mean, I think, in my opinion*), *hearer-oriented* (e.g. *now you come to mention it*), *speaker- and hearer-oriented* (e.g. *let's put it, let's face it*), and *third person-oriented* (e.g. *as far as X is concerned*). From an organisational dimension, she classifies DMs into *global markers* and *local markers*. The functional properties of the former type are to comment on the relationship between larger discourse units, to introduce new topics, segment discourse into larger units, and to order points in a discussion sequentially, etc. The latter kind of DMs serve to signal inter-sentential connections and to comment on the expectedness or validity of the new message (Aijmer 1996: 221-2).

She also mentions a new kind of DMs which are loose combinations of local and global DMs and interactional signs, all of which work together to speed up the hearer's comprehension. For example, they can combine with *em*, a marker marking hesitation or a planning pause, or *yes/yeah* to achieve certain interactional effects.

2.3.3 Basic Criteria

Discourse markers, being a set of small words in spoken discourse, play a fundamental role in spoken interaction. In the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written Language, Biber *et al.* (1999) define DMs as 'inserts which tend to occur at the beginning of a turn

or utterance, and to combine two roles: (a) to signal a transition in the evolving process of the conversation, and (b) to signal an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer and message.’ Although studies of DMs do not provide a consensus definition and words and phrases treated as DMs are often ambiguous, there are certain features that are basically agreed upon by most researchers. Among these, common features such as connectivity, optionality, non-truth conditionality, initiality and multigrammaticality are discussed in the sub-sections below.

2.3.3.1 Connectivity

The most prominent characteristic of DMs is their use to connect to the ongoing interaction. Schiffrin (1987: 31) defines DMs as ‘sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk’. They signal relationships between immediately adjacent ‘units of talk’ and which thus have a coherence building function on a local coherence level. Moreover, Fraser (1996: 186) claims that a DM is ‘an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse’. Yet Lenk (1998) argues that DMs are functional in establishing coherence on a more global level within the discourse and signal relationships with other segments of the discourse such as earlier topics, the topic before a digression, topics intended to follow, or even situations and extra-conversational knowledge. This means that they need not be adjacent (Fraser 1999) and just imply relations between two textual units. Therefore, the debate here is whether a DM should indicate a ‘local’ relation or a ‘global’ relation, like in the following example:

*(Seeing someone return home with parcels.)
So you’ve spent all your money. (Blakemore 1987: 86)*

The *So* has no linguistic context preceding it. Yet it is better, as expressed by Schourup (1999), if a DM like *so* is viewed as relating the propositional content expressed by the current utterance to assumptions that may or may not have been communicated by a prior utterance. This view is supported by Hansen (1998) who says that DMs may link their host utterance not only to the linguistic co-text, but also to the ‘context in a wider sense’.

2.3.3.2 *Optionality*

According to Schourup (1999), DMs are optional in two senses. First they are syntactically optional in the sense that removal of a DM does not alter the grammaticality of its host sentence (Fraser 1988: 22). Second they are optional in the sense that they do not enlarge the possibilities for semantic relationships between the elements they associate. This criteria of DMs does not render DMs irrelevant, but the connectedness of the utterance becomes less explicit in the absence of DMs.

2.3.3.3 *Non-truth conditionality*

It is generally held that DMs do not affect the truth-condition of the proposition expressed in an utterance (Blakemore 1988, Hansen 1998). This means that they would not add to the ‘content’ or ‘proposition’ of the utterance. A discourse marker does not create meaning (Fraser 1990) and would not affect the conceptual meaning of the utterance. On the contrary, DMs would bring about procedural meaning which constitutes information on how to process conceptual representations and to direct the inferential process involved in the interpretation (Ziv 1998). Consider the following example from Blakemore (1996):

- A: *Tom can open Bill's safe.*
B: ***So** he knows the combination.*

What **So** does here is to constrain the interpretation of the prior utterance. It contributes nothing to the conceptual representation and its meaning is basically procedural. In this sense, DMs are extremely useful to highlight a speaker's communicative intention. Schiffrin (1987) has referred to this as 'selecting' but not 'creating' a relationship.

2.3.3.4 *Initiality*

It has been observed that DMs predominantly occur initially (Schiffrin 1987), yet this is not a 'must' criterion. They may occur utterance-medial or utterance-final. Fraser (1999) claims that almost all DMs occur in initial position, fewer in medial position and still fewer in final position. The following example of service encounter in a post office illustrates the point:

- <1> *From here approximately **well you know** not counting weekends **but***
<2> ***So** it might get there by next Wednesday.*

Schourup (1999: 23) comments that 'the tendency of DMs to appear initially is probably related to their "superordinate" use to restrict the contextual interpretation of an utterance: in general it will make communicative sense to restrict contexts early before interpretation can run astray'.

2.3.3.5 *Multigrammaticality*

Basically DMs cannot be grouped under any single grammatical category because they are not from any single grammatical class. They may be adverbs (*now, then, therefore*), verbs (*look, say, see, listen*), conjunctions (*and, but, also, nevertheless*), interjections (*oh, well*), sequencing conjuncts (*first, next, finally*), or non-finite clauses (*to be frank, to be*

honest, I mean, you see, you know), etc. According to Hansen (1998), they are intermediate between grammatical and lexical items.

The most comprehensive analysis of grammatical properties is found in Fraser (1990). He claims that sometimes it may be ambiguous to distinguish DMs from other syntactic categories. Consider the following examples from Fraser (1990: 388), with DMs in bold:

- a. i. *John left. **Now**, Mary was really frightened.*
- ii. *John left. Now Mary was really frightened.*
- b. i. *A: I want another candy. B: **Well**, there are six left.*
- ii. *A: I want another candy. B: There are... well...six left.*
- c. i. *I want it finished today. **However**, you do it.*
- ii. *I want it finished today, however you do it.*

According to the distinction of Fraser, **Now** in a. i. functions as a focusing device, while in a. ii. **Now** serves as a time adverbial. **Well** in b. i. functions as a DM signalling some forthcoming dissonance, while in b. ii. it is a pause marker. Lastly, **However** in c. i. is used to signal a contrast to expectations and is not a part of the message content, whereas **however** in c. ii. serves as a manner adverbial.

Fraser has been very cautious in limiting the boundary of DMs. First he distinguishes DMs from interjections like *ah, eh, gosh, mm, no, oh, OK, uh-uh, wow, yeah, and yes*, etc. He emphasizes that ‘an interjection is not part of a sentence but is an entirely separate “sentence”, an expression which encodes an entire basic message typically involving the speaker’s emotional state’ (Fraser 1990: 391). According to his interpretation, they contribute to the propositional content of the actual utterances, so fail to be counted as DMs. However, he admits that these interjections do share some grammatical properties

possessed by DMs, that is, they are grammatically peripheral and they contain phonological segments as possessed by DMs.

Moreover, he excludes *because* as a DM since in his view, it is a content formative. He also rejects *y'know* and *I mean* as DMs on the grounds that they do not hold a sequential relationship, but they are categorised basically as parallel markers. He argues that, for example, in the utterance *Y'know I really like eating raw pickles*, the *Y'know* is signalling a speaker's attitude of solidarity instead of a sequential relationship. His fine classification is therefore in contrast with the classical analysis of DMs by Schifffrin (1987) who includes *oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, y'know, and I mean* in her pioneer study. In particular, his definition has been criticised as being too inclusive. But after all, Fraser's detailed description is an example of a diverse interpretation and reflects the practical difficulty of accounting for DMs under a unified theoretical description.

2.3.4 Conclusion

From the review of DMs detailed above, I have the following conclusion regarding the definition and criteria of DMs.

Definition

Discourse markers are defined as intra-sentential and supra-sentential units of linguistic items which work metalingually at the level of discourse and fulfil a non-propositional and connective function. As useful contextual coordinates, they signal a transition in the

evolving process of the conversation, index the relation of an utterance to the preceding context and indicate an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer and message.

Criterion 1 Position

Most DMs occur in turn or utterance initial position. Initiality highlights many functions denoted by DMs, such as marking boundaries of talk (*Okay* in a.), topic initiation (*Now* in a.), topic closure or as an attention-seeking signal (*Right* in b.), and continuation of topic (*And* in c.), etc. Initiality functions as a clue to DM status.

- a. *Okay* so you're all happy with it. *Now* how are we going to approach it would anyone like to suggest a method?
- b. *Right*. That's the end of that little section.
- c. *And* what about the price of the toys?

But still the position of some DMs is very flexible. DMs can be inserted in utterance medial position for floor-holding purpose, and very often they help to clarify meaning as in the use of *I mean* in a., or to enable the speaker to distance himself from making an inappropriate choice of words as in b. through the use of approximators *sort of/kind of*.

Also *then* and *and then* in b. are used to indicate the temporal sequence of events.

- a. Well *I mean* in all honesty \Leftrightarrow we we \Leftrightarrow we feel that she didn't deal with the situation the best way.
- b. I don't know if it's *sort of* the narrator about to tell you a story *then* the *kind of* feasting *and then* the preparation going over his journey seems very similar to what's happening here.

Less frequent is the utterance final position where DMs are understood as comments (*yeah, I think* in a. and b.), clarification (*I mean* in c.) or as an afterthought (*actually* in d.).

- a. Principal object *yeah*.
- b. She likes all kinds of music classical er mainly classical *I think*.
- c. But ah since it's for children, this can't be too high the price *I mean*.
- d. He sends his regards *actually*.

Criterion 2 *Multigrammaticality*

DMs can be drawn from both grammatical and lexical inventories. They do not constitute a single well-defined grammatical class but contain a set of functionally related group of items drawing from different classes. The difficulties of generalising across different entities make it hard to be defined as a specific class. The following, though not an exhaustive list, shows a comprehensive range of classes they primarily come from.

- a. Coordinate conjunctions (*e.g. and, but, or*)
- b. Subordinate conjunctions (*e.g. since, because, so*)
- c. Prepositional phrases (*e.g. as a consequence, in particular, by the way, at the end of the day*)
- d. Verbs (*e.g. say, look, see*)
- e. Adverbs (*e.g. now, actually, anyway, obviously, really, certainly, absolutely*)
- f. Clauses (*e.g. you see, I mean, you know*)
- g. Response words (*e.g. yeah, yes, no*)
- h. Interjections (*e.g. oh, ah, well*)
- i. Meta-expressions (*e.g. this is the point, what I mean is, that is to say, in other words*)

However, it must be noted that not all linguistic items from the above classes are DMs.

They need to be judged using the criteria raised in this section.

Criterion 3 *Prosody*

DMs have to be prosodically independent and have a fairly high separability from the utterances they introduce. Schiffrin (1987: 328) notes that a discourse particle ‘has to have a range of prosodic contours e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction’. Therefore, the prosodic clues that go with DMs include pauses, phonological reductions and separate tone units which are distinguished from other linguistic items in the discourse units bearing the same manifestation. For instance, *So* in a. below followed by vocalisation *er* which functions like a pause, is a DM. Also, *Right* in b. can be

distinguished prosodically as a DM because it marks a separate tone unit from the utterances that follow.

- a. *...I mean answering those would be fantastic. So er look for some answers look for the arrival of lone words...*
- b. *Right. Very good. What do you think might have happened since he left hospital that caused this ulcer to break down yet again?*

Criterion 4 *Indexicality*

A DMs has to function as an indexical expression to signal the relation of an utterance to the preceding context and assign the discourse units a coherent link. Since DMs can be drawn from both the grammatical and lexical categories, in terms of the conceptual meaning denoted by a DM, it exists in a cline which can be conceptually empty (*well, OK, hey, oh*), partly conceptual (*so* - with the semantic meaning 'cause') and conceptually rich (*I guess, I think, first, second, obviously, frankly*). Lexical words that have become DMs, as argued by Aijmer (2002), have undergone a process of grammaticalisation which leads to a change of function from propositional meaning to textual and interpersonal function. Given that, DMs interact with the discourse environment, linguistic or non-linguistic, to provide instructions or interpretational strategies (cf. Kjellmer 1993) to the listener as how the upcoming and recently completed discourse should be interpreted. Their presence expresses a kind of procedural rather than a propositional meaning to the discourse.

Criterion 5 *Optionality*

DMs have to be semantically and grammatically optional and their existence would not affect the truth condition of the propositions. This means they can be omitted from a

discourse without any syntactic and semantic consequences. But the listeners are then left without clues of how the propositions can best be interpreted in relation to the rest of the message. Consider a contrast in which the DMs in bold are deleted from the following extract. It is still possible for the interlocutors to go on with the talk, but the listener will have difficulty in establishing a coherent link with the previous segment and also the communicative style will become less interactional:

- <1> **Okay.** *I'll just give a little introduction about this. This is **basically** => the first </=> the very first hypothesis I sent to the University when I applied for+*
 <2> **Right.**
 <1> *+for admittance here.*
 <2> **Yeah.**
 <1> **And** *it has been restudied rewritten+*
 <2> *Revamped again and again.*

Consider the effect to the following utterance if all the highlighted DMs are omitted.

Obviously, the stance and attitude of the speaker would not be properly signalled.

*Well **actually** there's a couple of things **really really** quickly ask you one draft of my medieval my em history of English.*

Criterion 6 Contextual dependability

Verification of status as a DM should be contextually-referenced. Context, as well as the discourse environment, plays an extremely important role in determining whether an item or an expression is a DM. For instance, one common grammatical category of DMs is a conjunct which functions referentially and specifies that what follows is systematically connected to what has gone before in terms of different types of semantic relationships (e.g. addition, contrast, consequence, digression, etc.). However, coordinate conjunctions such as *and*, *but* and *or* function primarily but not exclusively as DMs. Since DMs allow speakers to indicate the relationship between one message and the prior message(s), *and*

in a. below serves only as a conjunction to link a single message at phrasal level, therefore, I will not consider it a DM. Neither is the case for *and* in b. because it also functions as a coordinate conjunction at clause level in a manner similar to a. However, c. is a bit ambiguous. I consider it a DM as it links the existing proposition with the prior one. Nevertheless, it is certainly clear that *and* in d. is a DM since it indicates the speaker's intention to continue talk with reference to the proposition made in the prior utterance.

- a. *We are waiting for this arrival at the mysterious green chapel **and** the second beheading because it's already been set up.*
- b. *Erm one one fun activity actually is to take all those unconnected meaningless sentences **and** put them all into the same context.*
- c. *Did you look in the project guide **and** did you find the bit about types of processes and the relevant chapter in er her book and all that?*
- d. ***And** if so why? What is the advantage?*

The following examples further illustrate the important role of context in distinguishing whether an item is a DM. Consider *now* in the following. Undoubtedly, *now* in a. occurring in utterance final position is just a deictic temporal adverb referring to the time of speaking, i.e. 'reference time' suggested by Schiffrin (1987). Although *Now* in b. appearing in utterance initial position signals a clue to its status as a DM, the context contrasting someone's past and present suggests that it is a temporal adverb, not a DM. Nevertheless, I treat *Now* in c. as a DM, as it suggests an indexical relation to the textual discourse and marks the speaker's progression through the discourse, where the speaker's point of view and evaluation is manifested (Schiffrin 1987). The fact that it precedes a hesitation *em* reinforces its role as a DM because it fulfils the criterion of being prosodically independent.

- a. *Okay. Let's practise some simple English **now**.*
- b. <1> *I was a very good teacher.*
 <2> *What you were. You've changed. **Now** you're not.*

- c. <3> *Now em that is a hard enough thing to do on its own because+*
 <1> *Mm.*
 <3> *+the schools today I think there's that much overcrowding...*

Criterion 7 Multifunctionality in organising discourse

DMs organise utterances or large stretches of spoken language at both local and global levels through acts of initiating, continuing or terminating an exchange. They could function either prospectively or retrospectively (Lenk 1998) to signal relationships between discourse units and mark coherence between speakers' turns. The functional domains of DMs are rather diverse. The same DM can perform a different function in a different context. I use *so* to exemplify the multifunctionality of DMs.

- a. Summarising the previous points made
 - i. *And totally different. So you've got three totally different cultures.*
 - ii. *...Then I'll sum up final remarks and thanks. So welcome the audience introduce the speakers topics of debate...*
- b. Marking the boundary of talk and making transition to another topic
 - i. *Right. So we move on from health if you're happy with that.*
 - ii. *So next part. Eh what's the slogan is it of the toy any opinion?*
- c. Indicating a consequential relation with the prior utterance
 - <1> *Twelve and a half actually. So it's not wise getting paid from Sweden.*
- d. Establishing links with the preceding linguistic context
 - <2> *But the schools that we'd obviously be looking at+*
 - <1> *Mm.*
 - <2> *+are out of this immediate and near immediate area. So in other words <=> we <|=> we'd we want to sort of get out of the inner city school sort of+*
 - <1> *Mm.*
 - <2> *+scenario. But we've got to get them somewhere where it's viable*
- e. Establishing links with the non-linguistic context
 (referring to the rash on skin)
So em but it's coming back again.

The above 7 criteria serve as a set of guidelines or principles for deciding whether a linguistic item carries the status of a DM. In examining and evaluating the role of discourse markers, essentially we need to ask questions such as Does this item help in organising the discourse? Is it optional in the utterance? Does it hold an indexical relation to the surrounding message? Is there any sign marking its prosodic separability? Does it contribute to any propositional meaning to the utterance? How does the context or the discourse environment help in confirming its role? However, it should be noted that any criterion alone is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the verification of DM status. Instead, a combination of criteria needs to be taken into consideration.

Based on the criteria I set in this section, I outline in the following chapter a theoretical framework (Section 3.5) in an attempt to systematically classify the various roles DMs play in the pedagogic register, which provides the basis for a detailed analysis of three underused DMs among Hong Kong speakers of English in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the aims and methodology of the Part I study. There is a detailed description of the participants, data collection procedure, research design and the methods used. Based on the literature review in Chapter II, a theoretical framework of the present study is outlined.

3.1 Aims of the Study

The present research focuses primarily on the so far understudied discourse markers in spoken language based on corpus findings. The aims are two-fold:

1. To understand the roles of discourse markers in conversation using data from CANCODE and the student corpus; and
2. To compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative differences in the use of discourse markers in pedagogical settings between British native speakers and Hong Kong non-native speakers of English.

The study seeks to answer the following three research questions:

1. What specific functions do discourse markers serve in spoken interaction?
2. How do Hong Kong non-native speakers of English differ from British native speakers in their use of discourse markers?

3. What contributes to the differences in the use of discourse markers among the two groups of speakers?

3.2 Participants

All the data involved in Part I study relate to real world settings. They consist of authentic recordings from CANCODE, a research project on spoken discourse based in the University of Nottingham (refer to Section 2.2.2.2.3 for a detailed description), and corpus data of 14,271 words from group discussions of 49 intermediate-advanced learners of English in a secondary school in Hong Kong.

The classroom data for this part was collected in December 1996. The subjects were all Form Six students from a secondary school in Hong Kong, who were aged between 17-19 years. According to the education system in Hong Kong, students start learning English as a second language in primary schools. So with over ten years' exposure to the English language, this group of learners can be regarded as intermediate-advanced learners of English.

There were altogether 49 students involved in this recording, 20 males and 29 females, who were referred to by mnemonic codes in the transcript, for example, A stands for Alice, C for Carmen, and D for David, etc. The participants were divided into 12 groups and were given a task at the beginning of a lesson. The task specified that they are the staff of a toy company and need to submit a proposal to their boss suggesting the type of toy they intend to manufacture. In order to come up to a

conclusion as to what to manufacture, they have to make suggestions, comment and negotiate in their discussion. The present elicitation activity involves students in an interactive environment where opinions are exchanged, ideas discussed and organised, and social relationships expressed. The interaction involves speech acts like explanation, clarification, persuasion, agreement and disagreement, through which a natural use of DMs is predicted.

Information about the student corpus is summarized in Figure 3.1 below:

Factors	Description
I. Language	
Medium	Spoken
Interaction Type	Classroom discussion
Content	A proposal for a toy manufacturing company
II. Subjects	
Level	Intermediate-advanced
Mother Tongue	Cantonese
Language Learning Experience	Mainly in classroom setting with relatively less naturalistic exposure
Setting	Classroom

Figure 3.1 The Student Corpus

3.3 Data

3.3.1 Data Collection

The student corpus is based on an audio-recording of an aggregate of 49 individual students who were divided into 12 groups. By observing group performance, this aggregate data helped smooth out individual differences and avoid the possible idiosyncratic bias in favour or in disfavour of DMs. When choosing the data to be transcribed, I intentionally omitted the first few exchanges in each discussion, as the students were rather conscious of the tape-recorder placed in front of them. Once their discussion had started off, they appeared to feel at ease and the discussion grew smoother. The average duration of each recording is about five minutes and the data transcribed and analysed for this study total approximately 70 minutes. This yields a total of 14,000 words for the present data.

3.3.2 Transcription

All the transcription in the student data is represented in standard orthographic form. Each line in the transcription represents either a continuing or completed intonation unit, but sometimes the turns may be taken or completed by other interlocutors, which has been clearly indicated in the transcription (refer to Transcription Conventions p.xvi). A full stop indicates a completed intonation unit and hence, a transition relevance place. A comma indicates a continuing intonation unit where the speaker is not relinquishing the floor. A question mark indicates a question with a rising tone as represented in written language. Pseudonyms are used to conceal the identity of the speakers. Symbols for transcription conventions to indicate

unfinished and interrupted utterances, overlapping speech, stress, non-verbal features such as laughter, pauses, etc. and unintelligible speech are also indicated. Some symbols are adopted from CANCODE to ensure compatibility. As far as prosodic information is concerned, there is no detailed transcription on intonation contour except pauses. Information on pauses is important to the analysis because it can distinguish DMs from other parts of speech, especially a pause after a DM can reinforce its role as a DM (Carter and McCarthy, forthcoming). As for the CANCODE data, the transcription conventions are presented in p.xvii.

3.3.3 Data Selection

Transcripts of classroom recordings provide an excellent record of ‘naturally occurring’ interaction (Silverman 1993). The data were selected on the basis of their relevance to my research questions and theoretical position which help to develop and test my theory and explanation. I chose to use senior form students’ discussions as the basis for analysis because first, classroom discussion is an important aspect of speech that is greatly valued by teachers because oral proficiency and competence is an essential tool for further academic and career advancement in Hong Kong. Second, it could illuminate the extent to which intermediate-advanced Chinese ESL learners are capable of incorporating DMs in their discussion in the manner native speakers do.

One might question the degree to which the language used in role play, as in the present negotiation setting, can reflect actual usage. I would argue that this context

allows elicitation of symbolic language choice which distinguishes students' abilities to convey ideational meanings and to express social relationships. All these skills, which involve speech acts like explanation, persuasion, agreement and disagreement, can be transferred to everyday activity types in real world settings. Pragmatically, the study is of great value to teachers in Hong Kong as it informs them of the value of exploiting real language data in the classroom and bears pedagogic significance for the teaching of spoken grammar in context. Though the small corpus of the Hong Kong data does not allow me to draw any strong conclusions with the findings in hand, I am unfolding linguistic and pedagogic realities in the Hong Kong classroom and hope to highlight the research potentials of this underexplored area.

Using data from the student corpus, comparison was made with the pedagogical sub-corpus (460,055 words in size) in CANCODE, a five-million-word spoken corpus developed at Nottingham University. Although the pedagogical contexts do not bear the same or equitable settings as in the student corpus, they resemble to a great extent the type of speech that is under study because all the conversational extracts took place in academic settings. In a broad sense, a similar starting point is reached.

3.4 Design and Method

Discourse markers, which operate inside and outside a clause, are one of the mechanisms which mark the affective and social functions of spoken grammar (Carter and McCarthy, forthcoming). The traditional semantic and syntactic

analytical approach apparently cannot explain this aspect of spoken grammar. These I think, can be more adequately elucidated by a method of analysis which moves from lexical or sentential levels to discoursal or contextual usage. Therefore, a discourse analysis approach is used as a skeleton for the present analysis. This utilises the surrounding discourse as a primary source of information to understand actions and meanings in their social context.

The basic direction to my research question in Part I is a qualitative methodology, and analysis is guided by the theoretical framework I propose in Chapter 3.5. In analysing the qualitative results, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods are used. For example, frequency counts to measure the frequency of occurrences of DMs by computer go hand in hand with the process of observing and describing the linguistic environments in which DMs occur. Also, I focus on the discovery of regularities and recurring patterns in the data. These findings are used to illuminate the role of these elements in language which have been given very little attention and to support the necessity of incorporating real language data in the classroom. I believe that this combination of methods, which ranges from a macro-investigation by computer to a micro-examination through observation, can best draw benefits from both methods and enrich the existing analysis. What is more, it is of maximum utility and can overcome the deficiency of arriving at sweeping generalisations through intuitive data analysis typically found in qualitative research.

Natural language data derived from classroom recordings and CANCODE provide an accurate picture of the similarities and discrepancies between native and non-native speakers' real use of language. It is this 'naturalism', inextricably linked with cultural description, that enriches our understanding of these two different varieties of spoken English. But at the same time, the discussion inevitably sparks off the practical issue of learning an English that makes a non-native speaker sound like a native speaker. So I take seriously the empirical generalisability of the findings across linguistic and cultural boundaries. It is this perspective that enables us to have genuine reflections on the descriptions upon which we base our teaching, the teaching materials, what goes on in the classroom, and the end products of our teaching (McCarthy 1991).

As revealed in Chapter IV, the starting point of approaching the qualitative data is through using computer programs which have become popular in performing basic content analysis in the humanities since the 1960s (Seale 2000). Wordsmith Tools (Scott 1996) and MicroConcord (Scott and Johns 1986) were the two sets of software used to examine the data. The former, which is housed in the English Department in Nottingham University, is used for running the CANCODE data and the latter, to which I have access, is used for my own classroom data.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

In the present analysis, aspects from different approaches have influenced my approach in some way. But basically, I have adopted Schiffrin's (1987) notion of a

multidimensional model of discourse who observes close interdependence of her five-plane components of coherence. DMs have indexical functions and contribute to the management and development of the discourse through contextual linkage at both local and global levels. Since my analysis is functionally-based, Schiffrin's five plane model was framed in Maschler's (1994, 1998) terminology to suggest a functional orientation, namely, *interpersonal*, *cognitive*, *referential* and *structural* dimensions. In his study of Israeli Hebrew conversation, Maschler (1994, 1998) based his rationale on the contextual constraints that shape a text (Becker 1988) and argues that DMs are a subcategory of metalingual expressions used to mark boundaries of continuous discourse.

In my distinction, the *referential* realm is broader in scope which is a rough equivalent of Schiffrin's ideational structure which indicates semantic relationships contributing to the overall configuration of ideas structures. The *interpersonal* realm correlates to her participation framework where speakers relate to each other. The *structural* realm reflects the ongoing organisation work in conversation as in her informational state and exchange structure where speakers regulate turns and make sequences at talk. There leaves the *cognitive* realm which has not been clearly distinguished in Schiffrin's model but it correlates with her informational state where cognitions are related. With the four realms that have been put forward, speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meanings and actions to make overall sense of what is said. That is how discourse coherence (Schiffrin 1987) is created.

Fraser offers a very detailed definition of DMs. While agreeing with his fundamental rationale that DMs signal a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse, it is his distinction of the following commentary pragmatic markers with which I principally disagree.

e.g. *Certainly, John was there on time.*
Frankly, I don't really care.
Amazingly, he is still there.

Fraser (1990) argues that *certainly*, *frankly* and *amazingly* encode an entire message - both force and content - which constitute a comment on the basic message itself, and therefore, should not be treated as DMs. Yet contrary to his view, Aijmer (2002: 55) posits that, besides establishing a coherent link between the preceding and following utterance, DMs also indexically point to the speaker's epistemic stance such as certainty and uncertainty regarding the utterance and express an affective attitude towards the hearer. In this perspective, lexical items as cited in the examples have undergone a change of function from propositional meaning to interpersonal function. This is the rationale that I take to justify placing Fraser's category of commentary pragmatic markers under the umbrella of DMs. Essentially, I believe that DMs are an important import to the social dimensions of the speech situation such as social identity and group identity through which a speaker's belief, attitude, feeling or stance are displayed. Therefore, various grammatical and lexical classes (e.g. adverbs, response markers, backchannelling and hedges, etc.) that are employed to perform discourse-marking function expressing stance and attitude can strictly be treated as DMs functioning in the interpersonal realm in my distinction.

In connection with the position above, the first distinction of the functional paradigm of DMs is the **interpersonal** category. This category contains “phatic connectives” which mainly perform a phatic function in the discourse (Bazzanella 1990) to facilitate closeness between participants for the purpose of establishing roles and relationships between the interlocutors, marking their social roles (Andersen *et al.* 1999), as well as signalling rapport and solidarity. In this category, DMs are used to mark shared knowledge (*you know, you see, see, listen*) and to indicate responses like agreement, confirmation and acknowledgement (*OK/okay, oh, right/alright, yeah, yes, I see, great, oh great, sure*) in a way to claim understanding. Markers function on this level also serve to mark attitudes (*well, I think, you know, sort/kind of, like, just, to be frank, etc.*) of the speaker and help express certainty about propositional meanings (*basically, actually, really, obviously, absolutely, exactly*). To name a few phatic functions, Aijmer (2002) notes that *I think* refers to the mode of knowledge; *actually* shows that something goes beyond expectation, while *just* is associated with affect intensity besides being a downtoner, whereas *sort of* carries evidential meanings like imprecision and approximation.

The second distinction is the **referential** category in which DMs work on a textual level and mark a relationship of verbal activities preceding and following a DM. For example, in referring to a certain point in a conversation, the deictic *now* is used. Relationships of various kinds are indicated by other conjunctions: cause (*because/cos*), consequence (*so*), contrast (*but, and, yet, however, nevertheless*),

coordination (*and*), disjunction (*or*), digression (*anyway*) and comparison (*likewise, similarly*). This category echoes most of the distinctions suggested in Halliday and Hasan (1976), Quirk *et al.* (1985) and Fraser (1990).

The third distinction is the **structural** category. DMs in this category orientate the discourse in progress. The presence of this type of markers in a dialogue may affect the subject under discussion or even the distribution of turn-taking. On the textual level, DMs in this category signal links and transitions between topics, for instance, signposting opening and closing of topics (*now, OK, right, well, by the way, let's start, let me conclude the discussion*), indicating sequential relationship (*first, firstly, second, next, then, finally*), and marking topic shifts (*so, now, and what about, how about*) which may be returns to a previous topic or projections to a new topic. On the interactional level, DMs serve as a textual device to mark continuation of the current topic (*yeah, and, cos, so*), to summarise opinions (*so*), to regain control over the talk, or to hold the floor, etc.

Finally, the **cognitive** category comprises markers providing information about the cognitive state of speakers in spoken exchanges. They can be in the form of a retarder (Montolío Durán and Unamuno 2001) indicating that the speaker is searching in his/her memory for the information which s/he requires but could not retrieve immediately. Also in reality, unplanned speech contains many utterances in which coherence or continuity may break if the speaker has topic shift, topic return, or if the hearer is required to go through some inferential procedure in order to

understand the discourse. Cognitive discourse markers, pertaining to the process of comprehending the discourse, instruct the hearer to identify the relevant phenomenon, and construct a mental representation of the discourse. DMs in this category serve to denote the thinking process (*well, I think, I see, and*), to reformulate or making self-repair (*I mean, that is, in other words*), and to elaborate (*like, I mean*). When the speakers require more processing time for the interpretation of new information, cognitive DMs can be used to denote hesitation (*well, sort of*) accompanied by fillers like *er, erm, eh*, etc. DM functions in this category can also be used to assess the listener's knowledge about the utterances (*you know*).

There are more examples to exemplify the above categorical functions in Section 4.2.1. To reinstate the criteria of DMs that have been discussed in Section 2.3.4, syntactically, DMs may be integrated into their host units, or may be extra-clausal, i.e. they are positionally variable and can either appear inside and outside a clause in the initial, medial or final position of an utterance (Criterion 1). This is in contradiction to some of the literature which claims that initiality must be one of the qualities of DMs in an utterance (Schourup 1999). They can be drawn from different grammatical classes (Criterion 2) and have to be prosodically independent (Criterion 3). Moreover, DMs do not contribute to any propositional meaning of either segment semantically, but are procedural in meaning and provide indexical instructions to the listener as how the upcoming or recently processed discourse should be interpreted (Criterion 4). The presence or absence of a DM may not result in ungrammaticality of an idea unit owing to its optional nature (Criterion 5).

Essentially, DMs work in context (Criterion 6) and do not function in isolation. They can be used with more than one meaning, depending on context (Criterion 7). In analysing the meaning and use of certain DMs, it is necessary to take into account sociolinguistic variables such as the situation and the setting of the interaction, the type of participants and the relationships between them (Montolío Durán and Unamuno 2001).

However, it is important to note that an important property of DMs is their flexibility and multifunctionality. Overlaps are observed in each category, as represented in Figure 3.2.

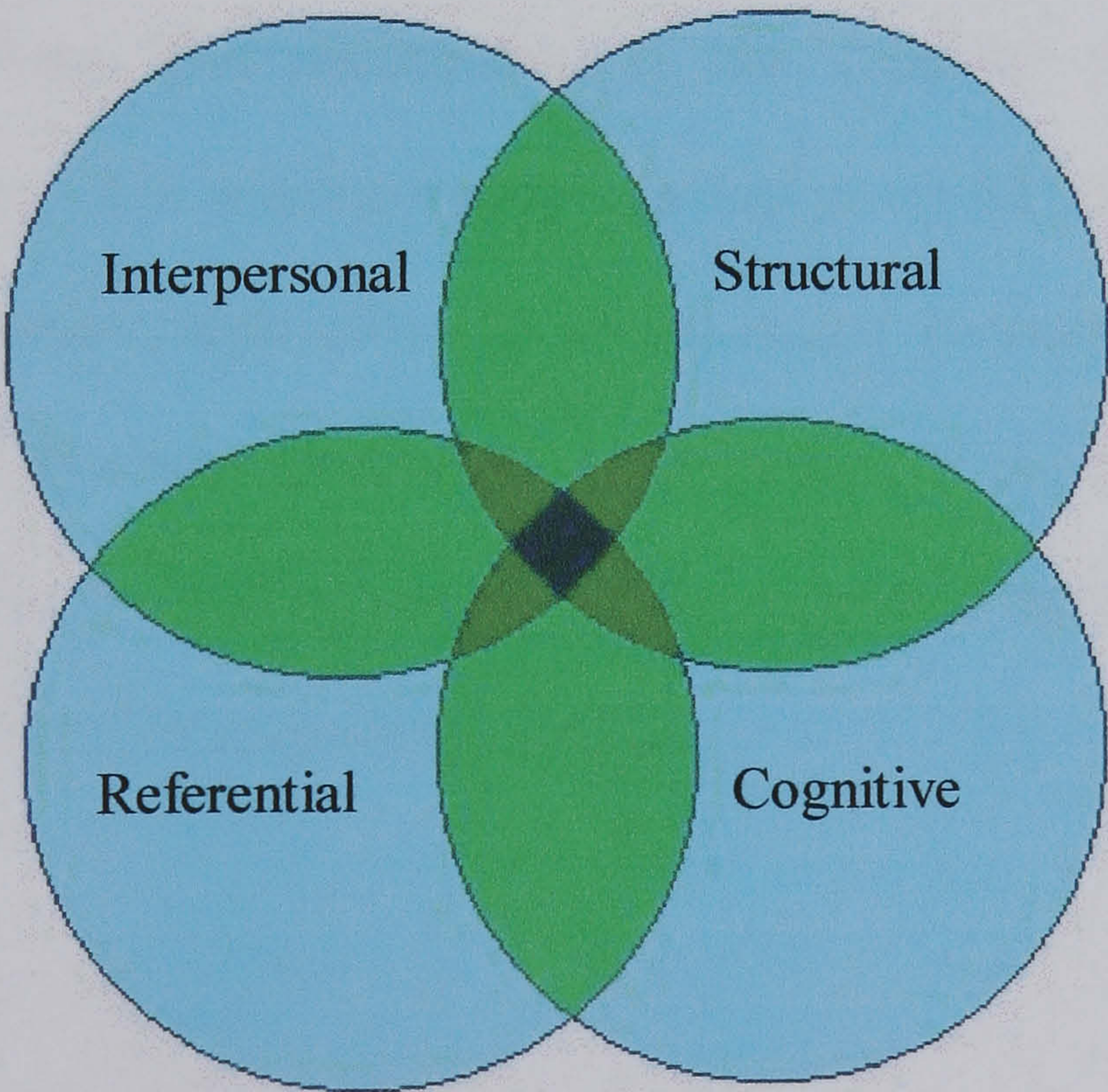


Figure 3.2 A Core Functional Paradigm of Discourse Markers in Pedagogic Discourse

On the basis of this observation, I would suggest that the occurrence of a DM in relation to its functional distribution can be discussed in terms of probability, that is, there exists a probabilistic relationship between a particular marker and its function(s) in a pedagogic context. Explanation for the overlapping areas can be accounted for by the fact that the same marker often fulfils multifunctions in spoken discourse, and speakers can exploit the versatility and dynamic nature of these markers which encode semantic and/or pragmatic relations to achieve their communicative purposes. So on the basis of the probability of occurrences, the frequency of distribution in a functional paradigm of a particular marker may vary. Very often they exhibit a tendency to one general function, while other functions arise in other contexts. Therefore, it is always difficult to locate a certain DM solely on one functional paradigm and to mark a one-to-one function without realising its multifunctional nature. This phenomenon is also explained by the fuzzy area illustrated in Figure 3.2 in which a marker can both claim different functions intra-categorically and inter-categorically. To give a simple illustration, *right* tends to appear more in the structural category to initiate a topic as in a., but it also occurs inter-categorically in the interpersonal category to mark a speaker's reception or acknowledgement of the message in b. i. and ii.

Inter-categorically

- a. Structural – Topic initiation
Right. If we start off then erm looking at the health diaries er
- b. Interpersonal - Marking responses
 - i. <2> *Where would be best for me to sit?*

- <1> *There.*
 - <2> ***Right.***
 - <1> *Anywhere there's space.*
- ii.
 - <2> *It was just something the lecturer told us*
 - <1> ***Right.***
 - <2> *About the section on*
 - <1> ***Right.***

Inter-categorically

Similarly, *well* as a DM functions in the interpersonal realm to display the speaker's reluctance to comply with the prior opinion as in a. It also appears as a softener in the same realm to mitigate a face-threatening act that is likely to go with a non-appreciative response in b.

- a. Interpersonal – Marking response
 - <1> *If it is then it's postmodifying buildings i= rather than being an A.*
 - <2> *Em **well** I'm not sure if the A <=> is </=> is the element.*
- b. Interpersonal – Indicating attitude
 - <1> *No. That's the consequence of the negligence.*
 - <3> *Oh right.*
 - <1> ***Well** let me put it in a an even more provoking way right.*

Indeed DMs function at either the non-propositional or the interactive level in an utterance. The relevant level, and also their specific function, I would argue, should be determined by considering the syntactic, prosodic and contextual factors. This paradigm is in line with Schiffrin's (1987) claim that a certain marker may function in more than one discourse component involved in one or more than one of her five different planes, namely, *information state, participation framework, ideational structure, action structure, and exchange structure.*

To summarise the classification made in the present theoretical framework, common DMs identified in the student data and in CANCODE as discussed above are grouped under the four categories in Table 3.1. However, it is emphasized that the classification is intended only as an illustration. The listed items are just observations of prominent or frequent-occurring DMs in the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE and in the student data which should not be considered as an exhaustive list of all the DMs in the English language. Since the study of DMs is still in its infancy, it is premature to establish an exhaustive taxonomy of markers as long as there is little consensus both about the function of individual morphemes, and about exactly which items should be included in the class of markers (Hansen 1998: 77). But there is a possibility of forming a broader framework and enlarging the classification to accommodate as many DMs as possible if a commonly accepted theoretical framework is agreed upon.

Table 3.1 A Core Functional Paradigm of Discourse Markers in Pedagogic Discourse

Interpersonal	Referential	Structural	Cognitive
Marking shared knowledge: <i>See, you see, you know, listen</i>	Cause: <i>Because, cos</i> Contrast: <i>But, and, yet, however, nevertheless</i>	Opening and closing of topics: <i>Now, OK/okay, right/alright, well, let's start, let's discuss, let me conclude the discussion</i>	Denoting thinking process: <i>Well, I think, I see, and</i>
Indicating attitudes: <i>Well, really, I think, obviously, absolutely, basically, actually, exactly, sort of, kind of, like, to be frank, to be honest, just, oh</i>	Coordination: <i>And</i> Disjunction: <i>Or</i>	Sequence: <i>First, firstly, second, secondly, next, then, finally</i>	Reformulation/ Self-correction: <i>I mean, that is, in other words, what I mean is, to put it in another way</i>
Showing responses: <i>OK/okay, oh, right/alright, yeah, yes, I see, great, oh great, sure</i>	Consequence: <i>So</i> Digression: <i>Anyway</i> Comparison: <i>Likewise, similarly</i>	Topic shifts: <i>So, now, well, and what about, how about</i> Summarising opinions: <i>So</i> Continuation of topics: <i>Yeah, and, cos, so</i>	Elaboration: <i>Like, I mean</i> Hesitation: <i>Well, sort of</i> Assessment of the listener's knowledge about the utterances <i>You know</i>

CHAPTER IV RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the results of the Part I study and addresses specifically the three research questions:

1. What specific functions do discourse markers serve in spoken interaction?
2. How do Hong Kong non-native speakers of English differ from British native speakers in their use of discourse markers?
3. What contributes to the differences in the use of discourse markers among the two groups of speakers?

The analyses are dealt with in two sub-sections. Section 4.2.1 reports the effects and functions discourse markers have in conversation using the student data and the pedagogic sub-corpus in CANCODE. The discussion is based on the theoretical framework established in Section 3.5. Section 4.2.2 presents a detailed comparative analysis of the use of discourse markers between the British native speakers and the Hong Kong non-native speakers of English. Three underused interactive markers among the Hong Kong subjects, namely, utterance initial *and*, *yeah* and *you know* are examined.

4.1 Results

In order to identify those common DMs in real speech, first of all, the top 100 most frequent words in the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE were identified and

quantified in frequency percentage by Wordsmith. Among these top 100 words, 23 lexical items, the role of which is highly associated as DMs, were selected. However, words such as *know*, *think*, *sort*, *mean* do not occur as DMs on their own. Therefore, another frequency list for *you know*, *I think*, *sort of* and *I mean* was run respectively to ensure comparability with the student data. This list of ²23 DMs and the data are presented in ordinal form as in Table 4.1. Owing to the limitation of the present computer software to discriminate the discoursal role of individual words, it is therefore stressed that the words cited may bear other grammatical functions rather than purely as DMs. Even with human judgement, the ambiguous status of DMs, as discussed in Section 2.3.1, makes their classification very difficult. Moreover, the list presented serves only as an illustration rather than an exhaustive list of all those DMs that appear in CANCODE and the student corpus. However, they are consistent with the observation of Carter and McCarthy (forthcoming) who identify the following DMs as very common in spoken contexts: *cos*, *like*, *right*, *so*, *I mean*, *I think*, *OK*, *you know* and *well*.

Based on the information suggested in Table 4.1, the frequency of the same 23 DMs used in the student data were run using MicroConcord (Table 4.2), a software that I have access to prior to this research project. However, it is observed that there are other DMs in the Hong Kong data outside these 23 items. Some examples are *Am I right?*, *woo*, *wa*, *la* as cited below.

Example 1

- T: *Secondly it it eh does not eh educate people while you are play with them.*
Am I right?
W: *Toys always not educate people⁺*

² These 23 words, the role of which is highly associated as DMs, are labeled as DMs in the results section, though they obviously perform other grammatical functions.

T: *But I think that some...*
W: *+ [except educational toys.*
T: *[Yes some people say educational toy eh provide some provide some with fun and also and also learning. [Am I right?*
W: *[So you think we should eh introduce toy which is educational?*
T: *Yes.*
(Student data 009)

Example 2

S: *Educational toys woo?*
J: *You know what I mean? I mean eh Penny's opin= Penny's toy eh just suitable for the children who is who are about ten so I I don't think it's difficult to promote it.*
(Student data 012)

Example 3

Le: *The type of toy that we should make is Barbie or Heman, the price of toy should be in between one hundred and two hundred and the location where the toy will be manufactured is China and and there there eh that's it.*
W: *Wa excellent excellent.*
(Student data 010)

Example 4

S: *Yeah Cap Woman la?*
J: *Yes Cap Woman.*
(Student data 012)

The frequency percentages allow comparison of DMs used in both sets of data. A simple mathematical subtraction was performed on the two columns of frequency percentages to obtain the contrastive frequency of the two sets of markers. After a careful study of the figures, a contrastive frequency of ± 0.14 was chosen as the cut-off point for the three categories. Since there is no occurrence of *cos* in the student data, it is justified to have it categorised under the 'underrepresented' column although its contrastive frequency is only -0.14. Hence, it was decided that if the figure falls within the range between -0.14

and +0.14, the representation of DMs is regarded as comparable. If the contrastive frequency is +0.15 or above, the representation is regarded as overused. If the contrastive frequency is -0.15 or below, then the representation is regarded as underused. A positive difference in contrastive frequency means the DM is used more frequently in the student data; whereas a negative difference in contrastive frequency means it is used less in the student data. Table 4.3 presents DMs which are overused, underused and those of comparable use among the 49 Form 6 Hong Kong students. They are underlined, highlighted in **bold** and in *italics* respectively to indicate the distribution.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Discourse Markers Among the Top 100 Most Frequent Words in the Pedagogical Sub-corpus in CANCODE

Discourse Markers		Frequency	CANCODE%
1.	And	11,736	2.55
2.	So	4,424	0.96
3.	Yeah	4,118	0.90
4.	Right	3,262	0.71
5.	But	3,152	0.69
6.	Or	2,133	0.46
7.	Just	1,988	0.43
8.	Okay	1,865	0.41
9.	Like	1,822	0.40
10.	You know	1,659	0.38
11.	Well	1,637	0.36
12.	Because	1,496	0.33
13.	Now	1,471	0.32
14.	Yes	1,250	0.27
15.	Sort of	1,172	0.25
16.	See	1,141	0.25
17.	I think	1,060	0.23
18.	I mean	922	0.20
19.	Say	920	0.20
20.	Actually	867	0.19
21.	Oh	819	0.18
22.	Really	745	0.16
23.	Cos	627	0.14

Table 4.2 Frequency of Discourse Markers Used by 49 Form 6 Hong Kong Learners of English in Group Discussions

	Discourse markers	Frequency	Student data %
1.	And	235	1.66
2.	But	179	1.26
3.	I think	164	1.16
4.	Yes	133	0.94
5.	So	100	0.71
6.	Like	72	0.51
7.	Because	68	0.48
8.	Yeah/yeh	67 (60/7)	0.47
9.	Or	62	0.44
10.	Okay/OK	55 (7/48)	0.39
11.	Just	47	0.33
12.	Oh	31	0.22
13.	You know	22	0.16
14.	I mean	15	0.11
15.	Now	12	0.08
16.	See	10	0.07
17.	Really	5	0.04
18.	Say	3	0.02
19.	Sort of	2	0.01
20.	Well	1	0.01
21.	Right	0	0
22.	Actually	0	0
23.	Cos	0	0

Table 4.3 A Comparison of Discourse Markers Used in CANCODE and in Student Corpus

	Discourse markers	CANCODE %	Student corpus %	Representation of DMs in student corpus as compared with CANCODE
1.	And	2.55	1.66	Underrepresented
2.	So	0.96	0.71	Underrepresented
3.	Yeah	0.90	0.47	Underrepresented
4.	Right	0.71	0	Underrepresented
5.	<u>But</u>	<u>0.69</u>	<u>1.26</u>	<u>Overrepresented</u>
6.	<i>Or</i>	<i>0.46</i>	<i>0.44</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
7.	<i>Just</i>	<i>0.43</i>	<i>0.33</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
8.	<i>Okay</i>	<i>0.41</i>	<i>0.39</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
9.	<i>Like</i>	<i>0.40</i>	<i>0.51</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
10.	You know	0.38	0.16	Underrepresented
11.	Well	0.36	0.01	Underrepresented
12.	<u>I think</u>	<u>0.23</u>	<u>1.16</u>	<u>Overrepresented</u>
13.	<u>Because</u>	<u>0.33</u>	<u>0.48</u>	<u>Overrepresented</u>
14.	Now	0.32	0.08	Underrepresented
15.	<u>Yes</u>	<u>0.27</u>	<u>0.94</u>	<u>Overrepresented</u>
16.	Sort of	0.25	0.01	Underrepresented
17.	See	0.25	0.07	Underrepresented
18.	<i>I mean</i>	<i>0.20</i>	<i>0.11</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
19.	Say	0.20	0.02	Underrepresented
20.	Actually	0.19	0	Underrepresented
21.	<i>Oh</i>	<i>0.18</i>	<i>0.22</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
22.	<i>Really</i>	<i>0.16</i>	<i>0.04</i>	<i>Comparable</i>
23.	Cos	0.14	0	Underrepresented

Table 4.4 Figures Indicating Overuse, Underuse and Comparable Use of Discourse Markers Among 49 Form 6 Hong Kong Learners of English as Compared with the Usage in CANCODE

Overused DMs	Contrastive Frequency	Comparable Use of DMs	Contrastive Frequency	Underused DMs	Contrastive Frequency
<u>I think</u>	<u>+ 0.93</u>	<i>Like</i>	+ 0.11	And	- 0.89
<u>Yes</u>	<u>+ 0.67</u>	<i>I mean</i>	+ 0.09	Right	- 0.71
<u>But</u>	<u>+ 0.57</u>	<i>Oh</i>	+ 0.04	Yeah	- 0.43
<u>Because</u>	<u>+ 0.15</u>	<i>Or</i>	+ 0.02	Well	- 0.35
		<i>OK/okay</i>	+ 0.02	So	- 0.25
		<i>Just</i>	- 0.10	Now	- 0.24
		<i>Really</i>	- 0.12	Sort of	- 0.24
				You know	- 0.22
				Actually	- 0.19
				See	- 0.18
				Say	- 0.18
				Cos	- 0.14

Table 4.4 shows the contrastive frequency of the two sets of data and demonstrates the extent to which they differ in use quantitatively. Results revealed that the target group under study seldom incorporated DMs in their speech because 52.2% of the DMs selected for the present study represented underused DMs. They include *and, right, yeah, well, so, now, sort of, you know, actually, see, say, and cos*. Among these, common markers in native speaker speech such as *say, sort of, well, right, actually* and *cos* had an extremely low or even no occurrence at all in the student corpus (Table 4.2). This echoes with the high agreement rate (64.3%) from 132 teachers regarding evaluation of their students’ use of DMs in the questionnaire survey reported in Chapter VI (Item 19 *Students have traditionally been taught to speak in written language form and they seldom display DMs in their*

Example 2

S: Educational toys *woo*?

J: You know what I mean? I mean eh Penny's opin= Penny's toy eh just suitable for the children who is who are about ten so I I don't think it's difficult to promote it.

(Student data 012)

Example 3

Le: The type of toy that we should make is Barbie or Heman, the price of toy should be in between one hundred and two hundred and the location where the toy will be manufactured is China and and there there eh that's it.

W: *Wa* excellent excellent.

(Student data 010)

Example 4

S: Yeah Cap Woman *la*?

J: Yes Cap Woman.

(Student data 012)

These DMs are frequently used in Cantonese to indicate the speakers' stance. While *Am I right?* is a rough equivalent of the English tag *is it?* or *right?*, it displaces mother tongue influence from a Chinese DM *dui bu du*. The two instances of *Am I right?* in Example 1 look like a polar question eliciting confirmation and information from the listener (Chen and He 2001), yet an examination of the following moves suggests that they are not responded to. In fact, *Am I right* can be perceived as a DM functioning on the interpersonal level to elicit affirmation and support from the hearer, and on the structural level to maintain the interlocutor's attention. Similarly, what commonly labelled as interjectory particles in Cantonese like *woo*, *wa* and *la* in Examples 2-4 are transliterated from Cantonese for the dual pragmatic purposes of expressing solidarity and of reinforcing the illocutionary force of the existing propositions they are tagged to. All these DMs typically reflect the characteristic use of DMs of a local variety. Since the

present study is norm-referenced, which focuses mainly on how Hong Kong speakers differ from British speakers based on a British corpus, I therefore do not intend to go into detail of this type of DMs. It is speculated that they can function in the same capability as their English counterparts, or serve as compensatory devices for discourse-marking purpose, yet the extent to which these Chinese DMs are fully exploited to facilitate talk needs to be investigated.

This sub-section focuses on the most frequent functions performed by discourse markers in accordance with the classification that is established in Section 3.5 (Table 3.1). The examples cited are selected from the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE which contains a running word of 460,055 words. The qualitative analyses highlight some popular use of DMs and, specifically, illustrate their interpersonal, referential, structural and cognitive functions. This section is a general analysis whereas a detailed study of individual markers initial *and*, *yeah* and *you know* will be dealt with in Section 4.2.2.2.

4.2.1.1 Interpersonal

Marking shared knowledge

On the interpersonal dimension, discourse markers are useful in marking shared knowledge between the speakers. It is found that some verbs of perception like *see*, *listen*, *know* are often used for this discourse-marking purpose.

- 1 <1> *I mean her main work's on Pinter really.*
 <2> *See that was the problem because I thought Yeah just and then sort of the*
 idea will have to be thrown out. She said Well you can risk it. But
 obviously it wasn't a very good idea you know the ex= she said the
 5 *external examiner could query it with it being too close.*

From the above conversation, the verb *See* (L2) acts as a DM here and starts as an utterance launcher to orientate and draw the attention of the listener to the upcoming utterance. It occurs in turn initial position and signals that what follows is an explanation of what has preceded. For *see* to qualify as a DM in this example, it is not followed by any complementiser. The *that* in *See that was the problem* (L2) is a deictic item referring to the problem Speaker 2 is addressing. It is a response to Speaker 1's comment towards somebody's work.

Another verb of perception frequently used as a DM is *know*. In spoken discourse, *you know* is often used to appeal to the assumed shared knowledge or experience of the speaker for the acceptance of information. In the above excerpt, Speaker 2 is talking about the reaction of the external examiner concerning the work and is appealing to Speaker 1's shared understanding where *you know* occurs in medial position. There is a detailed analysis of *you know* as a DM in Section 4.2.2.2.3.

Indicating attitudes

Based on the same excerpt as above, it is found that many adverbs are used to mark the attitudes of the speaker towards the message of the conversation. For instance, adverbs such as *basically, actually, really, absolutely, sort of*, etc. frequently occur in the CANCODE data.

- 1

<1>

I mean her main work's on Pinter **really**.
- <2>

See that was the problem because I thought Yeah just and then **sort of** the idea will have to be thrown out. She said Well you can risk it. But **obviously** it wasn't a very good idea you know the ex= she said the
- 5

external examiner could query it with it being too close.
- <1>

Mm.

- <2> So I had to **sort of** rethink how the text could be used with s= with some other framework. Em
- <1> Yeah. Mm. Well a= as I say I'm I'm a bit reluctant...

An examination of the role of *really* (L1) and *obviously* (L4) reveals that they enable the speakers to express certainty towards the propositional meanings of the utterances in L1 and L4 respectively. As for *sort of*, it is used as a hedge or a weakener of illocutionary force (Aijmer 2002) and denotes a degree of vagueness to reduce the face-threatening act in ...*sort of the idea will have to be thrown out* (L3) and to qualify the statement ...*sort of rethink how the text could be used with s= with some other framework*. They have the interactive effect of softening the tone and building up interpersonal closeness with the interlocutor. In the example, *obviously* is placed initially after another DM *But*, *really* is placed finally and *sort of* is placed medially.

In some cases, this type of DMs can occur at a transition relevance place (Sacks *et al.* 1974) and forms a turn on its own as denoted by *Absolutely* in the excerpt below. It serves as a DM marking response in the context.

- <3> But we still feel that we often still
- <1> <=> This is <=> <E> laughs <E>
- <3> fail to confront.
- <1> Confront the idea.
- <3> The idea.
- <1> I= idea er that human beings+
- <3> Beings.
- <1> +are the object of of study or object of inquiry or something like that.
- <3> Mm. Mm. **Absolutely**. Yeah. Yeah.

Another common discourse marker used to express attitude in many conversational exchanges is *well*. As observed from the CANCODE data, it always occurs in turn initial position. It functions to qualify the content of the previous utterance or the one it

introduces and is used as a device of insufficiency. That is, the response marked by *well* is not optimally coherent with the preceding question (Schiffrin 1987). In fact, it signals a shift in perspective as set up by the immediately preceding context. It contains a concessive element and appears to be a more moderate way of not complying with the interlocutor's opinion. The following two utterances selected from the above excerpt can illustrate its function as a marker of insufficiency.

*She said **Well** you can risk it.*

*But **Well** a= as I say I'm I'm a bit reluctant...*

As an attitude-marking device, which is also called 'stance marker' in Biber *et al.* (1999), the above responses prefaced by *well* denote the speaker's hesitation or reservation towards the topic spoken of. The speakers are not ready to comply with the interlocutor and a contrary view is implied.

Marking responses

It is also found that many DMs in both sets of corpora are used to provide responses or feedback to the speaker. They serve to 'grease the wheels of conversation' (termed after Tottie (1991) who uses the metaphor to describe the role of backchannels) and make the communication smoother. These DMs, similar to backchannels to a great extent (refer to Section 4.2.2.2.1 for the literature review on 'backchannels'), indicate active participation and listenership and show the listener's positive interest in what is being said. One widely used marker in the data is *okay* (L4, L8, L11) which acknowledges the contribution of the speaker. It always occurs in isolation at a transition relevance place as in the example below.

1 <3> *One of you think of a friend or relative and imagine they're coming to visit*

you in Nottingham next weekend. Working together plan a weekend's activity for the visitor in and around Nottingham.

- 5 <1> **Okay.** *So and you're like sort of a visitor here yourself aren't you so shall we+*
 <3> *Yes.*
 <1> *+imagine that it's your friends+*
 <3> **Okay.**
 <1> *+or relatives.*
10 <3> *Yeah.*
 <1> **Okay.**

Likewise, **right** serves a similar purpose as **okay** to mark the speaker's response.

- <1> *That's what it's saying. It's saying forget consumers.*
 <3> **Right.**

Yeah, though widely regarded as a response token in most literature, is another word I regard as a DM which finds support in Fuller's (2003) work. To establish its role as a DM, it is not used as an affirmative response to a polar question, but only as a minimal response or backchannel marking coherence within a turn. Similar to *OK* and *right*, it can be used to signal agreement on the part of the listener, and validates the information about the world supplied by the other participant (Maschler 1994). The following extract illustrates the usage.

- <1> *Don't forget your research project?*
 <?F> *Great.*
 <1> *A serious research project yeah.*

Moreover, **I see** is also used to mark response to a previous contribution to show understanding and agreement. In the exchanges below, *I see* functions on the interpersonal dimension to mark shared knowledge and to act as a response to the previous exchanges concerning the origin of a quote they are discussing.

- <1> *I'm not sure if it that's from that.*
 <2> *It's from the nineteen eighty seven paper.*
 <1> *It's either Fields of Discourse+*
 <2> *It's from Fields of Discourse.*

- <3> *Fields of Discourse. I see.*
 <1> *+or it's from the Contextual Archaeology+*

It is also found that many adjectives like *great*, *oh great*, *wonderful* are used to mark responses to a previous utterance. Sometimes they go with vocative *oh* to express a positive reaction. Some examples are listed below.

- <1> *Do either of you drive?*
 <3> *I could use my brother's car.*
 <1> **Great** *that's Trent Lock then that'll be nice.*

- S: *If they play alone, they will is very bored.*
 J: *Yes yes oh yeah I totally agree with with Sunny.*
 S: **Oh great!**
 (Student corpus 011)

One obvious effect these markers have in conversation is that they make the communication very interactive, involving and informal. It is observed that this choice is especially pervasive in native speaker speech. Besides appearing in isolation, some DMs occur in clusters at various boundaries and constitute most of the turns in a conversation.

The following group discussion is a typical example.

- <1> *Erm been living nine months just down the road from here where the rest of my family are.*
 <2> **Oh right.**
 <1> **Okay.**
 <2> *When you say down the road do you mean still in in this area round the estate yeah?*
 <1> *Yes yes.*
 <2> **Yeah.**
 <1> **Right.**
 <2> **Okay. Great.**

Similarly, the following conversational exchange after a presentation on advertising marks the speaker's frequent use of DMs on the interpersonal dimension where the listeners' support is appealed and the presented viewpoints reinforced.

- <2> **You know I don't want to be like sexist or anything or+**

- <2> +or patronising **but you know**
- <?> Sports <?> as well. **I mean** <H> you know <H>
- <2> **Yeah.**
- <?> <G?> very well.
- <2> **Definitely.** Erm and things like...

4.2.1.2 Referential

Indicating relationships between utterances

On the referential level, conjunctions frequently used in written language are always exploited in spoken discourse to signpost relationship of the existing utterance with the preceding one. They provide indexical direction to various semantic relationships like causal (*cos/because*), consequential (*so*), contrastive (*but*), disjunctive (*or*), coordinative (*and*), digressive (*anyway*) and comparative (*likewise, similarly*) links can be expressed using this type of referential markers. The following extract includes several functions achieved by this category of DMs.

- 1 <1> What about a nice traditional English Sunday lunch in a pub?
- <3> Yeah why not.
- <1> **Cos** a lot of places do that now.
- <3> Mm.
- 5 <4> That's right.
- <1> <=> So <=>
- <3> **Or** Trent Lock is nice <O45> **but** it's <\O45> quite far.
- <1> <O45> <=> Oh that <|= > <\O45>
- <1> It is. Does <O46> she drive? <O46>
- 10 <3> <O46> <=> **But** still <|= > <\O46>

In the previous group discussion, the members are proposing some activities in Nottingham for a visitor. Speaker 1 suggests a traditional English Sunday lunch in a pub. It is linked to a causal relationship as signalled by *cos* (L3) which offers evidence and justifies the suggestion – a lot of places offer Sunday lunch. In raising a suggestion to go to Trent Lock for lunch, a disjunctive *or* (L7) is used. However, a contrastive opinion –

Trent Lock being too far away (L7) - is signalled using *but* in the turn medial position. A similar contrastive relationship is observed using *But* (L10) in response to Speaker 1's query if the visitor can drive *Does she drive?* (L9). Basically *but* serves as a DM to contrast the upcoming proposition with the prior one.

Besides, another common DM used in spoken discourse is *and* which serves as an 'add-on' strategy (Biber *et al.* 1999) for the continuation of one's contribution. This is clearly a manifestation of the spontaneous nature of real speech and under the time constraint speakers need to add on to their contribution sequence by sequence using contextual glue like *and*. There is a detailed analysis of initial-*and* in Section 4.2.2.2.1 to further illustrate and discuss its role in conversation.

4.2.1.3 Structural

Markers on the structural realm provide information about the ways in which successive units of talk are linked to each other. This includes how the opening and closing of topics, the transition of topic, sequence of verbal activities and the continuation of topic are organised and managed.

Opening and closing of topics

DMs are also useful in signalling the opening and closing of a conversation in which the listener is oriented to the end of a discourse boundary and the beginning of the next. This has been noted by Sinclair and Couthard (1975) who noticed the frequent recurrence of a small set of words like *right, well, good, OK, now* in their analysis of classroom discourse. Similarly, a typical example is the use of *now* in turn initial position. As

defined by Schifffrin (1987), *now* indicates the speaker's orientation towards the discourse. In the excerpt below in which a medical conversation is taking place, *now* marks a speaker's progression towards discourse by orientating the listener's attention to what is coming next. With the co-occurrence of *OK*, they mark the beginning of a related, or a possibly new topic. More explicit markers like *Let's start now*, *Let's discuss...*, *let me conclude...* are found to perform a similar function. The following are some examples.

<2> **OK.** *Now is there any clinical evidence that he might have occluded his graft? What sort of symptoms would he have had?*

<1> *He would have had pain at rest or <3> pain <3> in his calf with walking.*

E: *A-a let's start.*

K: **OK.** *Today we are going to discuss that what kind of toys is best is for new best selling. Eh what do you think Eric?*

E: *Eh maybe transformer maybe suitable.*

(Student corpus 007)

It is also found that *OK* as a DM is used to signpost the closure of talk which precedes a summing up sequence as indicated in the student data below:

N: **OK** *to sum up we agree the slogan is 'Teddy Bear is the best. Jump and run and go go go'. OK that's all.*

(Student corpus 013)

Besides functioning on the interpersonal dimension to mark responses, ***all right/right*** is also used to signal a discourse boundary where a topic ends and another begins.

<3> **All right** *to to start from here.*

<1> **Right.** *Erm could you just tell me a little bit about the er the name of the inst= er er the department that you work in. Er erm*

<2> *Oh right.*

Sometimes, a combination of different DMs with vocalisation *erm* like the example below are used to frame the beginning of the topic.

<1> **Right. Erm okay. Well let's see if we can get our heads around the Unfair Contract Terms Act then...**

Sequence

Another observation is that DMs are frequently used to signal the sequence of talk and signpost to listener the logical sequence of how segments of talk are organised, for example, *firstly, secondly, thirdly, then, and then*, etc. The following conversation marking the preparation of a debate illustrates the sequence markers:

- 1 <1> *Erm okay this is the basic structure. And we've got thirteen points.*
 <2> *Mhm.*
 <1> *So <=> this is <|=> this is what we'll do. **Firstly** introduce the speakers.*
5 <2> *Yes.*
 <1> ***Then** introduce the topics of the debate and <=> the main <|=> the main topics. Er **thirdly** we'll give the reasons for actually having the debate in the first place.*
 <3> *<G?> part actually.*
10 <1> *Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.*
 <3> *<G?>*
 <1> *A= **and then** say why these*
 <3> *Right.*

In preparing a debate, the speakers in the above conversation use *Firstly* (L3), *Then* (L6), *thirdly* (L7), *and then* (L12) to signal how the sequence of the debate is organised and presented. All these DMs can clearly orientate the listener to how the different segments are ordered and related to each other. A clause like *Another point is that...* can also be used to indicate a sequential relationship as *and*.

- <1> *I think er er the the one of the advantages of er lexicographers is that they have the tradition and experience to work in a team to make large projects which cover the whole lexicons because they don't have the the money and the manpower and the the tradition to do that. So that is one of the things in which er lexiograpjers can contribute to er linguists. **Another point is that** I think linguists are always interested in making generalisations.*

Transition of topics

From the corpora, DMs like *so*, *and what about*, *how about* are found to signal the transition of topic, marking the end of a topic and the beginning of another. As indicated in the medical conversation in the first excerpt, DM *So* preceded by *Okay* signals the end of the prior utterance concerning the findings on an angiogram of a patient, and it is used to project the discourse forward to a change of topic regarding the treatment of the stenosis. The tutor in the second excerpt is inviting suggestion from the students for the kind of mock exam questions to be discussed. Here *Now* marks the transition of topic to how the questions they have previously raised can be answered.

- <1> *And on these views over here you can see that all three vessels go on down+*
<2> *Mm.*
<1> *+but only one of them seems to cross the ankle joint and into the dorsal arch of the foot. Okay. So now the next thing we really want to know is is there any way we could treat that stenosis?*

<1> *OK so you're all happy with it. Now how are we going to approach it would anyone like to suggest a method?*

Summarising topics

Other than functioning on the referential realm to indicate a causal relationship and on the structural realm to indicate a transition of topic, it is also found that *so* functions to signal that the conversation has come to an end and prefaces a summary of the opinions that will be made as a conclusion. Very often it occurs in turn initial. The first example shows that the two instances of *so* occur in turn initial position before a conclusion is made.

- F: So we all we have discussed all the things.*
Cd: So have a conclusion? We'll have the eh eh new game called Planet and the it the method of playing is just like other monopoly and it's suitable to all people. And then the price of toys is about \$200 because we...

(Student corpus 010)

The *so* in the following preceded by *OK* summarises and draws a conclusion to the previous discussion before making a topic shift to another focus.

<1> *OK so you're all happy with it. Now how are we going to approach it would anyone like to suggest a method?*

There are two instances of *so* in the last example. Both of them lead to a point where an agreement is solicited.

Le: And so what what what kind of toy should we should make?

W: Eh some (+) some... (laughs)

Le: So so we all agree that Wilson's idea is good?

L: Yes I agree with him.

(Student corpus 009)

Continuation of topics

DMs are also found to be frequently exploited as continuers to provide the prior speaker with the conversational space to explain and expand upon. Some typical uses by the native speakers for this purpose is the use of *and* and *cos* as shown in the following two excerpts.

From the discourse point of view, *and* is used strategically as a 'staller' to take, hold and yield a turn, a term suggested by Stenström (1994: 76). It indicates the speaker's desire to hold the floor. Whilst Speaker 2 keeps on acknowledging what Speaker 1 says with *Mhm*, *Mm* or *Yeah*, obviously Speaker 1 has no intention to yield the floor and *and* is strategically used by the primary speaker to signal to the interlocutor that s/he has not finished and is not ready to yield the turn. These *ands* typically occupy a turn initial position.

- <1> ...Next bit says *What alternative ways of breaking the ice can you suggest? I w= went on a course one time in fact several times where somebody had to introduce themselves to you in that kind of way+*
- <2> *Mm.*
- <1> *+but you did it in pairs+*
- <2> *Mhm.*
- <1> *+and then <=> you had to go <|=> having listened to someone else you had to go+*
- <2> *Mm.*
- <1> *+and tell a third person+*
- <2> *Yeah.*
- <1> *+what the first person had said.*
- <2> *Mhm. Yeah.*
- <1> *And that was really good because <O12> it <\O12>*
- <2> *<O12> Mm.< \O12>*
- <1> *really made you listen+*
- <2> *Mm.*
- <1> *+and it made you try and be very fair to them.*
- <2> *Mhm.*
- <1> *And I found it a really good way of getting to know the person+*
- <2> *Mhm.*
- <1> *+because I knew I was going to have <=> to <|=>+*
- <2> *Yeah.*
- <1> *+to tell someone.*
- And also when somebody else is telling someone about you you think Oh they listened to me <O13> isn't <\O13>*

Another DM that is regarded as a continuer in the data is *cos*. I have indicated earlier that it is commonly used to signal a causal relationship. But its function as a continuer to indicate a speaker's intention to hold the floor is also observed.

- <1> *So what we were talking about last time was that can you can you how did you formulate your hypothesis? Where's the hypothesis? Have you got it?*
- <2> *Er*
- <1> ***Cos** it's not to do with transitive and intransitive.*
- <2> *Oh God.*
- <1> *I would be inclined to make that a separate A because you know you could say to talk in four languages+*
- <2> *Yeah.*
- <1> *+knowledgeably amusingly cos er it you know it's it's what it's it's It's two separate kind if hows you know...*

The examples illustrate that what follows the two instances of *cos* is not an explanation for the previous utterances but rather it signals continuation of the turn after a brief vocalisation *Er* (Excerpt 1) and a response *Yeah* (Excerpt 2) by the second speaker respectively. The broken and incomplete utterance after DM *cos* in the second example further reinforces that it does not function in the referential realm as an explanation for the previous contribution but serves as an interactional marker to mark the continuation of topic.

4.2.1.4 Cognitive

Denoting thinking process/hesitation

Discourse markers in the cognitive realm provide information of one's cognitive process.

In this category, it is found that *well* is frequently used as a delaying tactic (Svartvik 1980) to denote the thinking process when an answer is not immediately available in the speaker's mind and to buy time for processes like word-searching and syntactic completion. As indicated in the extract below, the environment in which this kind of marker occurs shows a lot of false starts, pauses and disfluency which require self-repair and reformulation. Speaker 2 seeks to answer the student's question by framing the turn with *Well*, which is followed by a false start, backchannel *em* and pauses. The use of *well* can be viewed as a hesitation device to give the speaker time to plan and keep a turn in an interaction, a point that has been raised by Altenberg (1990). Similarly, *I think*, as another DM functioning on the same realm, also serves to denote the thinking process. In the second example, the turn is initiated by a cluster of DMs - *well* and *I think* which are surrounded by vocalisations *Er erm* in the front and *er er* at the back. It is observed that *well* occurs initially, whereas *I think* is more flexible in its position.

- <2> *Well <=> I it looks like em <|=> <E> pause <\E> “They are actually one specific senior positions” <E> pause <\E> Er I mean I think that yes I would regard it as being existential there which <=> is in a sense em er it <|=> works the same way.*
- <2> *Er erm well I think that er er from a linguistic point of view there is er an interest in all kinds of what linguists call formal properties of words.*

Reformulation/Self-correction

Speakers in real speech are under time constraints to structure and formulate their ideas. DMs are therefore exploited to allow sufficient time for the speaker to reformulate, rephrase or repair one’s utterance. One common DM used to mark this purpose is *I mean*. The motivation for this device is to clarify reference or to indicate one’s stance retrospectively. It marks the speaker’s reformulation or modification of his/her prior ideas or intentions (Schiffrin 1987: 267).

For example, the two instances of *I mean* found below together with the clausal construction *What I was really getting at was* can strictly be regarded as DMs marking the following contribution as a rewording to clarify the meaning and intention of the speaker. I

- <1> *So is this I mean are you What I was really getting at was was how are y= what features do you consider constitutes absurd? I mean er you know y= you’re saying...*

Elaboration

Similar to the reformulatory function, DMs *like* and *I mean* are used to elaborate and modify the existing propositional meaning to make clear the intention of the speaker or to supplement the inadequacies of the meanings. Schiffrin (1987: 267) claims that *I mean*

is used to modify the speaker's own ideas and intentions. Jucker and Smith (1998) categorise *like* as an information-centred presentation marker. The following *like* functions as an approximator or exemplifier to mark that the Monopoly game Speaker A proposes is a rough approximation:

- T: *What what type of game+*
A: ***Like** the Mono- Monopoly game is popular in Hong Kong nowadays.*
T: *+do you?*
(Student data 006)

The following instances of *I mean* are used to qualify or elaborate the information in the utterances they frame.

- <1> *Yes the last university I was at was very very free. Em you had to do some literary theory and you had to do the first year courses but er er **I mean** you could miss out Shakespeare you could do nothing but novels.*
<2> *Mm.*
<1> ***I mean** actually students didn't but the course allowed you to do that **I mean** it was quite bizarre.*

In sum, the above analyses suggest that DMs, though appear as small words in conversations, can fulfil diverse functions such as intimacy signals, boundary markers, discourse connectors, confirmation seekers, turn takers, topic switchers, hesitation markers, repair markers and attitude markers (Jucker and Ziv 1998).

4.2.2 A Comparative Analysis

A detailed qualitative analysis of three underused DMs, namely, initial *and*, *yeah* and *you know* in this section aims to illustrate the similarities and differences of their usage between the non-native and native speakers of English. This part approaches the differences in three dimensions:

1. What are the differences?
2. How do they differ?
3. Why do they differ?

4.2.2.1 *What are the differences?*

A preliminary analysis of the results reveals that second language learners of English in Hong Kong tend to underuse the kind of DMs British speakers of English usually use, to an extent that common ones such as *say*, *sort of*, *well*, *right*, *actually*, *cos* have just a few or even negligible occurrences among this group of Form 6 students. However, some comparable use of DMs in the four categories of the functional paradigm was observed. Owing to the scope of the study, I do not intend to go into detail but it is worthwhile to note some of the core functions of these 7 comparable use of DMs in the two sets of data. Respectively, they are *like* (modifying and qualifying a speaker's contribution as a rough approximation, exemplification or hedge), *I mean* (reformulating and elaborating a prior utterance), *oh* (creating a joint focus of attention on the message and marking a high level of attunement with it), *or* (marking a speaker's provision of alternatives to a hearer), *OK/okay* (marking the boundary of talk or signalling the end of a stretch of talk), *just* (functioning as a hedge and marking politeness) and *really* (expressing the speaker's certainty of or stance towards the propositions made).

The overused ones are common connectives like *because* and *but* which dominantly show causal and contrastive relationships in discourse. It has been stated by Ford (1994) that *because* emerges in highly negotiated and interactional contexts typical of the present discussion genre in which students produced *because* in direct response to the proposals made by their group members and in the consecutive moves to justify their ideas. For the same reason, this discussion genre also shows extremely high instances of *I think* which is regarded as a ‘phatic connective’ by Aijmer (2002) to express modes of knowledge and belief. Furthermore, the data also reveal that there is an over reliance on *yes* rather than *yeah* among the Hong Kong subjects, yet *yeah* was found to be the third most frequent word in the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE (Table 4.1). *Yes* functions mainly as a response/answer to a polar question in the student data. However, this usage is not treated as a function of DM based on my criteria of optionality and discourse-organising since a response to a polar question is obligatory in nature and it does not perform a discourse-organising role. Instead, it contrasts with *yeah* which is frequently used as a DM to organise a response to indicate acknowledgement, agreement and affirmation (cf a detailed discussion in Section 4.2.2.2.2). Since most of the above overused markers are cyclically introduced in the primary and secondary English curriculum, it can explain why they have been incorporated so frequently in their speech.

4.2.2.2 How do they differ?

This sub-section reports on the comparative analyses of the different usage of DMs between British and Hong Kong speakers of English. For reasons of space, not all the DMs listed in Table 4.3 will be investigated in detail. The selection criterion was based on the difference between the CANCODE and student corpus frequency index scores.

Taken into consideration the fact that some DMs bearing high contrastive frequency scores are not necessarily suitable candidates for analysis owing to the few instances of occurrences in the Hong Kong data, for example, *right* (0), *well* (1), *now* (12), *sort of* (2), therefore, three underused DMs *and* (-0.89), *yeah* (-0.43) and *you know* (-0.22) (Table 4.4) were selected for investigation. Among these, *and* and *yeah* rank the first and the second in terms of the contrastive frequency scores in the underused column as shown in the list. The varieties of functions they display on different realms reveal the multifunctional nature of DMs (Criteria 7), one crucial criterion for DM status as specified in Section 2.3.4.

4.2.2.2.1 The study of ‘initial and’

4.2.2.2.1.1 Literature review

Semantically, *and* is used to link words together. Syntactically, it is a coordinate conjunction and mainly works as a phrasal conjunction or as a sentential connective. The former denotes co-membership, a part-whole relation, or simply a relation, joining verbs, auxiliaries, adjectives or adverbs together; whereas the latter relates at least two clauses (van Dijk 1977). However, the proposition has been raised that the meaning of *and* cannot be fully accounted for in semantic terms (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994). Some researchers have proposed that some aspects of connective *and* are clearly pragmatic (van Dijk 1979, Stenström 1984, Schiffrin 1986, Fraser 1990, 1999, Redeker 1990, 1991) and require knowledge and expectations of interlocutors in the interactional context. Typically turn initial *and* is described by a number of researchers (Halliday and Hasan 1976, van Dijk 1979, Schiffrin 1987) in terms of continuation.

The semantic content of *and* is a subject of continual debate. It is widely claimed that *and* has a rather neutral or vague meaning and it was suggested by van Dijk (1979) that there is a minimal meaning for *and* which may be further specified depending on its semantic or pragmatic use. Several researchers have also claimed that it has a minimal pragmatic core meaning (Schiffrin 1986, 1987, Fraser 1990). However, others have proposed that *and* is richly polysemous (Schourup 1999). I adopt the view that it has a minimal core meaning, and from such a perspective, *and* should capture the idea that the speaker takes the message following it to have a parallel relationship to the prior discourse. But it is crucial to note that the meaning of *and* varies according to discourse context as it simultaneously interacts with the syntactic and prosodic factors. So its meaning is enriched by context and the more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by context, both linguistic and conceptual (Fraser 1999). These interpretations render *and* a pragmatic class of item, as it contributes to the interpretation of an utterance rather than to its propositional content.

And has been discussed rather extensively by Halliday and Hasan (1976), who regard it as an additive conjunct. Besides taking it as a structural co-ordination device, they also view it as a text-forming device which contributes additive meaning by linking the prior proposition to the upcoming one and marks its dependency upon the prior proposition for interpretation. So cohesive *and* is parallel with, though not equivalent, to its co-ordinative sense. They suggest that one common usage of sentence initial *and* is to link a series of questions or a series of points all contributing to one general argument, thus serving a retrospective function (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 236). They emphasise that there are both external and internal planes to conjunctive *and*. The former refers to the

meanings in the representation of ‘contents’, while the latter refers to the speaker’s own stamp on the situation, his choice of speaker’s role and rhetorical channel, his attitudes, his judgments and the like (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 238). It is in the communication process itself that the internal plane of conjunctive relation lies. They propose three categories of conjunctive *and* relations, namely, additive, temporal and adversative relations. The commonest usage of *and* indicates additive relation, showing that the speaker wants utterances to be added together and reacted to in their totality.

In analysing *and*, van Dijk (1979) draws the distinction between semantic connective and pragmatic connective. He claims that semantic connectives express relations between denoted facts, and pragmatic expressions express relations between speech acts. He cites the idea that pragmatic connective *and* is often sentence initial, usually followed by a pause and uttered with a specific contour, and carries a continuative meaning as noted in Halliday and Hasan (1976). Unlike other researchers, he adopts a less speaker-centred perspective and states that ‘continuation’ is defined in terms of relations between speech acts, or between moves or turns in conversation. In illustrating this relation, he quotes examples as below:

Example 1

Why didn’t Peter show up? And, where were you that night?

This *and* serves as an addition or continuation of the first speech act.

Example 2

Harry has counted me out. And, I even hadn’t had a chance!

This *and* signals a contradiction or a protest, which bears a pragmatic meaning similar to *yet* or *but*. Therefore, he claims that pragmatic connective *and* can perform various

speech acts such as adding to, checking, questioning, and attacking the preceding speech act (van Dijk 1979: 456).

From a semantic and grammatical perspective, Quirk *et al.* (1985) suggest that *ands* are used as coordinating conjunctions or coordinators coordinating clauses, nouns and prepositional phrases. So the conjoins express a mutual relationship. However, the only restriction on the use of *and* as coordinator is the pragmatic one that the clauses should have sufficient in common to justify their combination (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 930). In their classification, *and* introduces five types of semantic connections, namely, consequence, contrast, conditionality, addition, and explanation.

Sköries (1998) distinguishes three syntactic levels of *and* usage in his analysis of a blame type, namely, below the sentence, within the sentence and above the sentence levels. He declares that the basic function of *and* is that of putting things side by side, in a symmetric environment, and can also be used in an asymmetric environment to imply contrast. This bears resemblance to the distinctions drawn by van Dijk (1979) about the usage of *and* at the pragmatic level. By extending what Sköries (1998) proposes, *and* can be used pragmatically to add something else, to introduce a new perspective, to signal that something has ended and something new is beginning, to summarise or comment, or to draw a conclusion, etc.

The most extensive analysis of *and* in discourse is by Schiffrin (1986, 1987) who maintains that DM *and* works mainly on an ideational dimension which reflects relationships between propositional ideas, like cohesive relations, topic relations, and functional relations. She claims that the pragmatic function of *and* is an interplay

between semantic meaning and grammatical form and is used in everyday discourse to build idea structures and to continue speakers' action. Schiffrin (1987: 147) argues that *and* 'marks a speaker's definition of what is being said as a continuation of his/her own prior talk'. Similarly, Redeker (1990) regards *and* as a marker of pragmatic structure which is used between successive elements in a chain of events.

According to Fraser (1999), *and* has been labelled 'elaborative marker' which has its counterparts like *also*, *besides*, *furthermore*, *similarly*, etc. He gives a brief but useful distinction of what should be regarded as DM, and claims that *and* indicates a relationship in which the message of the upcoming utterance parallels and possibly augments or refines the message of the prior utterance (Fraser 1999: 948). That is, it signals a quasi-parallel relationship between linked utterances, and adds lists of items to the preceding discourse. In my distinction, DM *and* has been extensively used to indicate continuation of the speaker and mark a coordinative relationship between the existing utterance and the upcoming one on the referential level.

4.2.2.2.1.2 Research method

The present analysis demonstrates that semantic and pragmatic descriptions of *and* can be profitably addressed at discourse level (Schiffrin 1986). I will show that initial *and* connects not only single utterances, but can connect stretches of utterances (either statements or questions) in a spoken discourse. Also I will pay due emphasis to the speech acts the message contents carry when analysing *and* because it is through the interaction of the core meaning of *and* with the conjoined propositions that the

communicative force of an utterance is produced. This contributes to the paramount role context plays in the analysis.

Owing to the high frequency of *ands* in both the student data and CANCODE, I will restrict my discussion to utterance initial *and* which introduces an independent move or turn. Non-initiality of *ands* which co-occur with markers like *er*, *eh*, and *urm*, etc. are also placed in this category. Altogether 39 instances of utterance initial *ands* were identified from the student database. A comparable size of 39 instances of initial *ands* were randomly selected from the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE (460,055 words in size) which comprise samples of spoken extracts from three interaction types: information provision, collaborative tasks and collaborative ideas. All were studied in context since contextual dependability (Criteria 6) is one crucial criterion for verifying DM status, and their functions were compared. Occurring at the beginning of a turn, *and* invokes a relationship between the current turn and its interactional setting. The analysis focuses on the interlocutors' pragmatic objectives in the social context in which *and* is embedded.

Typically *and* as a DM is followed by a pause and uttered with specific contour (Criteria 3 - Prosodic Separability), which requires an interpretation of functions with respect to pragmatic contexts (van Dijk 1979). From this perspective, the central place of prosodic features cannot be ignored (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1442). However, since prosodic information has not been included in both sets of data, the focus of the present analysis will be primarily from a semantic and grammatical perspective, rather than from a phonological one. So provisionally I will assume that *and* initiating an utterance does not

deviate much from its distinction as a DM phonologically, and so interpretation of its function will be made in the light of the pragmatic context.

4.2.2.2.1.3 *Classification of functions*

Along the line of Schiffrin (1986, 1987), I will propose that *and* performs functions on both local and global levels. The former refers to relationships between individual propositions, and the latter refers to relationships between sets of propositions. In this sense, several turns can be treated as one conjunct and the *and*-initiated turn as another. From a functional dimension, *and* sometimes works like a conjunction in a semantic sense, signalling sequencing procedure. Pragmatically as a DM, *and* very often acts as a continuer and indicates addition of a follow-up or extension of utterances. Furthermore, it signals afterthoughts, marks pauses for thinking, and is used as a strategy for floor-holding. In view of the diversities of functions *and* can perform in spoken discourse, I propose that the functions of *and* can be ideally captured under the **structural**, **referential**, and **cognitive** domains.

Referentially *and* works on a textual level and marks a relationship of verbal activities preceding and following *and*. Therefore, *and* works cataphorically as well as anaphorically. Structurally, it serves as a textual device to mark continuation of the current topic, to regain control over the talk, or as a floor-holding device. This echoes with McCarthy's (1991: 50) claim that it helps structuring and organising an extended stretch of discourse such as linking one speaker's turn with another's, or linking back to an earlier turn of the current speaker. By functioning on a cognitive level, *and* indicates the ongoing mental process, and co-occurs with vocalisations like *eh*, *er*, *erm*, etc.

4.2.2.2.1.4 Analysis of functions

Student Data

Altogether 39 instances of *and* were identified from the student data. It was found that *and* was the second most frequent word in the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE after *the*, with a frequency index of 2.55. As far as the student data is concerned, *and* was the most frequent word (Table 4.3), with a frequency index of 1.66. The contrastive frequency of -0.89 suggests that *and* bears the widest discrepancy in terms of frequency count among all the DMs counted in the two sets of data. Although both figures do not truly represent *and* as a DM in its own right, it does indicate a comparative underrepresentation of *and* in the student data and so it is worthwhile to investigate the extent to which they differ.

Table 4.6 indicates that there were 235 instances of *and* in the student data, with 16.6% occupying utterance initial position, and 81.7% occupying internal position. A glance at internal *ands* (though this is not the focus of my study) shows that students tend to use *and* mainly in the coordination sense. This was restricted to structural coordination within the sentence (38.5%) and across clauses (61.5% in Table 4.7). Out of the 38.5% of *and* usage at phrasal level, coordination within the nouns or noun phrase was the most frequent coordination type and this accounts for 33.8%. Within the 61.5% of *and* usage at clausal level, it was less obvious that *and* was used in a cohesive sense, such as linking a succession of two or more independent utterances. However, more detailed study is required to divide this category into cohesive DMs usage and coordinative usage.

Table 4.6 Frequency of *ands* in the Student Data

Position	Percentage	
Initial <i>and</i>	39	(16.6%)
Internal <i>and</i>	192	(81.7%)
Ambiguity	4	(1.7%)
Total	235	(100%)

Table 4.7 Usage of Internal *ands* in the Student Data

Level	Grammatical Categories	Frequency (%)
Phrasal level		74 (38.5%)
	Nouns/noun phrases	65 (33.8%)
	Adjectives/adjective phrases	9 (4.7%)
Clausal level		118 (61.5%)
Total		192 (100%)

Traditionally second language learners are informed through conventional teaching that a sentence beginning with ‘*and*’ is ill-formed, and this is often penalised as a grammatical mistake by the standard of written language. This accounts for the high frequency of internal *ands* and its usage in a coordinative sense. But in reality, sentence initial *and* can perform a cohesive relation as a sentence linker (Halliday and Hasan 1976) and coordinators at the beginning of an orthographic sentence or utterance are in general much more frequent than in other registers (Biber *et al.* 1999).

As detailed before, I define and as a DM when it indicates a relationship in which the message of the upcoming utterance preceded by *and* parallels, elaborates, contrasts, or continues the message of the prior utterance (Criteria 4 - Indexicality). In this sense, and signposts the interactive development of discourse, and therefore and functioning as a coordinator at phrasal level within a message content is not regarded as a DM (Fraser 1999). However, there is difficulty in distinguishing what constitutes utterance initial or internal *ands*. In my distinction, I regard the *ands* in Example 3 as utterance initial though they are not all embedded at the very beginning of the turn. All the utterance or turn initial *ands* will be included in the present analysis since a full stop before *And* in my transcription indicates a completed intonation unit (Transcription Conventions p.xvi), a distinguishable prosodic clue for its role as a DM.

Example 3

- C: *What what's the opinion Simon?*
S: *Ahh I think the best selling selling selling toy the best selling toy is not Hello Kitty. I think is plastic models. I like plastic model and I know that everybody like plastic model. And there may not be plastic model. And in Malaysian may there may not be a lot plastic model. We sell...*
(Student data 003)

Moreover, there exists ambiguity in the student data, especially when the utterances are inaudible or incomplete, or when the current turns are being taken over. Utterance initial *and* in Example 4 is excluded from the analysis.

Example 4

- C: *We need to think of our raw materials.*
J: *Yes if we if we eh use eh VVC to to to to make it...*
M: *OK just plastic.*
C: *And also [eh*
J: *[Many kind of plastic. Yeah there are many kinds of plastic you know.*
(Student data 003)

Ambiguity also exists when *and*, on the one hand, is analysed as a coordinate conjunction, joining two parts of a message, and when, on the other hand, *and* can be categorised as a DM signalling that the second message is in some sense parallel with the first. For instance:

Example 5

- <?> *cos the novel I mean cos the novel is so long*
- <?> *Yeah.*
- <?> ***and** there's so much within it you kind of forget that really.*
- <?> *Yeah.*

Anyway, I will adopt a more liberal view and treat similar occurrences of *and* as in Example 5 a DM.

Table 4.8 compares the functions of utterance and turn initial *and* in CANCODE and in the student data on the referential, interactional and cognitive paradigms. This gives a general idea of how it is used differently among native and non-native speakers.

Table 4.8 A Comparison of the Functions of Utterance Initial *ands* in CANCODE and the Student Data

Functional Paradigms	Functions	Frequency in CANCODE	Frequency in Student Data
Structural	Continuer		
	Prefacing statements	18 (46.2%)	11 (28.2%)
	Prefacing questions	0 (0%)	5 (12.8%)
Referential	Additive	4 (10.3%)	9 (23.1%)
	Temporal Sequence	10 (25.6%)	5 (12.8%)
	Contrastive	0 (0%)	4 (10.2%)
	Concession	0 (0%)	1 (2.6%)
	Agreement/Acknowledgment	0 (0%)	1 (2.6%)
	Topic marker	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.6%)
Cognitive	Hesitation/ Pause for thinking	6 (15.4%)	2 (5.1%)
	Total	39 (100%)	39 (100%)

As a continuer

The most frequent use of DM *and* is as a continuer, a display by the speakers that they are prepared for movement to a new unit (Goodwin 1986). Here *and* points to a sequential relationship on the **structural** realm, connecting the prior utterance of the current speaker with the *and*-linked sequence and signals that the same speaker is ready to take the floor and continue with a new unit. This function accounts for 41% of all occurrences, with 12.8% prefacing questions.

Example 6

- F: *Is a toy need to be a an object that you can pick it and then play with it is it? (laughs)*
E: *You mean that you can take it everywhere.*
F: *Eh take it and then play with it. Move it.*
K: *Oh yes. Some video games is just small size.*
B: *Such as game boy you mean.*
K: *Just as the game boy.*
B: ***And and** any more idea? Ah I think of the small motorbike+*
F: *Small motorbike.*
B: *+and the small car very small about...*
E: *But it may be dangerous.*
(Student data 007)

In Example 6, *And and* are used by Speaker B as a global initiation marker to elicit some more ideas after an extended exchange of discussion. It is then followed by her own contribution to suggest manufacturing some small motorbikes.

Example 7

- E: *I think we can import the raw materials from Malaysia.*
V: *Malaysia yes. **And and** I think we can also import some yes from S. E. Asia+*
N: *Yes.*
V: *+Yes.*
(Student data 002)

In discussing where to import the raw material, Speaker V responds to E's suggestion to import the raw materials from Malaysia first with an <agree> act *Malaysia yes*. She then continues to suggest importing raw materials from other S.E Asian countries. This <suggest> act is prefaced by *and and* as a continuer which introduces a further idea. It is a prototypical way of signalling that the speaker wishes to hold the floor.

One special feature of utterance initial *and* in the Hong Kong data is that it is frequently used to preface questions and performs a questioning speech act (van Dijk 1979). It is also claimed that *and* can be used to introduce a question which relates directly to what

someone else has just said (COBUILD 1995). Table 4.8 indicates that out of 41% of usage as a continuer, 12.8% of DM initial *ands* precede utterances that denote the speech act of questioning or querying. It has been specified by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 236) that one common usage of sentence initial *and* is to link a series of questions meaning ‘the next thing I want to know is...’ The same phenomenon was observed in the following extract:

Example 8

- 1 S: *But I think Sailor Moon is popular.*
 M: *Sailor Moon.*
 S: *Yes Sailor Moon.*
 J: *So the name of the toy is Sailor Moon.*
 5 M: *Yes. OK. Sailor Moon series. **And and** how about if the cost of the*
 type of the toy is XO, we also call it Sailor Moon series?
 S: *No we just sell the Sailor Moon toy series.*
 M: ***Ah and** how about the XO?*
 C: *How about the Hello Kitty?*
 10 S: *Batman?*
 J: *I think we'll not sell it.*
 M: *Why?*
 (Student corpus 003)

The above sequence of exchanges is a continuation of a prior idea. In deciding what toy to manufacture, Speaker M asks if a toy called ‘XO’ should be placed in the same category as the ‘Sailor Moon’ series (L5-6). Here question word *how about* (L5) is prefaced by two *ands*. He is answered with a <disagree> act from S, who suggests that they should only sell the Sailor Moon toy series. Again *and* is used as a question initiator performing a link in L8 with the rest of the utterance. Here conjunctive *and* does not appear alone, it is prefaced by *ah* indicating the thinking process. The *and*-prefaced question builds on the answer to the preceding question (L7), which is also observed by Stenström (1984), Schiffrin (1986), and Heritage and Sorjonen (1994). Stenström (1984) also claims that *and*-prefaced questions are characteristics of a communicative situation

in which one speaker's utterance is a reaction to the previous speaker's utterance. However, the two succeeding questions in (L9-10) are no longer prefaced by *and*. I would comment that *and* is an optional pragmatic choice (Stenström 1984) supporting my claim that it carries a minimal meaning. This successive use of question agenda by M does achieve a form of continuity or coherence, and marks his questions as different from that of C and S in the extract. In sum, *and* is used here to mark a speaker's continuation of his question agenda and this function is realised through the speaker's situated use in a global spoken context (Schiffrin 1986, 1987).

The examples below indicate that when *ands* preface questions at the conclusion stage of a discussion, quite often they combine with other DMs like *so*.

Example 9

- D: OK then what we have the result is the Monopoly. Eh I'm sorry Joseph your Snoppy is eh outdated and out of our [decision.
Jo: [Too poor.
D: **And so** eh do we all agree with that?
Jo: [No.
J: [Yes.
D: OK then that's all for the discussion.
(Student corpus 004)

Example 10

- L: So what what...
Le: **And so** what what what kind of toy should we should make?
W: Eh some (+) some... (laughs)
Le: So so we all agree that Wilson's idea is good?
L: Yes I agree with him.
(Student corpus 009)

Generally speaking, *and so* signals that the discussion has come to an end and marks the end of a discussion and is used by a speaker to signal the arrival of a conclusion stage.

Additive

Another common usage of *and*, which is sometimes difficult to distinguish from its use as a continuer, is to add another proposition to the existing proposition. In contrast to *and* as a continuer working on the structural side of a conversation, *and* as an additive works referentially to connect adjacent propositions or sequences of propositions together. Obviously, the former relates to a sequential relationship on a discoursal level, whereas the latter signals a relationship referentially on a semantic level. *And* as an additive accounts for 23.1% of the total number of occurrences. COBUILD (1995) states that *and* is used at the beginning of a sentence to introduce something else that that you want to say. It has been claimed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that '*and*' links a series of points all contributing to one general argument, suggesting a sense of 'projecting backward'. Also, they suggest that when *and* occurs at the beginning of a sentence it is often accompanied by another conjunctive word or phrase. Example 11 shows the use of *and* to co-occur with *also*.

Example 11

- 1 A: *I just mean the the the doll.*
 G: *But there's a lot of these toys in the market.*
 A: ***And** also copyrights. If we follow them to eh manufacture the toys we
 can't eh follow their copy because it has copyright. But if Barbie and
 Heman*
5 *are so popular then we eh manufacture other toys is not eh eh how to say*
 C: *Ideal.*
 A: *Yeah.*
 G: *So until now no conclusion is made.*
 (Student data 005)

In the context of discussing what kind of toy to produce, Speaker A proposes to manufacture dolls in L1, then she adds to her point another propositional statement *And also copyright* (L3) and implies a <remind> speech act. Though utterance initial *and* just

links a noun *copyright* and seems to serve as a coordinator on the surface level, it in fact integrates with the context and produces the communicative force of a reminder. Here Speaker A raises the copyright issue and attempts to draw the attention of other group members towards this problem. Therefore pragmatically, it performs a referential function in the surrounding context.

Example 12

- 1 F: *So that we would we should become a first one to do this to make it to make it eh special.*
 B: *OK let's see.*
 K: ***And** we can design a poster that has a puzzle in it and the puzzle and the*
 5 *puzzle inside there's a (?) in the puzzle.*
 E: *I I have some (?) 3D puzzle.*
 B: *... for the children [young and adult. (laughs)*
 E: *[Young and adult.*
 (Student data 007)

Example 12 illustrates another additive function through adding another suggestion in the agenda. In L4 Speaker K makes another suggestion to manufacture a kind of 3D puzzle. The statement is preceded by *and* and it is different from the previous example in that K's contribution is not added to his own point. This reveals a joint collaboration with Speaker F by elaborating his contribution (L1-2) to construct the discourse. Here DM *and* helps provide an explicit linkage and a referential orientation of what the speaker takes to be the discourse relationship.

Marking temporal sequence

Another common usage of *and* is to impose an order of priority on the sentences it links (Lakoff 1971). The temporal priority signals that the second utterance is chronologically sequent to the first (Quirk *et al.* 1985). Results indicate that it accounts for 12.8% of all the DM *ands* in utterance initial position.

In all the examples related to this usage, utterance initial *and* is always accompanied by *then* rather than being used in isolation. Example 13 clearly indicates that Speaker E wants to proceed to the next point on the agenda, that is, from the discussion of the type of toy to produce (L1) then to the price (L4). Initial *and then* conveys Speaker E's understanding that the prior utterances are connected to the upcoming utterance *ah how about the price* (L4) in some way. Analysis of this *and* reveals that this temporal relation lies on the internal plane specified by Halliday and Hasan (1976) who claim that the successivity is not in the events being talked about but in the communicative process. Therefore, *and then* is referring to the 'here and now' of the discourse rather than to the external world denoted by the content of utterance.

Example 13

- 1 K: *I've one question? Eh what type of education eh toys eh we will sell?*
 E: *Eh which type? We we depends on the designer how to design it?*
 (laughs). Eh I think it's only the nature of the toy is educational type OK?
 And then *ah how about the price?*
 5 W: *I think it should sell it below US\$10.*
 (Student corpus 001)

Example 14

- 1 M: *You're 70 and you can't. No we produce those toys for the eh 3, 3 to 8*
 years old girls eh so I think ah they may ah they may like this la like
 Barbies.
 C: *I agree with.*
 5 G: ***And then*** *reproduce a doll for the 9 to over 9 years old em girls.*
 C: *Maybe we can eh produce a series of toys like babies Barbie ...*
 (Student corpus 008)

Here *and then* in Example 14 illustrates the external plane of temporal relation distinguished by Halliday and Hasan (1976). In L5 G expresses the temporal relation between two successive events – from producing Barbie toys for three to eight year old

girls, then for those who are nine and above. This type of relation is one of the most typical forms of conjunctive *and* being taught in the second language classroom.

In sum, both types of temporal relations signal a connected sequential relationship, no matter if it is referring to the communication process or to the propositional content. It was also observed that the first *and* links an earlier utterance to a later one by the same speaker within the same turn (Example 13), while the second one links up different temporal events contributed by different speakers in different turns (Example 14).

Contrastive

Besides the conventional ‘additive’ meaning, *and* can also signal a contradiction or protest, and bears a pragmatic meaning similar to *yet* or *but* (van Dijk 1979, Quirk *et al.* 1985). A simple example from (van Dijk 1979) illustrates the contrastive usage:

Example 15

Harry has counted me out. And, I even hadn’t had a chance!

The student data show that 10.2% of utterance initial *ands* illustrate this usage by placing idea units in an asymmetric environment to imply contrast. In the following extract, as Speaker E is making a <comment> in L1-2 raising the fact that students may not afford the toy, Speaker K makes a contrastive claim that they can design some cars that are not expensive (L3). Utterance initial *and* produces a pragmatic meaning which is like *but*, and performs the speech act of attacking the previous speaker’s idea. While K is upholding his idea of producing a model car, Speaker F questions the practicality of his idea (L9-10). This then invokes a <disagree> act from K (L11-12) who initiates his turn

with *and no* expressing a contrastive speech act. Here the pragmatic meaning of *and* bringing out a negative claim is displayed through the choice of word *no*.

Example 16

- 1 E: But you must think that this kind of toy cost many cost much. It's very expensive and not all student not not all child can buy this at all.
K: **And** we can design some car that is eh not expensive eh (?)
F: Electric?
5 K: Yes not using electric.
B: You mean for example eh eh eh solar energy? (laughter) You use a mirror to absorb energy?
K: I think there's a fine wheel inside the car and we just...
F: Orrr-err but but I don't think eh that's the children would play a toy with
10 so many trouble. They have to do some work and then they can play.
K: **And no** I I think that they are and they have a lot of energy they would like to do.
(Student corpus 007)

Signalling hesitation and a pause for thinking

The student data also reveal that at pragmatic level *and* can help signal hesitation and indicate a pause for thinking. This falls into the **cognitive usage** in my present classification of *and* functions. However usage of *and* at the cognitive level is not widely represented in the literature. But it should be noted that although this function is placed under the cognitive paradigm, *and* concurrently performs a referential function because of the multifunctional nature of this DM. Table 4.12 shows that around 5.1% of *and* occurrences in the student data indicate this cognitive function.

Example 17

- 1 K: The the economic in Hong Kong is decreasing no in the people do not spend much money on entertainment espec= especial in buying toys.
V: Or can we think eh other country's market I mean foreign market we because Hong Kong market is so small [that...
5 E: [Chinese is a big market.
V: Yes.

10 K: *Eh and the toys made in China is increasing (?). Many parents em
willing spend the money on their children because they only have one to
two children in the their family and so the toys is (+) eh they will buy
more toys in their own.*
(Student corpus 002)

In response to E's contribution that China is a big toy market, Speaker K makes a <response> move beginning the utterance with *eh and* (L7), which is a continuation of his earlier topic that the Hong Kong economy is not good enough for toy products (L1-2). As preceded by *eh*, this utterance does not signal complete fluency. Also the latter inaudible part suggests that he is engaged in the thinking process. A similar example is found in Example 18 in which Speaker A is recalling the slogan they have previously decided on for the Barbie toy product. But somehow she has a memory lapse in L7. This disfluency is marked by the *and*-prefaced sequence and it is again preceded by *eh* which reflects the constraint of online processing and the time necessary for processing the information. As I have claimed that there is only a minimal meaning for *and*, these examples demonstrate that it is through the surrounding word choice that the communicative force of the related utterances is displayed (Sköries 1998).

Example 18

1 A: *Eh so let us come to a conclusion. We're now going to produce eh Barbie
and electronic games, electronic monopoly games. Eh we're going to
produce Barbie in China in Shanghai and the computer game in Japan.*
T: *The price of the oh...*
5 A: *The price of Barbie is around \$70 the computer game is around \$100 and
the (laughs) and the advertising slogan is... (laughs). 'Which is your good
friend? Eh and the take care you every night'. (laughs)*
(Student corpus 006)

In sum, the frequency count of *ands* in the non-native speakers' speech shows that a great number of them were placed in utterance internal position, functioning as a structural coordinator on phrasal and clausal levels. As far as the 16.6% of utterance initial *ands*

were concerned, most were used as a marker of continuation, and functioned as an additive conjunct linking a series of points and contributed to one general idea or argument. A smaller proportion was used to mark temporal sequence, and some prefaced questions to verify ideas. There was also a contrastive usage to mark a different idea in the discussion genre.

CANCODE

Results from the study of randomly selected CANCODE data suggest that the functions of utterance initial *and* predominantly lie in three categories, namely, as a continuer, a hesitation marker as well as a marker of temporal sequence. It was found that 46.2% of initial *ands* perform a continuative function, 25.6% signal temporal sequence, and 15.4% mark a pause for thinking or hesitation (Table 4.8). However, the territories of all these distinctions are relatively ill-defined. For example, *and* linking continuing utterances together can at the same time denote an ongoing thinking process. So for the sake of simplicity, the classification of *and* functions in Table 4.8 is based on the comparatively prominent feature that particular *and* signifies in a particular utterance. Typically, the CANCODE data reflect the multifunctional nature of *and*, the functions of which vary according to the context in which they appear. This phenomenon supports my earlier claim that there are fuzzy areas in the functional realm of each marker.

As a floor-holding device vs a continuer

Example 19 illustrates the multifunctional dimension of utterance initial *and*. In the following extract, a student and a tutor are discussing the course components in their English Department. The student (Speaker 2) seems to be unhappy about some

compulsory courses. In L6 Speaker 2 continues her comment with a <complain> which is prefaced by *and*, complaining that she needs to attend some odd classes. This *and*, on the one hand, works on the **structural** level for floor-holding because it is quite obvious that Speaker 2 has not completed her turn as in *It's really eclectic and I haven't concentrated on anything since (L3-4)*. On the other hand, it also functions as a continuer linking the prior unfinished utterance with the upcoming ones (L6 & 8).

Example 19

- <1> *Because they have to chose one historical language course or one medieval course.*
 <2> *Yeah. We either have really. It's really eclectic and I haven't concentrated on anything since*
 <1> *Mm.*
 <2> ***And** we have a lot of odd classes. Like I took things like censorship and+*
 <1> *Mm.*
 <2> *+stuff like that and*
 <1> *Yes the last university I was at was very free. Em you had to do some literary theory and...*

Marking a pause for thinking vs preserving topic continuity

It is quite common to find *and* working as a marker to provide information about the cognitive state of speakers in spoken exchanges. Data indicate that 15.4% of the selected examples carry this function.

Example 20

- 1 <2> *...Erm during children's television I sat yesterday from three till five in the afternoon and just and just had a look at the adverts on ITV.*
 <laughs> *And Birds Eye Fish Fingers was the most frequent advert. The one where you know there's Captain Birds Eye abducts all the little*
 5 *children.*
 <?> *laughs*
 <2> *On his boat for like half an hour while they have some fish fingers*
 <4> *There's a bit dodgy isn't it.*
 <2> *Yeah. Very. <laughs>*
 10 <1> *laughs*

- 15 <2> *Erm **and** there's another one call= about erm magic sprinklings which
was like a weird dessert for children.*
- <?> *Oh.*
- <2> *It's like specially aimed at kids. It's like kind of like a mousse with
hundreds and thousands on the top or something.*
- <1> *laughs*
- <2> ***And** that was on quite often as well but they're really all obviously geared
towards children...*

Example 20 is a follow-up discussion after a presentation about advertising by Speaker 2. There are two instances of *and*. The first one, which is preceded by *erm* (L11), serves a rather dynamic function. While marking a short pause for thinking as the speaker attempts to raise another advertisement in the discussion (L11), it also marks a referential function on a global level, connecting two chunks of propositions together. The first set of ideas is about the advertisement of Birds' Eye Fish Fingers (L1-9). From L11 onwards, the topic focus shifts to another advertisement - a sprinkling for a children's dessert. Here *and* has a global referential function as well as serving as a sub-topic marker, marking off two different examples but at the same time preserving topical continuity. Also its role as a continuer on the interactional level cannot be neglected. The second *and* (L17) performs an additive function providing further information about the second advertisement to the listener.

Generally speaking, *and* as a marker of continuation is the most frequent usage as observed in CANCODE. This accounts for 46.2% of all instances of occurrence. The tutor, in the same spoken discourse as in Example 19, continues to add his comments and explains the situation that the English Department is in fact changing the system (L1), and is gradually departing from the rigid system (L3) towards a freer choice of courses

by students. It was observed that all three utterances by Speaker 1 are preceded by different DMs. *Well* (L1) signals inadequacy of the existing system as a remark by the tutor; *so* (L3) marks his tentative conclusion from the prior context; and *And* (L5) connects his upcoming statement and initiates continuation with his previous exchanges (L5). All these DMs serve to tie the exchanges together and perform the very important role of managing and organising the discourse in a way that facilitates understanding on the part of the interlocutor.

Example 21

- 1 <1> *Well as I'm sure everyone's told you we've just changed our system.*
 <2> *Mm.*
 <1> *So em w= we're sort of half way from a very rigid system.*
 <2> *Oh right.*
 5 <1> *And I don't know how far we'll go towards total freedom but+*
 <2> *Oh.*
 <1> *+this requirement to do a medieval course in the second year is still very strong. So er I think some people probably not particularly well motivated because whereas others were sort of passionate enthusiasts. And er+*

Marking temporal sequence

Data show that 25.6% of utterance initial *ands* mark the temporal sequence. As mentioned before, *and* can express a local time relation that holds between two facts. The successivity of events is illustrated in the following extracts in which a tutor starts off a seminar by introducing what will be done (L1-2). This is followed by *and then* bringing out the next sequence of events, that is, proceeding to the discussion of their problem (L4-7). Example 22 exemplifies the internal plane of temporal relations claimed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) as it denotes the here and now of the communicative process. As for Example 23, I would say that all the *and thens* refer to the external plane of temporal relation (Halliday and Hasan 1976) in which Student 1 is reporting to the tutor

what the lecturer has previously done. All these instances impose an order of priority on the utterances they link, and they all function in the **referential** realm as they convey a referential time relationship.

Example 22

- 1 <1> ...Now let's discuss that at the end. Let's see how we get on with today's seminar erm questions on unfair terms.
 <?M> Mm.
 <1> **And then** if we get on okay we could at least perhaps start a discussion
5 of our problem. But I think we should perhaps make some other arrangement because I wouldn't like to just leave that lying. I think that we should discuss er problem solving+

Example 23

- 1 <2> he just went through the main sort of clauses like the ones that erm for negligence or erm restriction is negligence. **And then** sort of explained a bit about it and there are a few exercises we can do.
 <1> Right.
5 <2> **And then And then** just go through the other s=sections like that.

Additive

Utterance initial *ands* used with additive meaning account for 10.3% of all the usages. The tutor in Example 24 is giving his student some supervision for his essay. The additive sense is being built up from the advice through the first utterance - to comment on the word 'healer', then through the second utterance – to focus on an old English compound word, then the third utterance – to focus on the way prefixes are used to create words, which is preceded by *and*.

Example 24

- <1> You know you might want to comment things on like like that the word healer they used there or folk em you know. Em <pause> and I suppose the other thing sort of things like compounds which are old English. **And** the way prefixes are used to create words. Em <pause> the and so on. So have a look at some of the things that are typical of the period.
<2> Mm.

In sum, the CANCODE data indicate that about half of the utterance initial *ands* were used as a continuer, performing a referential function as well as acting as a floor-holding device on the structural level. A rather significant use is to mark temporal sequence and as a cognitive device to mark hesitation and pauses for thinking.

4.2.2.2.1.5 Conclusion

A correct understanding of the functions of DM *and* requires a foundation based on conversational studies. The present analysis, which is based on real data, demonstrates that contexts provide the parameters which work with *and* to organise ideas in discourse (Schiffrin 1986, 1987). It was found that *and* plays an important role in conversational discourse, conveying referential, structural and cognitive imports which provide clues to listeners concerning the communicative intent of the speaker and signpost to them the appropriate interpretation of utterances in the course of conversation.

Similar to its grammatical role to coordinate grammatical structures, initial *and* forms a discourse coordinator to bind ideas into a cohesive spoken text. So qualitatively there is no communicatively significant discrepancy between the native and non-native use of initial *ands*. Rather it differs quantitatively in that non-native speakers' use of initial *and* as an initiator of utterances is significantly underrepresented.

On the whole, more *ands* were represented as a continuer and as a marker of hesitation and cognitive processing in the native speakers' speech. As a continuation marker, *and* introduces information that is connected to what was said before. In the non-native data, a significant use of *and* as a continuer prefacing questions is observed. However, slightly

more *ands* were represented in the additive sense which can be explained by the fact that the discussion nature as a specific feature of classroom interaction type predicts a higher usage of *and* as an additive conjunct. A fundamental observation especially true for the real data is that the functions, no matter whether it is from the referential, structural, or cognitive realm, quite often intertwine with each other and lack a clear boundary for a unique function.

In conclusion, the two sets of data basically confirm the usual distinction that the semantic meaning of *and* is additive and the pragmatic meaning is one of continuation. This interacts with the contextual, syntactic, semantic and prosodic factors (though it is not the scope of this study to cater for the last factor) to produce the intended communicative force. However, this is only a partial comparison of the functions of *and* at the utterance initial position. A larger scale study is required to arrive at a deeper and more systematic understanding of *and* as a DM at both initial and internal positions in terms of native and non-native speakers' speech.

4.2.2.2.2 *The study of 'yeah'*

4.2.2.2.2.1 *Literature review*

In most interactions conversationalists have a repertoire of conversational devices that they use with a certain frequency. One device used by the listener is listener responses which are generally short and non-floor holding utterances produced by the non-primary speaker to accompany and support the primary speaker's speakership. They are termed 'backchannels' by Yngve (1970: 568) who regards backchannels as markers of quality in ongoing communication. The study of backchannels begins with Fries (1952, cited in Schegloff 1982) who treated *yes, uh huh, yeah, I see, good, oh* as backchannels. White (1989: 59) elaborates that a listener gives useful information through backchannels, either in the form of verbal and non-verbal forms, without claiming the floor. In much literature this conversational phenomenon is also described as minimal responses. Reid (1995) regards tokens such as *yeah, hmm, ha no, yep, bloody oath, that's right, aha, ya have to, someone* as minimal responses. However, there is no definite delimitation of what are included as minimal responses. Zimmerman and West (1975) suggest that only *um hum, uh huh* and *yeah* are minimal responses, and the term 'backchannel' has been adopted by Duncan (1974) and his associates (e.g. Duncan and Fiske 1977) with the broadened definition of five types of conversational behaviour with regard to minimal responses, namely, backchannels, sentence completion, brief requests for clarification, brief restatements, and also head nods and shakes. Schegloff (1982) treats conversation as an interactional achievement, and regards *uh hum* and other backchannel tokens as 'continuers', which are used to pass an opportunity to produce a full turn.

A close observation of CANCODE reveals that while a speaker is engaging in an extended talk, the listener always responds with a brief token of acknowledgement using lexical and non-lexical items such as *yeah*, *right*, *mm*, *um hum*, *uh huh*. Among these, *yeah* is predominant in CANCODE but is far too underrepresented in the students' discussion. *Yeah* is found to be used not just as a response form, a term after Biber *et al.* (1999), to mark an affirmative response to a question meaning 'yes', but also as a DM to organise responses. This reflects the multigrammaticality of DMs (Criteria 2) as it draws from the backchannel class. While it is arbitrary to categorise other non-lexical items under the umbrella of DMs as observed from the conflicting views of Schiffrin (1987) and Fraser (1999) in the treatment of *oh* as a DM, I regard *yeah* as a DM when it functions on the structural realm to serve as a coherence marker within a turn or between turns to allow conversation to continue, and when it functions on the interpersonal realm as a confirmation marker marking agreement as well as a backchannelling device to acknowledge and indicate active listenership. In the following, I will focus on the third most underrepresented interactive DM *yeah* in the study. This reveals how conversational partners keep track of each other's ongoing activity, a finding consistent with Jucker and Ziv (1998).

4.2.2.2.2 *Analysis of functions*

Student Data

The occurrence of *yes* is very frequent in the student data, whereas *yeah* is not very prominent. The finding reveals that *yeah* is the third most underrepresented DM in the student data. Its frequency is 0.47% in comparison with 0.9% in the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE (Table 4.3), with a contrastive frequency of -0.43 (Table 4.4). In

contrast, its formal form *yes* is widely represented in the student corpus, being the fourth most frequent DM (0.94%) in the present data (Table 4.2).

Broadly speaking, three kinds of usage of *yeah* were identified in the students' discussion. The first kind, which is the least frequent usage as observed from the data, is the use of *yeah* as a response marker by supplying an agreeing answer to a yes-no question.

Example 1

A: *Software? Do you think the younger children are capable to use the software?*
G: ***Yeah.***
(Student corpus 002)

Example 2

T: *If we can use eh use the eh comic eh eh comic...*
L: *Copy from the comic book?*
T: ***Yeah*** *the people we can attract more teenagers.*
A: *Teenagers yes.*
L: *The comics help us.*
(Student corpus 007)

In Example 1, *Yeah* is a reply to the yes-no question raised by Speaker A and appears to be a simple equivalent of *yes*. It occurs alone in a turn initial position and it completes a free-standing adjacency pair. In Example 2, *yeah* follows an incomplete yes-no question *Copy from the comic book?*, then it is continued with further same-speaker talk. In line with the discussion of Drummond and Hopper (1993), these *yeahs* enact agreement and in both cases, *yeahs* either occur alone or are followed by further same-speaker talk. But strictly speaking, this lexical *yeah* is only a response marker, and therefore, should not be

regarded as a DM since they are not evident in performing any discourse-organising functions.

Marking responses - Agreement

Among all the *yeah*-instances in the study, the commonest use as a DM is to mark the speaker's response to express agreement. According to Fuller (2003), *yeah* is one form of recipient token or reception marker which is used to state one's positive attitude or affirmative position as to the truth value of the proposition underlying the primary speaker's contribution (Bublitz 1988). Therefore, it functions primarily on the interpersonal realm to mark social function. Example 3 exemplifies this use:

Example 3

- C: *We may... I (?) make many kind of plastic plastic model. We can make the very small one and very thick one just just for the people choose.*
S: *That means different size have different price.*
C: ***Yeah.***
M: *Em I think we should manufacture them in China.*
C: ***Yeah yeah I think so.***
S: ***Yeah I think so.***
C: *Cheap labour.*
(Student corpus 002)

Speaker C in the above discussion initiates the first move which contains a <suggest> act of what to manufacture: i.e. different kinds of plastic models. This is followed by a response move by Speaker S who reacts to the idea by clarifying it with *That means*, and with C's follow-up move in the form of an agreement token ***Yeah*** (L4). Three other *yeahs* as agreement tokens appear later on in different turns. M's suggestion that the toy should be manufactured in China is endorsed by C (L6) and also S (L7), and both sequences contain *yeah* and *I think so*, further reinforcing its role as an agreement token in this context.

The reason that the *yeahs* mainly convey an agreement style can be accounted for by the genre of the data. The dialogic text type generates personally-held opinions in which students either agree or disagree with the interlocutors' utterances. In this case, high occurrences of DMs performing this function are predicted. Examples 4 and 5 exemplify that the speakers express an absolute degree of agreement through a repetition of *yeahs*.

Example 4

A: *How about the toys? Eh. How about the toys? (+)*
J: *\$70.*
T: *Cheaper than the computer game.*
A: ***Yeah yeah yeah.***
T: *Eh cheaper than (?)*
Together: ***Yeah yeah yeah.***
(Student corpus 006)

Example 5

P: *You said that the Batman car the Batman's car we can eh eh make it bigger and there're some functions functions like other models... Move it by control.*
Together: ***Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.***
(Student corpus 002)

Marking responses - Acknowledgement

It was found that *yeah* could also be used to acknowledge the previous speaker's utterance, marking function on an interpersonal dimension. Typically this classification of use occupies a turn initial position. Consider the following:

Example 6

A: *So how about back to the Barbie?*
G: *Barbies?*
A: *Yes.*
C: *Only suit girls, but you can also manufacture the He-Man, X-Man or Spiderman or Batman, Superman.*
W: ***Yeah.***
A: *I just mean the the the doll.*
(Student corpus 005)

Basically the *Yeah* uttered by W can be regarded as an acknowledgement token which simply indicates comprehension of C's point and apparently W shows no intention of taking over the turn. It can also, however, be interpreted in this example that *Yeah* performs an agreement function in alignment with C's comment and suggestion. Really it remains ambiguous whether the *yeah*-speaker is acknowledging, agreeing, or both. As commented by Drummond and Hopper, 'Though there do exist some prototype cases of each use, a great many cases either combine these two functions or leave the matter of functioning for-the-moment sequentially ambiguous' (Drummond and Hopper 1980: 207). The example can again illustrate the multifunctional nature of DMs and the versatile roles they have in spoken discourse enhance the communicative effectiveness.

As a continuer

The above-mentioned agreeing and acknowledging functions have a functional overlap with *yeah* used as a continuer, which exhibits 'understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway by another' (Schegloff 1982: 81), and at the same time encourages continuous speakership by the current speaker. So functioning on the structural realm, the use as a continuer is facilitative in nature to maintain the flow of talk. For instance, the *Yeah* in Example 7 occupies a single turn and indicates low speakership incipency. It overlaps with Speaker C's utterance but, shows no sign of claiming the turn. Pragmatically, it signals understanding and agreement of the prior utterance and thus it encourages and facilitates furtherance of extended talk by the current speaker. In this joint discussion context, Speaker S, instead of Speaker C, makes a follow-up move and continues with the point of what price to fix for the toy. His incomplete response *The price the price is proportional* is jointly continued by C's *Depend on*, then modified by

Speaker S's point that the price should be determined by both the labour force and the price of the raw material.

Example 7

- C: *We need to eh think of what we use where we make first+*
M: **Yeah.**
C: *+then we know the price.*
S: *The price the price is proportional...*
C: *Depend on (laughs).*
S: *Depend on the proportional proportional to the labour force and and and the price of the raw material you know.*
(Student corpus 003)

Marking strong emotional response

It is quite common for Hong Kong youngsters to use *yeah* as an in-group pragmatic marker to denote enthusiasm, exclamation or a sense of victory. It functions to signal the speaker's response towards the proposition of the prior discourse and concurrently indicates a greater degree of involvement. So the use of *yeah* in this context registers high on the affective side and functions primarily on the interpersonal realm of the theoretical framework.

In Example 8, *Yeahs* have been used twice at utterance initial position to signal Speakers N and V's strong emotive engagement towards the topic under discussion.

Example 8

- N: *I think the south part of China is the most suitable one because the land rent is the cheapest.*
V: *Shenzhen.*
N: **Yeah!** *Shenzhen. Yeah! That's good place. Should we make a decision?*

Similarly, in finalising Monopoly as the game to manufacture (Example 9), the group members who have suggested this idea indicate a sense of victory through the exclamative use of *yeah* in the utterance final position when their proposal is accepted:

Example 9

M: Mononopoly is always **yeah** (laughs).

E: Always **yeah**.

M: Always **yeah**. OK so...

(Student corpus 008)

This marks a positive attitude towards the proposition made, but so far only a few instances of *yeah* are used in this sense and I do not intend to make any sweeping generalisation concerning this usage.

The above observations suggest that contributions from DMs as minimal as *yeah* do have functions at both interactional and organisational levels and can influence and develop the course of conversation. They express a speaker's affirmative position (Bublitz 1988) and signal affective meanings like interest and enthusiastic agreement (Stubbe 1998). However, *yeah* is far too underrepresented among NNS speech as a DM as compared with the NS performance in CANCODE. This is where the next part of analysis is turning to.

CANCODE

Marking responses – Acknowledgement

The CANCODE data show that *yeahs* occur quite frequently particularly in language-in-action text type in which they mostly serve as an acknowledgement token. Example 10

illustrates how Speaker 2 demonstrates to Speakers 1 and 3 the way to make an account book to keep record of money expenses.

Example 10

- 1 <2> *Well if I if I put it in this for the minute cos we've not bought a book yet have we. Erm I can get like an account book or something.*
 <1> **Yeah.**
 <2> *You want to do is draw a line+*
5 <3> **Yeah.**
 <2> *+all the way across.*
 <3> **Yeah.**
 <2> *Erm no. At the end of the page the right hand end of the page+*
 <3> **Yeah.**
10 <2> *+on each page draw a line about two centimetres long er all the way from the margin.*
 <1> *Like them like them account books.*
 <2> **Yeah.**
 <3> **Yeah.**
15 <2> *Then on the left hand side+*
 <3> **Yeah.**
 <2> *+in the bigger bit you put what was bought and how much it was.*

Altogether there are seven instances of *Yeahs* in this excerpt, all acting as acknowledgement tokens. Throughout the exchange, Speaker 2 is showing Speakers 1 and 3 where to draw lines, and they acknowledge him respectively at various points using *Yeahs*. By observing the appearance of *Yeahs* as interrupted utterances (L5, 9 and 16) before the current speaker (Speaker 2) completes the turn, it gives further evidence that they are performing an acknowledging function. This is a very frequent usage of *Yeahs* in which they appear singly as an individual turn without indicating any imminent speakership. Likewise, the conversation in Example 11 reveals a similar phenomenon.

Example 11

- 1 <1> *Yes. What a+ what are these for?*
 <3> *They're honey dippers.*
 <1> *Honey dippers.*

- 5 <3> **Yeah** you dip it in the honey+
 <1> **Yeah.**
 <3> +and twist it round and the honey goes into there+
 <1> **Yeah.**
 <3> +and you spread it around and you
 <2> Mm.
 10 <1> Oh really.
 <3> Or just let it drip into your+
 <1> **Yeah.**
 <3> +into your er or whatever you want.
 <1> Oh I see. Oh I see. Yes. **Yeah.** Mhm.
 15 <3> Mm.
 <1> Mm.

A shop assistant is demonstrating to two tourists what honey dippers are. The *Yeah* (L4) uttered by Speaker 3 in *Yeah you dip it in the honey* enacts acknowledgement followed by more talk in the speaker's same turn. It exhibits an intention to shift from reciprocity to speakership, a similar observation found in the data of Drummond and Hopper (1993). Like all the *yeah*-instances in Example 10, the other *Yeahs* (L5, 7 and 12) are basically minimal responses to acknowledge the instruction of Speaker 3. In line with the previous observation, these *Yeahs* appear as interrupted utterances but the speaker does not resort to immediate speakership. Interestingly, the last *Yeah* (L14) is embedded in a turn which solely consists of DMs *Oh I see. Oh I see. Yes. Yeah. Mhm.* At the interactional level, this turn acknowledges full comprehension and at the organisational level, it acts as a concluding remark to the whole demonstration procedure. This is consistent with the finding of Jucker and Ziv (1998) that the speaker appears to be expressing a general acknowledgement of the preceding interactive unit.

Marking responses – Agreement

Besides functioning as an acknowledgment token in the above examples, *yeah*, as a minimal response or backchannel, supplies an agreeing response to the prior utterance to create discourse continuity and marks coherence within a turn and between turns. Similar to *OK* and *right*, it can be used to signal agreement on the part of the listener, and validates the information about the world supplied by the other participant (Maschler 1994). The following extract illustrates the usage.

Example 12

- <2> *cos it seems to me actually devastating in a way through his whole attitude.*
<3> *Mm. Yeah. That's why he keeps away from it...*

In the above academic discussion (Example 12), *Yeah* is used by Speaker 3 to organise a positive response towards the proposition of Speaker 2. Similarly, all the four instances of *Yeah* in Example 13 are used in each alternative turn to organise speaker(s)' agreement towards the propositions made by the tutor (Speaker 1). This marks coherence between turns similar to the use of *OK* and *right*.

Example 13

- <1> *That you know we've got there is basically just a dummy sitting in there.*
<2> <03> **Yeah.** <\03> *And that is* <04> <G2> *subject* <\04>
<1> <04> <=> *And some satisfactorily* <|= > <\04> **Yeah.** <=> *But* <|= >
 but just like that.
<2> **Yeah.**
<1> *Indicate that that's* <05> *also subject* <\05>.
<2> <05> **Yeah.** *All right.* <\05> *Okay.*
<1> **Yeah.**

So far we can see from the above analyses that most *yeahs* as agreement or confirmation tokens appear at turn initial and are seldom followed by any extended talk. But it is rather

difficult to decide its specific function and there lies an arbitrary boundary to distinguish *yeah* as a marker for acknowledgment from that of agreement. Finally, there is also observation that *yeah* appears in utterance final but it is a less frequent position.

Example 14

- <1> *Don't forget your research project?*
<?F> *Great.*
<1> *A serious research project **yeah**.*

As a continuer

Similar to the finding from the student data, *yeah* was found to collocate with other DMs to organise response and marks continuation of talk. The following *yeah*, placed at turn initial position and in combination with another DM such as *well*, allows the speaker a time slot or an opportunity to formulate a response and to preserve his speakership. In this case, it no longer appears in isolation but is followed by further talk.

Example 15

- <2> *So I had to sort of rethink how the text could be used with s= with some other framework. Em*
<1> ***Yeah**. Mm. Well a= as I say I'm I'm a bit reluctant...*

Another instance of continuer *yeah* occupying a turn medial position is in Example 16. Speaker 2 is fancying the situation when family members are together enjoying a snow scene outside the window at Christmas. Discourse marker *yeah* is used to qualify proposition within the same speaker turn to reinforce the meaning which is further achieved through the use of another DM *definitely* for affirmative purpose.

Example 16

- <2> *We are get together. I mean like if it snows it's even better cos you can I – just look out the window and let the world go by but **yeah** definitely looking forward to it.*

Example 17

- <1> <G?> *didn't say what he was saying about Darcy yeah cos he's <G?>*
 whenever she is. Em but
<?> <G?> *I can gather it's a bit too much*

In a similar manner, *yeah* in Example 17 also appears in turn medial position and is used as a continuer to qualify upcoming proposition which is immediately introduced by another DM *cos* to give the explanation. Unlike the use of *yeah* to acknowledge and to agree which usually appear singly in turn initial, *yeah* is observed to mark continuation and coherence of speech when it appears within turn.

4.2.2.2.2.3 *Conclusion*

In a nutshell, the finding reveals that the use of *yeah* among non-native students is compatible with the use among native speakers functionally but not quantitatively. However, Hong Kong learners do not use the range of possibilities available with DM *yeah* that English speakers do as a way to exhibit understanding or acknowledgement, or as a continuer of the progress of the primary speaker's turn. Syntactically, the environment in which *yeah* occurs is less varied in the student data than in CANCODE. Functionally, *yeahs* are used in acknowledging, agreeing and continuing. *Yeahs* in the former two usages appear mostly in isolation in turn initial position, whereas the latter use tends to correlate with a turn medial use of *yeah*. This usage also tends to combine with other DMs to emphasise the propositions made in the prior discourse. It provides tentative evidence that the functions of *yeah* tend to correlate with position. So strictly speaking, *yeah* is backward-pointing in its role. But it is evident that *yeah* is employed primarily as a solidarity building device to mark agreement which listener would

reasonably be expected to recognise or agree with and also as a reception marker to mark coherence within turn and between turns.

4.2.2.2.3 *The study of 'you know'*

4.2.2.2.3.1 *Literature review*

I proposed in my earlier framework (Table 3.1) that *you know* as a DM can be principally categorised under the interpersonal and cognitive realms. According to Schiffrin (1987: 274), *you know* marks the information state and displays the speaker as an information provider who depends upon hearer reception of information. Therefore, *you know* is used to 'establish shared knowledge and to gain attention from the hearer to open an interactive focus on speaker-provided information'. In her analysis, *you know* marks not only an informational function, it also has its interactional function. So **interpersonally**, *you know* provides an interactional focus and marks a relational function displaying rapport and marking shared knowledge for the establishment and maintenance of social relations. Support is sought from the work of James (1983) who identifies *you know* as one of the 'compromisers' which carries the interpersonal significance of 'solidarity' or 'affiliation' between interlocutors. Stubbe and Holmes (1996) view *you know* from a sociological point of view and suggest that it reflects the speaker's degree of certainty in relation to the propositional content of an utterance, and conveys affective, addressee-oriented meaning. Moreover, Crystal and Davy (1975) regard *you know* as a 'softening connective' which is echoed by Brown and Levinson (1978) who treat it as a 'hedge' in politeness strategy within a face-threatening act (FTA). It has been argued that in relation to a discussion genre, *you know* serves as a kind of negative politeness strategy to allow the speaker to avoid taking a hard line on a firmly-held opinion or potentially contentious statement, thus facilitating further discussion (Coates 1987). The same thought is shared by Schiffrin (1987: 279) who claims that a speaker uses *you know* to present support for a disputable position as a way of converting an opponent to one's own side. As a positive

politeness strategy, *you know* conveys solidarity and establishes shared understanding with the addressee (Holmes 1993). All these interpretations support my claim that *you know* as a DM is socially-sanctioned, and plays a crucial role in the furtherment of interpersonal rapport between participants in verbal interaction.

Jucker and Smith (1998) regard *you know* as an addressee-centred presentation marker which used to signal the speaker's estimation of how the information may relate to the hearer's cognitive environment. So **cognitively** it is used to create a situation in which the speaker assumes that the hearer shares knowledge of a particular message. This is similar to Schiffrin's (1987) distinction of the informational role of *you know* in spoken discourse which consequentially bears an interactional effect. It has been cited in Holmes (1986) that *you knows* occur more in sustained narratives, but less in the contexts of discussion and argument where there is more speaker change. With a different view, Schiffrin (1987) states that *you know* is often found in argument sequences and in narrative as a subtle means of getting the hearer to admit to the validity of a premise or a set of premises.

The analyses below compare and contrast the functions of *you knows* identified from the student data and the CANCODE data along the interpersonal, cognitive and structural dimensions, a demonstration of the multifunctionality nature of *you know* (Criterion 7) as a criterion for DM status.

4.2.2.2.3.2 *Analysis of functions*

Student Data

Altogether 22 instances of *you know* were identified from the student data. Previous results indicate that the frequency index of *you know* in the pedagogical sub-corpus in CANCODE is 0.38, while the frequency index of *you know* in the student data is 0.16, having a contrastive frequency of -0.22. The pervasive occurrence of *you know* in CANCODE in contrast with the low occurrence in the student corpus suggests a point of interest to investigate the manner in which the usage differs.

A detailed analysis of all the instances of use has shown that sixteen *you knows* fulfilled the criterion as a DM, while six of them did not (Table 4.9) because they were used in their literal sense.

Table 4.9 Frequency of *you knows* in the Student Data

Distinction of <i>You know</i>	Frequency
Discourse marker	16
Non Discourse Marker	6
Total	22

For instance, the following *you knows* (Examples 1-3) functioning as the abbreviated form of ‘*Do you know*’ were excluded from the data.

Example 1

C: *I think Hello Kitty is the best. You know what is Hello Kitty?*
M: *I don’t know.*
(Student corpus 003)

Example 2

B: *Yes good great. Give me five. **You know** you understand?*
K: *Yes.*
(Student corpus 007)

Example 3

S: *Which one?*
 J: Let's have the election. (laughs)
 *M: Which one is popular? **You know**?*
C: *Barbie?*
(Student corpus 003)

Positionally, *you know* appears variably in turn or utterance initial, medial, and final position, demonstrating its flexibility in its syntactic position as a DM (Criterion 1). Results in Table 4.10 indicate that over half of the *you knows* (56.3%) in the student data occur in turn final, 25% in turn initial, and 18.7% in turn medial position.

Table 4.10 Position of *you knows* in the Student Data

Position	Total
Initial	4 (25%)
Medial	3 (18.7%)
Final	9 (56.3%)
Total	16 (100%)

Utterance Initial

Topic marking

Utterance initial position is the second most frequent contextual environment in which *you knows* appear, and it accounts for 25% of the total number of occurrences (Table 4.10) in the student data. Occurring in this position, *you know* functions on the structural realm and performs a topic marking role which introduces a new dimension in the course of discussion. It has been commented by Levinson (1983: 88) that ‘a major function of topic marking is precisely to relate the marked utterance to some specific topic raised in the prior discourse, i.e. to perform a discourse-deictic function’. The discussion in Example 4 is on the topic whether young children are able to make use of computer software. Speaker A later shifts to another related topic, suggesting that computer software is something expensive (L4). Here *you know* is used to introduce a sub-topic relating to the prior discussion. According to Goldberg (1980), *you know* serves to mark moves that introduce or reintroduce a conversational topic. She also argues that *you know* is a linguistic device that contributes to the creation and sustenance of discourse coherence. However, the second *you know*, though occupying an utterance initial position, does not seem to introduce a related topic. Rather, it performs the role of a connective linking up the preceding <reply> act (a suggestion to write an easier program for children (L7) and the subsequent <elaborate> act of emphasising the important role of a programmer in designing easy programs (L8).

Example 4

- 1 A: Software? Do you think the younger children are capable to use
 the software?
 G: Yeah.
 A: To consider the price. **You know** it's very expensive.
5 G: No but eh nearly every every teen has has a computer in their home.

- A: But do you think that they can operate the computer properly?
- G: Eh no but we should can can write the program easier for <reply>
 for them to play. *You know* that depends on the <elaborate>
 programmer, not the player.
 (Student corpus 005)

Utterance Medial

Softening a threat from a FTA

Table 4.10 indicates that the least frequent position for *you know* to occur is in utterance medial position. This accounts for 18.7% of the total number of occurrences in the student data. In this position, *you know* primarily establishes relationship between the preceding and upcoming ideas. Being a connector, a function it performs is to tie to statements that have been contradicted in earlier statements by the addressee (Jucker and Smith 1998: 194) and presents support for a disputable position (Schiffrin 1987: 279).

The two excerpts cited below illustrate the same situation that the speakers want to introduce an idea different from the previous one. Speaker M in Example 5 initially raises the idea that the Hello Kitty cartoon programme is not very popular and then brings in a different claim that Batman is more popular through *you know* in a way to get the addressee to accept the informational content provided as mutual background knowledge. Similarly, speaker L in Example 6 justifies the argument that the price of the toy cannot be too high by saying that it will be a waste if children throw the toy away once they get tired of it. Here, he uses *you know* to appeal to the addressees' interpretative capability in deriving the intended sense (Luke 1990), so that he can avoid taking a hard line in upholding his argument and at the same time inviting the addressees to stand on his side. The significance of this usage is to ensure that the proposition

presented is made prominent not just as an individual calculation but as a jointly constructed position. In both cases, the *you knows* also serve to mitigate the threat from a face-threatening act (FTA) (Brown and Levinson 1978) owing to the introduction of a contrastive idea.

Example 5

M: Which channel?

S: Is ATV or eh?

Together: ATV.

M: But I think but I think eh it's not very popular **you know** ah I think Batman cartoon is more popular.

S: Batman?

M: Yes Batman.

(Student corpus 003)

Example 6

T: Yeh such a such a low price you can't make good [toy

L: [But em do you think
that if the price is too high **you know** that the toy the children play the toy
only one or two year then will throw it away.

(Student corpus 009)

Utterance Final

Marking shared knowledge and checking understanding of the intended message

The majority of *you knows* occur in utterance final position. This accounts for 56.3% of the total number of occurrences (Table 4.10). It was found that *you know* in utterance final position is primarily for checking purpose, with the addresser wanting to get assurance from the addressee that s/he is following the line of communication. Since the preceding information is usually given information, this 'shared knowledge' indicator (Quirk *et al.* 1985, Schiffrin 1987) is interactionally relevant to the process of communication, both textually and interpersonally.

The following two instances of *you know* help to check understanding of the intended message. In Example 7 the first *you know* (L6) is an echo of Speaker J's comment *We can't make profit* (L3) which is referring to the fact that not much profit can be made in manufacturing Sailor Moon. Similarly the second *you know* (L13) is a repetition of the idea of using plastic to manufacture their suggested toy which has been mentioned by Speaker M *OK just plastic* (L10), and also by the speaker himself in the preceding act in the same turn (L12). In this respect, this is in accord with Schiffrin's (1987) view and Erman's (1987) observation that *you know* tends to be used with the presentation of given information or of what the speaker assumes to be known to the addressee, with the speaker assuming that the addressee accepts the information (Erman 1987: ii).

Example 7

- 1 S: Eh 50 yen is better.
Together: Yes yes yes.
J: We can't make profit.
M: 50 yen?
5 J: 50 yen.
S: We can't make profit **you know?**
M: Why not? <challenge>
C: We need to think of our raw materials.
J: Yes if we if we eh use eh VVC to to to to make it...
10 M: OK just plastic.
C: And also [eh (?...)]
J: [Many kind of plastic. Yeah there are many kinds of plastic
you know.
C: I don't think we can eh we can stood the price. <disagree>
(Student corpus 003)

However, in reality the addressee may not always accept the provided information. This is illustrated by the <challenge> act in the interrogative form *Why not?* (L7) by Speaker M, as well as the <disagree> act (L14) by Speaker C who claims that they cannot stand the high cost of manufacturing.

Contrary to the dispreferred seconds after the two *you knows* in Example 7, Example 8 demonstrates a preferred second from the addressee in the form of an <agree> act marked by DM *Yeah* (L5) as a response to the previous <suggest> act followed by *you know*. The use of *you know* here signals a floor-yielding point and seeks to enlist cooperation from the addressee to stand on the same line. This is in line with Östman’s claim (1981) that the speaker strives to get the addressee to cooperate and to accept the propositional content of one’s utterance as mutual background knowledge for the establishment of camaraderie relation between the speaker and the addressee (Östman 1981: 17, 21).

Example 8

- | | | | |
|---|----|---|-----------|
| 1 | S: | <i>The price the price is proportional.</i> | |
| | C: | <i>Depend on... (laughs)</i> | |
| | S: | <i>Depend on the proportional proportional to the labour
force and and and the price of the raw material you know.</i> | <suggest> |
| 5 | C: | <i>Yeah.</i> | <agree> |
- (Student corpus 003)

In sum, the *you knows* appearing in utterance final position among non-native Chinese speakers primarily mark shared knowledge and serve the specific function of checking the addressee’s understanding of the intended message while validating the flow of argument as communication proceeds. Cognitively, *you know* creates a joint focus on the information it frames and points to the speaker’s assumption of acceptance of information by the addressee. This also bears interpersonal significance as *you know* enlists an addressee’s support when agreement of an argument may or may not be expected.

CANCODE

In order to widen understanding towards the usage of DM *you know* which is frequently represented in CANCODE, slightly more instances were examined. A total number of 28 rather than the 16 instances in the Hong Kong data were sampled at random from the pedagogical sub-corpus. A survey of the distribution of these 28 *you knows* paints a different picture. Positionally, Table 4.11 shows that the order of appearance of *you knows* was medial-initial-final, in contrast to the student data in which the order was final-initial-medial (Table 4.10).

Table 4.11 Position of *you knows* in CANCODE

Position	Total
Initial	8 (28.6%)
Medial	15 (50 %)
Final	6 (21.4%)
Total	28 (100%)

Table 4.12 A Comparison of *you knows* in CANCODE and the Student Data

Position	Student Data	CANCODE
Initial	4 (25%)	8 (28.6%)
Medial	3 (18.8%)	15 (50 %)
Final	9 (56.3%)	6 (21.4%)
Total	16 (100%)	28 (100%)

A comparison of the results indicates that in pedagogic discourse, native speakers tend to use more utterance medial *you knows* (50% in Table 4.11), while in the discussion of non-native Chinese speakers, more utterance final *you knows* tend to be used (56.3% in Table 4.12).

Utterance Initial

Turn initiation/attention maintainer

28.6% of *you knows* in CANCODE appear in utterance initial (Table 4.11). The data indicate that when appearing in utterance initial position, *you know* is primarily used to claim the floor and elicit the attention of the hearer, a finding consistent with Halliday (1973). A study of the contextual environment in Example 9 (for reasons of space, only a short extract is cited) indicates that Tutor <2> and Student <1> are having unequal turn length, with the student giving only very brief responses throughout, either in the form of *mm* or just laughter after each lengthy turn by the tutor. Sometimes long pauses are observed in between turns. So it is the tutor who takes up most of the turn (L2-6) where he draws the addressee's attention and initiates the turn with *You know* (L2).

Example 9

- 1 <2> *laughs (long pause)*
 <1> ***You know** you might want to comment things on like like that the word*
 healer they used there or folk em you know. Em (pause) and I suppose the
 other thing sort of things like compounds which are Old English. And the
5 *way prefixes are used to create words. Em (pause) the and so on. So have*
 a look at some of the things that are typical of the period.

A similar usage is found in Example 10 where *you know* is used as a device for turn-initiation. After a small group presentation Speaker <2> is interacting with his fellow

coursemates and initiates the turn with *You know*. Here he is appealing to the listeners over his position – trying not to be sexist or patronising, so as to invite them to stand on his side and view things from his perspective.

Example 10

<2> ***You know** I don't want to be like sexist or anything or+*

<?>

<2> *+or patronising but you know*

Example 11

<1> ***You know** I what you're saying is in respect of the clauses that are controlled we u= we tend to use the reasonableness test. And that's ninety nine per cent true although some clauses might even be outrightly void between business. But more fundamentally what+*

In Example 11 the speakers are in a tutorial discussing the extent to which exemption clauses in business contracts are controlled by the Unfair Contract Terms Act. *You know* initiates a new turn but does not precede any new information. It links up the prior information in the previous turns (for reason of space, the whole exchange is not cited here) with the upcoming information, which is somehow a continuation of the previous discourse.

In all the above examples, *you knows* appearing at turn or utterance initial predominately function on the **structural** realm to claim a turn, to initiate a turn and to continue with a turn so as to gain attention from the hearer and open an interactive focus on speaker-provided information (Schiffrin 1987).

Utterance Medial

The present analysis shows that 50% of the occurrences of *you know* in CANCODE are in utterance medial position (Table 4.11). Drawing insights from the classification of *you know* in Holmes (1986), I distinguish *you know* as a DM performing functions along a continuum in terms of the speaker's certainty towards the propositional meaning received by the addressee. At one end, it indicates that the addressee **does know** the propositional meaning of the speaker, and at the other end, it shows that the addressee **does not know** what is going on. However, sometimes the speaker credits the addressee with the relevant knowledge for the purpose of oiling the wheels of communication.

Claiming mutual knowledge

In Example 12, Tutor <1> is having a tutorial on linguistic analysis. The *you know* in context demonstrates that the listener shares mutual knowledge with the speaker. It is confirmed by Speaker <2>'s response *Yeah* pointing out that the word under discussion is a subject. Here *you know* marks an information state where the propositional content is shared between the speaker and the hearer.

Example 12

- <1> *That **you know** we've got there is basically just a dummy sitting in there.*
<2> *Yeah. And that is subject.*

Attributive function

You know with attributive usage indicates that the speaker is crediting the addressee with relevant knowledge and confidently anticipates agreement with the proposition asserted

(Holmes 1986). However, the addressee may or may not know the proposition of the speaker but only that relevant background knowledge is accredited to the addressee.

Example 13 exemplifies a class presentation situation in which Student <2> is presenting the history of advertising. On the one hand, he is attributing to his audience knowledge about the Pears soap advertisement (L1-2). In this sense, the speaker is expressing his positive politeness towards the audience. On the other hand, Student <2> uses DM *you know* to invite the floor participants to agree to what he has presented, a way to elicit affiliation and support at the interpersonal level.

Example 13

- <2> *laughs. Its like it's like erm I don't know it may be implying that if you haven't used Pears soap **you know** it's not such a good day or something.*
Laughs
<?> *laughs*
<2> *Erm*
<?> *deep and troubled unconscious.*

Similarly, another extract from the same transcript exemplifies the attributive function of *you know* in which the speaker basically regards the addressees as having relevant background knowledge towards the issue addressed. Yet it is not clear whether they have that relevant background knowledge.

Example 14

- <2> *...Erm and I think that the increase in advertising campaigns was a result of the growth in trade rather than erm the industrial revolution **you know** just the growth of factories erm and a few statistics between nineteen fifty one and sixty four the number of television sets owned in Britain rose from one million to thirteen million which is quite a big jump erm so...=*

As a softener

You know has been classified as a ‘softening connective’ which can alter the stylistic force of an utterance (Crystal and Davy 1975). In relation to the information state, the addressee may or may not share the knowledge of the speaker’s proposition. In Example 15, a tutor of a commercial course is confirming with his tutorial group in a seminar the kind of background knowledge they have before going on with their discussion. After making the relevant clarification, the tutor frankly admits that he is not good at computers, and attaches his remark with *you know*. By attributing to the addressee knowledge about his weakness, DM *you know* works as a softener which brings about a mitigating effect on the negative comment in the upcoming proposition. Speaking in such a way, the social distance between the tutor and the student is narrowed.

Example 15

- <1> *Right. I mean I I don’t you know I’m not a computer person so I don’t know anything about it. So what what what’s in there? This I mean what’s*
- <2> *He’s just went through the main sort of clauses like the one that erm for negligence or erm restriction is negligence. And then sort of explained a bit about it and there are a few exercises we can do.*

Marking linguistic imprecision

According to Holmes (1986), *you know* used in this category reflects the speaker’s uncertainty concerning aspects of the linguistic imprecision of the proposition. So *you know* serves ‘as an appeal to the addressee for tolerance while the speaker searches for the appropriate lexical item, introduces more specific and precise information, or recasts the utterance after a false start’ (Holmes 1986: 10). In this respect, *you know* acts as a ‘verbal filler’ (Brown 1977) and allows time for linguistic planning and idea formulation.

Therefore, I would claim that *you know* in this category basically functions on the **cognitive** dimension in search for linguistic precision for the desired proposition.

In the following extract, the speakers are having an academic discussion on plays, and commenting that plays are absurd.

Example 16

- 1 <1> *So is this I mean are you What I was really getting at was was
 how are y= what features do you consider absurd? I mean er **you**
 know y= you're saying You can presumably have some way of
 identifying what you mean by absurd.*
- 5 <2> *Yeah. I've got some sort of quotes but it's its' it's quite a hazy
 area anyway by the sort of books that I've been reading on it.*
- <1> *So are you y= have you got some independent ident= **you know**
 judgement of absurd.*
- <2> *Mm.*
- 10 <1> *You have.*
- <2> *Yeah.*

Here the first *you know* (L2) occupies a medial position preceded by a few fragmented utterances. It is immediately prefaced by another DM *I mean* which serves to make clarification and a vocalisation *er* to denote verbal hesitation. What follows after *you know* is an incomplete word *y=* and a reformulation *you're saying...* With the context surrounding, *you know* indicates a false start and reflects a searching process for a precise linguistic expression for the intended proposition. The effort to search for the desired proposition is witnessed by a change of syntactic structure from *y= you're saying* (L3) to *You can presumably have some way...* (L3-4) showing that a reformulation or a planning process is under way. A similar phenomenon is observed in the second *you know* (L7) with the word *independent* followed by an unfinished word *ident=* complete the proposition of *independent judgement of absurd* (L7-8).

Likewise, *you know* (L4) in Example 17 functions on the cognitive level to denote a false start and a word-searching process. This can be shown by the imprecise linguistic expression *Er well m= in this book em* (L4) preceded *you know* and the change of syntactic structure from *in this book* to *it's on the book list* (L4).

Example 17

- <1> *Well that that's okay cos what she's doing is using this thing from em Berry. I mean she that that That thing in in Burton actually reproduces this thing in Berry. which is (turns pages) basically Here it is. She summarizes. Er well m= in this book em **you know** it's on the book list is this thing but she separates material and mental and relation+*
- <2> *Mhm.*

As a continuer

It was found that another common usage of medial *you know* is as a continuer, serving a discourse marking function on the **structural** realm. This can be seen in the following extract.

Example 18

- <1> *Well come back if if when you've started writing you've got questions either about presentation or **you know** content or **you know** am I saying too much about spelling. A lot of people go to town on spelling. **You know** cut it down if you feel you don't have to talk about every example of a T H.*
- <2> *laughs*

Here, Tutor <1> is advising Student <2> on how to do an essay. Three *you knows* are identified, two being in medial position and one in initial position. Strictly speaking, they can all be regarded as continuers, dispersed throughout the talk to ensure a smooth flow of the conversation. On the discourse organisation level, these continuers perform both the monitoring and turn-holding functions. Further to this, a sense of solidarity is conveyed to the addressee as conversation proceeds.

The above analyses illustrate that the functions of *you knows* in utterance medial position fall onto a continuum, marking the speaker's estimation of the degree of certainty of the addressee towards his/her propositional meaning. The analyses inform a dichotomy of functions performed by medial *you know*, namely, appealing to addressee's mutual knowledge (expressing the addressee's certainty towards the utterance), attributing to the addressee his/her shared knowledge, and acting as a softener (expressing the addressee's lesser degree of certainty towards the utterance). It also serves to mark linguistic imprecision and acts as a continuer. In such a way, *you know* falls on the interpersonal, structural and cognitive categories of my distinction of the core functional paradigm and works either individually or intermingled with other functional paradigms to mark the speaker's stance and intent. For the above analysis, the CANCODE data is seen to contain qualitatively and quantitatively more variety of functions than the non-native student data.

Utterance Final

Boosting the strength of the speech act

Utterance final position is the least frequent contextual environment in which *you knows* occur in CANCODE (21.4% in Table 4.12), in contrast to its top rank position in the student data (56.3% in Table 4.12). It was found that the following two examples yield the same conversational pattern as below:

Old information, you know + simple concluding paraphrase

Example 19

- 1 <1> *Em and you may find a particular passage has something that's interesting. Em (pause) so er*

- <2> *Seems like a mighty task for some reason.*
 <1> *(laughs) Yeah.*
 5 <2> *it's a bit bewildering for me I think because it's all it's all new **you know**. This this is all new.*

Example 20

- 1 <1> *+you used Aeolus right. Now what did did you use it generally just to look at anything to do with commercial law or was it specifically on exemption clauses? Or what? I mean what I just want to get an idea of how much you know about exemption clauses+*
 5 <?> *Yeah.*
 <1> *+as as well as what you've read **you know**. Just what what you've done.*

In Example 19 Student <2> is expressing her difficulty in doing linguistic analysis (L3 and 5) in her essay. An examination of the context reveals that the speaker is seeking emphatic understanding and anticipating agreement from her tutor that it is a difficult task by placing *you know* in utterance final position, and she follows this with a similar paraphrase *This this is all new* (L6) as a concluding point. Hence *you know* at turn final position marks a floor-yielding point.

A similar phenomenon is observed in Example 20 in which a tutor is checking the background knowledge of his class on a certain aspect of commercial study. Here *you know* follows old information and is followed by a simple paraphrase *Just what what you've done* (L6). With the observation of this pattern of *you know* in turn final, I would claim that it serves to boost the strength of the speech act and hence to reassure the hearer concerning the validity of the proposition asserted (Holmes 1986).

4.2.2.2.3.3 **Conclusion**

A comparison of the above analyses yields the following observations:

1. It is apparent that position of *you know* affects DM function. Turn initial position is associated more with functions on the structural realm (topic marking, turn initiation, attention maintainer); whereas turn medial position is associated more with functions on the cognitive realm where an interactional focus on the proposition *you know* frames is created, and the cognitive state of the speaker reflected (indicating the speaker's assumption of the hearer's knowledge of the propositional meaning, marking linguistic precision and reformulation of utterances after a false start). More importantly, *you know* marks an interpersonal function reflecting the shared ideology between speaker and hearer and the speaker's concern to have the proposition asserted accepted by the hearer. Likewise, *you know* at turn final position functions on the interpersonal realm to boost the strength of the speech act and also on the structural realm to mark a floor-yielding point.
2. No great difference is observed when *you knows* are used in utterance initial position. Both sets of data indicate that they serve a discourse-deictic function, marking topic in relation to the prior discourse. Of special relevance to the CANCODE data is its usage as a turn claimer and as an interactive focus to gain attention.
3. Yet there is a marked discrepancy both quantitatively and qualitatively when *you knows* are used in turn medial position. Native speakers tend to use more *you knows* in turn medial position but this is not the case for non-native speakers. What is common in both sets of data is that most speakers tend to use *you know* to appeal to listener's mutual background knowledge so as to invite them to stand on their side, check understanding of the message content and possibly use it as a

softener to mitigate a threat from a face-threatening act (FTA). Besides these functions, CANCODE findings also indicate that native speakers tend to use *you knows* to denote false starts and word-searching processes. Very often native speakers use *you know* as a continuer to keep the conversation going, which is obviously an extremely underrepresented usage in the non-native speakers' speech.

4. Furthermore, it was found that usage for utterance final *you knows* was quantitatively different but was qualitatively more or less comparable in both sets of data. Non-native speakers tend to place more *you knows* in this position and it is comparatively less common in native speakers' speech. Yet the common usage is as a marker to boost the strength of the speech act and also as a floor-yielding device. In both sets of data, old information precedes utterance final *you know*.
5. The current findings show that *you know* conveys interpersonal, structural and cognitive functions in native speaker speech, but only the first two functions are observed in non-native speech. Comparatively speaking, *you know* works predominantly on the interpersonal realm and points to the affective dimension of discourse grammar where maintenance of social relationship takes precedence over information exchange. Structurally, it is used to maintain attention, to claim a turn, to initiate a turn or to continue with a turn. Cognitively, *you know* expresses the speaker's assumption of the speaker's knowledge towards the propositional meanings. It also signals how information may relate to the speaker's cognitive environment, such as marking the speaker's attempt to clarify meanings and denote his/her thinking process in search of linguistic precision.

6. The distributive functions of *you know* as analysed above demonstrate its high probabilistic relationship with the interpersonal function than with the other functions. Since the role of the marker changes as context changes, the functions overlap with one another and make the boundary difficult to define.

4.2.2.3 *Why do they differ?*

How can we account for the scarcity of DMs in Hong Kong students' speech? Students' oral production significantly correlates with the curriculum focus and teachers' attitude, and correspondingly, their use of DMs. First of all, an obvious explanation for the underrepresentation is that the traditional grammar-centred pedagogic focus has been geared towards the literal or propositional meanings of these underused words rather than their pragmatic use in spoken language. Many locally-produced course books claiming to represent the details of English usage are of unsatisfactory quality, focusing primarily on form rather than meaning and use. For example, in the second language classroom, *well* is more frequently emphasised as an adverb meaning 'achieving a high standard' (Example: *He has been doing very well at school*) or 'having something done thoroughly or completely' (Example: *Wash it well before you dry it*). Also its usage as an adjective 'in good health' (Example: *I don't feel well today*) and as a noun referring to 'a hole in the ground where water is taken' (Example: *The well has dried up*) are frequently introduced. Contrarily, the very common usage of *well* in spoken English to indicate one's intention to continue a topic, to change a topic, to make a suggestion, criticism or correction, to express doubt and uncertainty about something that has been said, and to mark other emotional states as amusement, anger or surprise, etc. have rarely been focused upon. With the emphasis of the grammatical status in written mode rather than

its pragmatic use in spoken mode, the pedagogic focus is preparing learners to speak like a textbook rather than speaking naturally. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, the inauthenticity of teaching materials reflects many materials writers' doctrine of linguistic absoluteness, and they are often insufficiently sensitive to differences between registers and between varieties of English. Discourse markers, being interactive devices to organise and manage a spoken discourse, are pervasive in conversational exchanges. A prescriptive view towards language teaching favouring the formal register and overlooking the informal register would only result in an insufficient understanding of conversational devices like DMs, thus resulting in a more restricted and underrepresented usage, both in quantitative and qualitative use. This actually explains why students seldom initiate an utterance with *and* because it has been traditionally regarded as ill-formed, and their preference for a 'more proper' form of acknowledgement *yes* rather than the informal counterpart *yeah*.

Teachers' understanding of what DMs are, their exposure to them and their awareness and attitude towards this kind of discourse marking device is another aspect of determining factor to decide the amount of input students can receive from the classroom. A correct perception of their pedagogic role and their pragmatic value in real life communication can assert their value. Shifting the research focus from students' production to teachers' perspective, the second part of the study explores the attitude of 132 English-medium secondary teachers towards DMs followed by an in-depth study of three of them. Their responses further shed light into our understanding of the use and teaching of DMs in Hong Kong in the light of the globalisation of English.

CHAPTER V LINGUISTIC PROFILE IN HONG KONG

5.0 Introduction

The Part II study is devoted to an attitudinal survey of Hong Kong teachers towards discourse markers which consists of a quantitative and a qualitative survey. This chapter is a background study of the linguistic profile in Hong Kong and discusses the emergence of Hong Kong English. The methodology, results and interpretation of the quantitative study is presented in Chapter VI, whereas the methodology, results and discussion of the qualitative study is reported in Chapter VII.

The history of Hong Kong as a British colony dates from the end of the Opium War in the mid-nineteenth century when Hong Kong Island was ceded. Following the return of sovereignty to China on July 1, 1997, Hong Kong becomes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in which the policy of ‘one country, two systems’ is practised. The present review attempts to outline the linguistic profile and to examine the triglossia phenomenon in Hong Kong against this historical background, with the possible linguistic changes that might accompany the political handover discussed. The examination of two extracts of ICQ exchanges suggests evidence for the emergence of a Hong Kong variety and justifies that the emergence of a distinctive local variety is a natural outcome of linguistic evolution which bears its roots in the local situation as an adaptation of the norms of English to the sociocultural contexts of contemporary spoken Cantonese. All these set the scene for the attitudinal survey in Chapters VII and VIII.

5.1 One Country, Two Systems, Three Languages

Hong Kong is a relatively homogenous community in terms of race. Approximately 96% of the population are Chinese. There are not more than 2% of English-speaking professional expatriates who work in Hong Kong (Scollon and Flowerdew 1997, Bacon-Shone and Bolton 1998). Despite that, Hong Kong is indeed a multinational and multilingual place because there are some expatriate communities and immigrant minorities in the territory, including: Americans, British, Australians and Canadians who are linked to the civil service, business circles and education system; Filipino domestic helpers; as well as a minority of Indian residents and Vietnamese refugees. But a more salient phenomenon is population movements from the surrounding Chinese provinces into the new Special Administrative Region.

Linguistically, Cantonese, which is the indigenous variety of the Canton province, is overwhelmingly the main spoken lingua franca among the Chinese population. In informal communication, Hong Kong people speak Cantonese within the family, with their friends and in other daily exchanges. In formal written domains such as in society and at school, Modern Standard Chinese (MSC) is used. With its wide use at home, in government, in legal and cultural, and especially in entertainment-related domains as the medium of oral communication, Chinese can be seen as the language of solidarity (Cheung 1984), or a powerful symbol of ethnicity (Luke and Richards 1982).

Since 1974, the status of Chinese has continued to rise with the recognition of Chinese as a co-official language. Its status was further consolidated in the Basic Law:

‘In addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislative and judicial organs of the Hong Kong Administrative Region’

(Article 9, The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, 1992).

However, there is no precise definition of what Chinese means in the Basic Law and there are neither any clear stipulations nor recommendations for the future role of Putonghua in Hong Kong. It has been pinpointed by Yau (1992: 16) that Beijing would like to keep the ambiguous element in the term ‘Chinese’ so that there would be more leeway for them in the interpretation and implementation of post-1997 language policy in Hong Kong.

English is widely used in several domains important to Hong Kong, namely, the government, law, business and finance, science and technology, employment, and especially in high paid jobs, and education, all of which are formal contexts. Besides being used in the formal, official domains, English is also used in informal written domains like internal memos and emails. Moreover, the importation of Filipinos into the labour market as domestic helpers has also created a need to use English as the *lingua franca* at home (Tsui and Bunton 2000). The advance of computer technology has created the frequent use of email and ICQ exchanges in informal settings.

The importance of English continues to grow in response to the impact of economic forces which have shaped Hong Kong into an international banking, business and communications centre. Under this socioeconomic situation, the English language possesses strong instrumental value and is transformed from a *colonial language* to a *multinational lingua franca*. As in other multilingual countries, English is undoubtedly

the language of power and prestige, and the language of an exclusive social elite (Cheshire 1991) though it is becoming internationalised. Because of the profound colonial influence, the norm of correct English is inevitably exonormative.

The role of English in Hong Kong in relation to Cantonese has created a diglossia situation. Yet a new linguistic scene has been created since 1997. The PRC has its own standard spoken language, Putonghua, and written language, the Modern Standard Chinese (MSC) which is in simplified characters rather than the traditional form are in use in Hong Kong. With the societal transition from diglossia to triglossia, now the official policy is to promote trilingualism (spoken English, Cantonese and Putonghua) and biliteracy (written Chinese and English). The three languages, in reality, reflect different ways of organising political and economic life. While some local academics like Flowerdew *et al.* (1998) ascertain that the English language still enjoys high esteem, some others (Wright 1996) predict that the linguistic hegemony of English will be diluted in the new political situation and it may become a third language whose functions are restricted to the business and commercial domains.

Table 5.1 provides data on the use of English, Cantonese and Modern Standard Chinese (MSC) on which written Chinese is based (T'sou 1996: 137) amongst the upper middle classes in Hong Kong. In terms of the three domains of family, work and others, the use of MSC was minimal, while Cantonese superseded it by almost three times, and English superseded Cantonese by more than 20%.

Table 5.1 Language Choices - English, Cantonese and Modern Standard Chinese (MSC)

MSC	Cantonese	English	Categories	
2.5 2.7 0.4 2.0 0.5 8.1	3.0	0.6	Family	With children
	3.0	0.2		With parents
	3.0	1.0		With brothers and sisters
	3.0	1.0		With neighbours
		2.8		Newspaper reading
		2.4		Other leisure reading
	3.0	1.3		TV
	3.0	3.0		Movie
		2.7		Personal correspondence
	19	16.2		Subtotal
1.0 1.8 3.0 5.8	1.0	3.0	Work	Formal meeting with colleagues
	3.0	1.1		Informal discussion with colleagues
		3.0		Correspondence
		3.0		Report
		3.0		Reference material
	0.7	3.0		Formal meeting with client
	3.0	0.7		Informal meeting with client
		3.0		Official visitors
		2.6		Notes to subordinate
	0.5			Notes to janitor/messenger
	8.2	22.4		Subtotal
2.1 0.7 2.8		3.0	Others	Appearance in court
	2.3	2.8		Telephone companies
		3.0		Tax office
		3.0		Complaints to government departments
	3.0			Police
	3.0			Public transportation
	3.0			Shopping
	3.0			Restaurant
	1.1	2.8		Popular songs
	0.6	3.0		If and when going abroad
	16.0	17.6		Subtotal
16.7	43.2	56.2	Total	

3 = very frequent use;
0 = not used

5.2 Language Attitudes of Hong Kong Chinese to English

There is a body of significant research on language attitudes. Empirical evidence has indicated a strong positive instrumental orientation to English. For instance, Flowerdew *et al.* (1998) cited a survey conducted among 926 students at City University of Hong Kong about their attitudes towards English (Hyland 1996). It was interesting to note the five attitude statements that were most strongly agreed to:

- ❑ *I wish that I could speak fluent and accurate English.*
- ❑ *I believe I will continue to need good English skills after I graduate.*
- ❑ *The ability to communicate in English is very important for success in my subject at university.*
- ❑ *It is a good thing to have English as one of the official languages of Hong Kong.*
- ❑ *The use of English is one of the most important factors in Hong Kong's prosperity and development today.*

Likewise, research conducted by Tung *et al.* (1997) which explored attitudes of students, teachers and parents towards the medium of instruction has indicated that students and their parents consistently value English over Chinese as a teaching medium for pragmatic reasons, although they agree with the teachers that instruction in Chinese is educationally more effective.

While in the past English might have been perceived as the colonial language imposed by the government, it may no longer be perceived in such a light by the community nowadays. In reality, parents, government, business and educators seem to be at one in their attitudes in promoting and perpetuating the dominance of English in Hong Kong and this has resulted in a group of 'cultural eunuchs' who have insufficient command of literacy in either English or Chinese' (T'sou 1985: 17).

5.3 The Emergence of Hong Kong English

5.3.1 Hong Kong English

The rise of a Hong Kong style of English can in fact, be viewed as a natural outcome of linguistic evolution having its roots in the local situation, with semantic, grammatical and pragmatic features that are internal to the contexts. In the 1980s, researchers like Luke and Richards (1982: 55-56) claimed that there was no such thing as ‘Hong Kong English’ and there was ‘no societal need nor opportunity for the development of a stable Cantonese variety of spoken English’. Along the same line, Tay (1991: 327) echoes that ‘there is no social motivation for the indigenisation of English in Hong Kong. English in Hong Kong has been considered either a learner’s language, a developmental rather than lectal continuum... or is described in terms of a cline of bilingualism’. Basically, the range of English used in Hong Kong is wide, but the depth of language use in the various sectors of society is restricted. Whether or not Hong Kong English has acquired the status as a new variety of English is still debatable, but recent research at least supports the argument that there are distinctive linguistic features like a Hong Kong phonology of English (Hung 2000) and lexis (Benson 2000).

Unlike many other Asian Englishes such as Indian English, Singaporean English and Malaysian English which have been institutionalised, localised and indigenised since they were decolonised, there is basically an absence of any local recognition of Hong Kong English. A great hindrance in the development of a non-native model is noted by Kachru (1983: 39):

‘A variety may exist, but unless it is recognized and accepted as a model it does not acquire a status. A large majority of the non-native speakers of

institutionalised varieties of English use a local variety of English, but when told so, they are hesitant to accept the fact.'

This is much the situation in Hong Kong, as raised by Pang (2003), who argues that English in Hong Kong has been localised to a large extent but it is not yet indigenised. An ideology of linguistic purism dominates Hong Kong society and the local people, government and business circle are in accord in lamenting the fall of standards in English and refuse to admit the existence of a local accent or treat certain local usages as normal or grammatical. So, when making judgements about standards in education, government and business communication, it was the exonormative standard that was referred to and the majority of Hong Kong English teachers still showed a preference for Standard English in formal communication (Tsui and Bunton 2000). A derogatory term 'Chinglish' meaning English sentences containing Chinese syntax or lexical features directly picked up from Chinese is used to describe a Hong Kong style of English 'deviating' from standard English and which may contain interlanguage features.

In justifying Hong Kong English, researchers claim that 'problematic' features identified are not random errors, but systematic and distinctive features resulting from transfer from Cantonese. Therefore, anyone equating this linguistic phenomenon with a decline from an English standard is in fact making an unfair accusation (Bolton 2000). This is supported by Harris (1989) who says that '[i]n the context of English in Hong Kong, if history teaches us anything it is that the "decline" in externally-imposed standards *must* occur if English is to survive in post-colonial Hong Kong.' Therefore, in order to facilitate a nativised English, new 'internal' standards must replace the 'external' norm, and these internal standards must be accompanied by a paradigm shift based on a

pluralistic approach (Kachru 1997b) to demystify the deep-rooted ‘native speaker idealisation myth’, the ‘native speaker vs non-native speaker interaction myth’, the ‘cultural identity (or monocultural) myth’, the ‘exocentric norm myth’, and the ‘interlanguage myth’ (Bolton 2000: 266). If the norm adopted from the colonial power remains unchanged, there will hardly be any space for the development of a local variety.

5.3.2 A New Hybrid Variety of Communication

With the development of computer technology, it is not difficult to discover that a kind of code-mixed and hybrid variety is emerging in Hong Kong: informal ICQ on-line communication. This hybrid variety indicates a highly inventive and dynamic language use and plays an increasingly significant social role among Hong Kong Chinese as a form of group identity. However, it is still a query whether to distinguish this form as ‘standard’ Hong Kong English where the first language is recognisable.

The following extracts are ICQ exchanges of some 2nd year undergraduate students from Hong Kong who are studying at Nottingham University (Appendices 14 & 15). The data were collected in February 2002. They show a mixed form of written English and Chinese, with Cantonese vocabularies and conversational particles ‘romanticised’ into a linguistic matrix of written Hong Kong English (Bolton 2000). The exchanges indicate various degrees of resemblance to Cantonese along the stylistic continuum which includes features of lexical borrowings (*double 2*, *ho charm*, *ng gan yiu la*, *lei dim ar*), code-mixing (*ho ugly ar*, *mut yea is scar?*), Cantonese syntactic structure (*it should be very happy for you*), phonological abbreviations (*u*, *thx*, *how r u?*, *tmr*, *icic*), and

Cantonese discourse markers (*la, ne, lor, ah, ar, wor*) which are used for varying degrees of intimacy and expression of attitudes.

Extract 1 (Appendix 14)

Ann: happy birthday ne
Laura: thank you...hehe...double 2 lar...ho charm
Ann: getting old lor...ai...how are you?
Laura: Thank you for your card wor...which is very nice. I've seen him and my mum for two days in London, we visited some places and took some pictures. Yesterday they went off to the school in Northampton which is further north from London...I think he is ok in there now...my mum now is approaching to the airport back to HK.
Ann: oh.... have good time ne... it should be very happy for you.
Laura: I had a very good time in with them in London but now I am suffering from revising exams....ai...I'm visiting Felix's school after exams...so looking forward... ar..how about u? Have u done something excited?

Keys

ne – Cantonese discourse marker
double 2 – 22 years old
lar – Cantonese discourse marker
ho charm – not good
lor – Cantonese discourse marker
wor – Cantonese discourse marker
u – phonological abbreviation for 'you'

Extract 2 (Appendix 15)

Viki: it's snowing quite strong outside...be careful
Sue: I will, thx
Viki: wei wei...lei dim ar?
Sue: ok la, juz got bk from Amsterdam loh. how r u?
Sue: ok..la...I have 9 tmw ar..
Viki: haha, I have 2-4 ar sooooooooo happy
Sue: che..... anyway...have your rash gone?
Viki: yes, but I have scar oh... ho ugly ar!
Sue: mutt yea is scar?
Vicki: la --- in Chinese
Sue: mutt ar?
Viki: u know when u fall down n have a wound then it heals then u have a mark left?

Sue: *icic...ng gan yiu la...still a pretty girl. haha!!*
 Viki: *hehe, I know!!!!*
 Sue: *anyway I have to take a shower now...cu later*
 Viki: *ok*

Keys

thx – phonological abbreviation for ‘thanks’
wei wei... lei dim ar? – Hi how are you?
la – Cantonese discourse marker
juz – phonological abbreviation for ‘just’
bk – phonological abbreviation for ‘back’
how r u? – phonological abbreviations for ‘how are you?’
ar – Cantonese discourse marker
tmw – phonological abbreviations for ‘tomorrow’
ho ugly – meaning ‘very ugly’
ar – Cantonese discourse marker
mut yea – meaning ‘what’
mut ar? – meaning ‘what’s it?’
icic – phonological abbreviations for ‘I see I see’
ng gan yiu la... – meaning ‘it doesn’t matter’
cu – phonological abbreviations for ‘see you’

The language used in this kind of informal exchange is not necessarily a reflection of a decline in the English standard, but can be viewed as an adaptation of the norms of English to the sociocultural contexts of contemporary spoken Cantonese. The primary intent of this usage is to appeal to and engage readers’ (interlocutors’) involvement through a shared bilingual repertoire. Code-mixing can be seen as a strategy to foreground feelings of friendship, rapport, and intimacy. Also the shifting between English and Cantonese can coincide with changes in speakers’ pragmatic intentions. The examples cited only hint at the numerous patterns of borrowing, mixing and switching occurring in Hong Kong English. This language phenomenon is also observed by Pang (2003: 17) who maintains that Hong Kong English ‘appropriates the English language by absorbing it into their own language through relexification (as evidence in the use of loan words), regrammatisation (as evidence in code-switching) and rediscoursalisation (as

evident in code-switching). He also claims that such language use is not only indicative of an inventive and dynamic culture, but also various pragmatic norms and conventions. A more extensive analysis can detail how pragmatic norms and conventions are conveyed and how interlocutors combine elements of the local vernacular to accomplish their pragmatic ends. Apparently, Hong Kong English is evolving its own distinctive features in response to the needs and motivations of its users, and I anticipate that Hong Kong English will gradually come to be associated more with intimacy, spontaneity and informality, along with its formal use in education, administration and the legal domains.

To be sure, Hong Kong English will be a future development. It will take some time, perhaps a few decades, for the local variety to emerge as foreign influence diminishes. It remains to be seen whether the local features of pronunciation, lexis, grammar and discourse features which have become common are no longer construed as errors, but have become legitimised and institutionalised features of Hong Kong English. So in terms of status, it is still not recognised, and its attainment of public status will, of course, be closely connected with its particular linguistic functions. This rests on the future policies of the Beijing and Hong Kong SAR governments, and on the development of a Hong Kong identity, all of which are far from predictable.

Hong Kong is now in a transitional stage of adjusting to a new political regime in which Cantonese, English and Putonghua are competing discourses. Sociopolitical change and the pressure of economic and political forces play a significant role in shaping the future linguistic scene of Hong Kong. However, the complexity and uniqueness of the current linguistic situation can be summarised as follows:

‘Two H languages are in competition: Mandarin is evolving into a more powerful position politically but the difficulties of becoming literate in it compared to English confuse the issue; English has lost its political ascendancy but retains the advantages of being the lingua franca of much international commerce, of being the medium of many exchanges in the new global information society as well as being reasonably easy to acquire.’

(T’sou 1996: 112)

It is a linguistic challenge for Hong Kong learners to acquire biliteracy and trilingualism, and for educationalists and the public at large, to recognise and accept the emergence of a local variety of English.

CHAPTER VI QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the aims of the Part II study, the methodology used and reports the responses from 132 EMI (English as medium of instruction) Hong Kong English teachers concerning the use and teaching of discourse markers. The study aims to explore the teachers' opinions towards the pragmatic value of discourse markers, and hence, their pedagogic value. It incorporates a discussion of the necessity for non-native speakers to follow the native speaking norm, and pedagogic practice related to the representation of discourse markers in the second language classroom.

In general, Part II seeks to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the role and usage of discourse markers in the curriculum? Do teachers perceive that their students can understand a spoken discourse better with knowledge/awareness of discourse markers?
2. To what extent should discourse markers be represented in the teaching of spoken discourse, as a reception clue or a production agent, or both?
3. Do teachers expect their students to be taught to speak like a native? Are they exonormative or endonormative regarding the speaking norm?

6.1 Methodology

6.1.1 Design

The Part II survey aims at understanding the teachers' thoughts, perceptions, knowledge and experiences related to and arising from DMs through a 2-stage methodology design in which quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The first part is a quantitative measurement based on scales composed of forty-eight standardised questionnaire items. The quantitative study is then supplemented by a semi-structured in-depth interview of three teachers who had filled in the questionnaire in order to add depth and details to the quantitative results. The second part is confirmatory and elucidating in nature. There are several benefits of linking qualitative and quantitative analyses together. Firstly, while the quantitative component serves to map out the general pattern of the respondents' attitudinal profile and provide a broad picture of the perception of the teachers, the qualitative component helps to fill out the meaning of the global patterns and elaborate responses in a more in-depth manner. Secondly, a combination of both methodologies could reveal potential contradictions in teachers' beliefs, and the areas in which teachers need further clarification and support. The two-stage design is intended to enhance the validity and credibility of the overall analysis, precisely by producing data on different aspects of the research questions concerned, to build up a rounded and credible overall picture (Mason 1995, Patton 2001). I will turn to a detailed discussion of the methodology in Section 7.1.1.

6.1.2 Participants

A total of 456 questionnaires were mailed out from the University of Nottingham to the principals of all the 114 'English as the medium of instruction' (EMI) secondary schools

in Hong Kong. Each school received 4 questionnaires and the principals were invited to select randomly 4 senior form teachers teaching English in Form 4-5 (Grade 10-11) and A-Level grade to complete the questionnaires. The present research aims at focusing on this group of English teachers and investigates their attitudes towards the linguistic and pedagogic roles of DMs, taking into consideration factors like the gender, mother tongue, language expertise and teaching experience of the subjects concerned. The study explores any significant differences statistically. In order to conceal their identities, the respondents were not required to fill in their names in the questionnaires, except those who were willing to take part in a later interview.

Table 6.1 shows the demographic background of the subjects sampled and includes information about their gender, nationality, first language, teaching experience, ELT training and the language expertise of the respondents. These characteristics are reported in terms of percentages.

As mentioned above, the subjects were senior form English teachers from all the EMI secondary schools in Hong Kong. With all the 132 returned questionnaires, 82.6% of the subjects are females and 17.4% are males. Most are local teachers (81.8%), with the rest of them mainly native speakers of English from UK (6.1%), Canada (3.0%), Australia (1.5%), USA (1.5%), India (1.5%), New Zealand (0.8%), Malaysia (0.8%) and elsewhere (3.0%). As far as their first language is concerned, 77.3% are Cantonese speakers, while 18.2% are English speakers and a minority of 4.5% speak other languages as their first

Table 6.1 Demographic Background of the Subjects Sampled

Characteristics		Percentages
<i>Gender</i>	Female	82.6%
	Male	17.4%
<i>Nationality</i>	Hong Kong	81.8%
	UK	6.1%
	Canada	3.0%
	Australia	1.5%
	USA	1.5%
	India	1.5%
	New Zealand	0.8%
	Malaysia	0.8%
	Others	3.0%
<i>First Language</i>	Cantonese	77.3%
	English	18.2%
	Others	4.5%
<i>Years of Teaching</i>	1-4	14.4%
	5-9	25.8%
	Over 10	59.8%
<i>ELT Training</i>	Yes	93.9%
	No	6.1%
<i>English/English-related Subject as a First Degree</i>	Yes	77.1%
	No	22.9%
<i>TESL/TEFL as a Master's Degree</i>	Yes	23.8%
	No	76.2%

language. Nearly 60% are ³experienced teachers of English who have taught English for over 10 years. 25.8% have five to nine years' teaching experience and 14.4% are young teachers who have taught English for less than four years. Most of the subjects had received ELT training (93.9%), and only 6.1 % have not been trained. As far as their qualification or expertise is concerned, 77.1% had English or an English language-related subject as the first degree, and 23.8% possessed a master's qualification in TESL/TEFL. 84.1% take up over 17 periods of English lessons every week. In sum, the figures reveal that the subjects are predominantly female, non-native speakers of English who are experienced, trained and well-qualified English teachers in Hong Kong. Since all the EMI schools are subject to the streaming policy of the Education Department, where students with a good command of English and good academic performance are allowed to study all subjects in English except the Chinese language and Chinese history, the respondents in fact represent teachers of this batch of elite pupils in the territory.

Moreover, usually the most experienced and well-qualified teachers are assigned to teach senior classes in Hong Kong. I believe that the attitudes of this group of teachers not only significantly reflect the mindset of teachers from the local context, but also provide bearings to a 'maximum' limit where they perceive the capability of their pupils in comprehending and acquiring DMs in classroom instruction.

³ By teaching experience, teachers who have been teaching for 1-4 years are regarded as 'young' teachers, those with a teaching experience of 5-9 years are regarded as 'fairly experienced', and those who have taught over 10 years are regarded as 'experienced' teachers.

6.1.3 Materials

The materials were developed in four stages as below:

1. In October 2000, a preliminary draft questionnaire (Appendix 16A) containing 60 items was developed.
2. The draft questionnaire was then sent to 20 teachers, teacher trainers in Nottingham and Hong Kong who are current ELT practitioners from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and England at either secondary or tertiary level. They were invited to complete the questionnaire and give comments regarding the strength and shortcomings of the questionnaire design, in particular to the individual items.
3. The draft questionnaire was revised and modified based on comments from the various teacher trainers and practitioners. Along with the four sets of revised questionnaires were four individual letters to the subjects concerned (Appendix 16B) and a letter of introduction to the principals (Appendix 17), stating the purpose of the research and indicating anonymity and confidentiality of the responses. They were formally mailed out in January 2001. Stamped, self-addressed envelopes were attached which allowed 4 weeks for teachers to return the questionnaires. The Teachers' English Language Education Centre (TELEC), at the University of Hong Kong, was used as the collection point of the questionnaires in Hong Kong.
4. A reminder (Appendix 18) was sent to all the principals a week prior to the deadline. By the end of March, a thank you letter (Appendix 19) was sent to all the principals and teachers concerned as a last attempt to boost the response rate.

The questionnaire begins with five comprehensive short extracts chosen from CANCODE to define the form and role of DMs (refer to Appendix 16A). This can help to illustrate in a preliminary way what DMs are in the present survey. Out of the sixty items developed, a final forty-eight items were adopted after the piloting trial.

All the items were in the form of a 5-point Likert scale where teachers indicated their favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards the statements addressed. The scales were anchored at one end by ‘strongly agree’ and at the other end by ‘strongly disagree’, with a mid-3 score expressing uncertainty towards the statement. The questions were pre-coded from 1-5. For those positively worded statements, a high score reflects strong endorsement of an attitude statement, while a low score reflects weak endorsement. The following is an example:

Item 30 Students should be taught how native speakers use DMs and follow their way of using them. (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree)

Contrary to this, scores were reversed prior to the calculation of those negatively worded statements. In this case, a high score reflects weak endorsement of a negatively-worded attitude statement, while a low score reflects strong endorsement:

Item 23 DMs are only small words in conversation and it is not worth the time to teach them (5=strongly disagree, 1=strongly agree)

The whole questionnaire focuses on the linguistic, pedagogic and cultural aspects of the use of DMs. In order not to invoke bias from the teachers concerned, the questionnaire does not show the score that goes with each item.

In the first section, 14 items were constructed to tap the teachers' general attitude towards the use and the role of DMs. Two spoken texts were selected from CANCODE, one from an interview and another from an informal meeting in an educational publisher's office. They were both marked as the 'original scripts' and put side by side with the 'revised scripts' in which all the discourse markers from the original texts were deleted. However, it must be noted that the sample scripts from CANCODE were slightly modified, to the extent that the new edition looks tidier with less syntactic fragments. This might alleviate some of the difficulties non-native teachers encounter in tackling 'real' data, and open to them the possibility of introducing this kind of language data to advanced language learners in senior forms. The task for the teachers is to study and compare the effects DMs have on the spoken exchanges when they are present and when they are omitted.

The second section deals with the general attitudes of teachers towards the teaching of DMs in Hong Kong in general. Issues like the representation of DMs in teaching materials and their teaching, the pedagogic needs, the teaching priority of incorporating DMs as a speaking and listening skill, and their attitude towards native and local usages are explored. The last section contains 9 multiple choice demographic questions which were used to elicit the background information of the subjects.

6.1.4 Methods

Likert -point scale

The Likert-type attitude scale was adopted to be the method to elicit teachers' attitudes as it plays a significant role in revealing teacher belief (Karavas-Doukas 1996: 194). An

attitude scale is basically a crude measuring device, consisting of a number of statements to which the respondent must express his or her degree of agreement or disagreement, which places the responses on a continuum from least favourable to most favourable. The higher the score, the more favourable the respondent's attitude towards the statement. It is a good method with which to measure the weight of their overall attitude through the summation score. The Likert scale can open up to respondents some alternatives and avoids introducing bias by forcing them to choose between 'yes' or 'no'. However, a limitation of the Likert-scale is the difficulty it poses in establishing a neutral point on the scale. Therefore, interpretation of results in relation to the teachers' belief has taken into account the standard deviation of the score range, as illustrated in Section 6.3.3.2.

Response rate

Altogether 456 questionnaires were sent out and 132 were returned, with a return rate of nearly 29%. This modest overall response rate is not unusual for mailed questionnaires in social science research. Possible reasons for the low response rate were that with the enforcement of mother tongue teaching in Hong Kong since 1997, this batch of EMI schools, being the target of many research studies, have to respond to researchers from different sources and they are also under close supervision of the Education Department. Tremendous workload brought about by the transition of the educational scene after 1997 also possibly affects the response rate.

Statistical analyses

Statistical analysis of the survey data was carried out using the computer program SPSS v 10.0.5 for Windows. Methods used in this study include reliability analysis and factor

analysis. The former method groups different items together by conceptual thinking, while the latter achieves this through mathematical calculation. The strength of applying the two methods lies in mapping the reliability of different groups of items with the factor solution as a means to counter-check categorisation of items. Further to this, t-test was computed for mean comparison in single independent variables (native/non-native distinction, gender, teaching experience, language expertise).

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Cronbach Alpha Reliability

First of all, Cronbach alpha was performed on all the 45 items (excluding Items 9, 19 and 32 which did not correlate highly with other items) to check the internal consistency. The reliability of each subsection, as well as the overall reliability was calculated. The questionnaires produced Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.61 to 0.89, with an overall good reliability of 0.83.

- Q1-14

Linguistic value ($\alpha=0.79$)

14 items were used to tap the use and role of DMs played in spoken texts. Item 9 was not counted in the calculation because of its weak correlation with the rest of the items.
- Q15-19

DM representation in reality ($\alpha=0.74$)

4 items were used to assess the teachers’ perception of the representation of DMs in teaching materials (2 items) and in their own teaching (2 items). Item 19 which evaluated students’ use of DMs, was not counted in the final calculation because of its weak correlation with the other items.
- Q20-29, 33

Pedagogic relevance ($\alpha=0.89$)

The instrumental value of DMs was assessed through 10 items. 9 items were set on the desirability, teachability and the pragmatic value of DMs. Item 33 investigated teachers' attitudes towards the suitable level at which DMs should be taught.

Q30-31,
40-42, 46

Integrative value ($\alpha=0.80$)

The integrative value of DMs was evaluated using 6 items.

Q34-39

Attainment level expected ($\alpha=0.64$)

The attainment level of DMs expected from students were evaluated using 6 items, exploring if DMs should be taught mainly as a listening skill or as a speaking skill as well.

Q43-48

Cultural and psychological aspects ($\alpha=0.61$)

6 items were used to explore teachers' attitudes towards the recognition and adoption of a local use of DMs.

6.2.2 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is 'a set of statistical procedures used to explore the underlying variance structure of a set of correlation coefficients.' (Brown 2001). In the present study, this method was used to help determine the degree to which all the 45 variables could be reduced to a smaller set. On top of the 45 items, 9 multiple choice questions were set to elicit the background information of the subjects, which were grouped as 5 independent variables for further analysis.

In running factor analysis, first of all, a matrix of correlation was generated for all the 45 items. All the variables which had correlation coefficients greater than 0.3 were included in the present analysis. Only Items 9, 19 and 32 were dropped from the data set since they did not correlate with any of the variables. In fact Item 19 was used to illustrate students' production in Section 4.1. The ⁴KMO value at 0.76 suggests that the items are suitable for factor analysis. Thereafter, I applied the SPSS Principal Factor extraction, followed with Varimax rotation to correlate the responses with the items. The Scree test proposed by Cattell (1966, cited in Kinnear 1999) was then used to decide the number of factors to be extracted.

As indicated in Figure 6.1, the plot depicts a break between the steep slope of the initial factors and the gentle one at the seventh factor. Therefore, with this application a seven-factor solution was yielded which accounts for 51.7% of all the variance and the solutions all had an eigenvalue greater than one. Since the overall factor loading was high, only items with a factor loading greater than 0.39 are presented (Table 6.3). If a factor loading greater than 0.39 loads on more than one component (like Items 7, 27, 28, 41 and 45), then the categorisation of these components to a particular factor is either based on the highest loading they fall onto or according to the most natural and appropriate interpretation of that component based on judgment.

⁴ In assessing whether a set of variables in a correlation matrix is suitable for factor analysis, one of the statistics is called KMO which ranges from 0-1. If the statistic is above 0.7, then the correlations on the whole are sufficiently high to make factor analysis suitable.

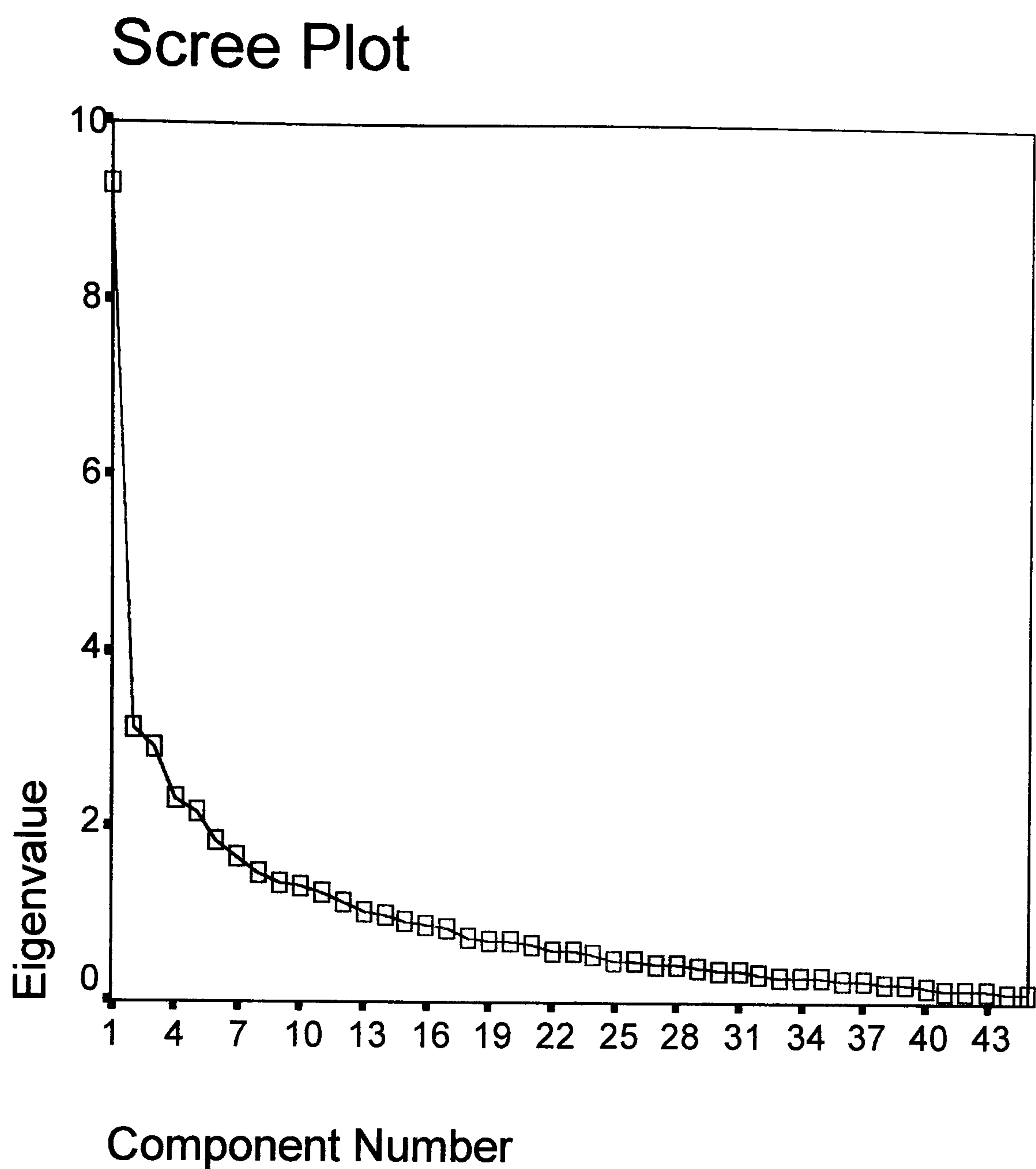


Figure 6.1 The Scree Plot

Table 6.2 shows descriptive statistics of the 45 questionnaire items, with the maximum and minimum item scores rated by the teachers on a 5-point scale and their mean and standard deviation indicated. Table 6.3 contains the seven factor loadings of the teacher responses after Varimax rotation. For easy reference, all the factor loadings smaller than 0.39 were suppressed. Table 6.4 groups all the items into their corresponding factors, with their mean scores, standard deviation and factor loadings illustrated.

Table 6.2 Descriptive Statistics of the 45 Questionnaire Items

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	132	2	5	4.33	.66
Q2	132	2	5	4.21	.76
Q3	132	2	5	4.36	.63
Q4	131	1	5	3.69	.99
Q5	132	1	5	3.27	1.06
Q6	131	1	5	2.53	.98
Q7	132	1	5	3.61	.91
Q8	132	1	5	3.27	1.08
Q10	130	1	5	2.27	.80
Q11	129	2	5	3.22	.96
Q12	132	1	5	4.06	.77
Q13	132	1	5	2.50	.88
Q14	132	1	5	3.71	.89
GAP15	132	1	5	3.15	1.12
GAP16	132	1	5	3.28	1.12
GAP17	132	1	5	3.02	1.06
GAP18	132	1	5	2.92	1.10
NEED20	132	1	5	3.92	.77
NEED21	132	1	5	3.53	.89
NEED22	131	1	5	3.95	.74
NEED23	132	1	5	3.86	.81
NEED24	132	2	5	3.90	.70
NEED25	132	2	5	3.98	.72
INSTRU26	132	1	5	3.77	.83
INSTRU27	132	1	5	3.67	.93
INSTRU28	132	2	5	3.83	.85
INSTRU29	132	2	5	4.02	.81
INTG30	132	1	5	3.70	.84
INTG31	132	1	5	3.05	1.09
LEV33	132	2	5	3.58	.85
ATT34	132	1	5	2.47	.86
ATT35	132	1	5	2.74	.91
SAME36	132	1	5	2.27	.76
DELAY37	132	1	5	2.88	.92
FREE38	131	1	5	3.07	1.02
COMM39	132	2	5	3.48	.94
REAL40	132	1	5	2.70	1.03
US41	132	1	5	2.71	.85
UK42	132	1	5	3.05	.86
WRONG43	132	1	5	3.07	.93
HKUSE44	130	1	5	3.11	.91
ACCEP45	130	1	5	3.87	.71
JUST46	132	1	5	3.04	1.01
EXPOS47	132	1	5	3.82	.81
NATIVE48	132	1	5	3.40	.93
Valid N (listwise)	120				

	Table 6.3 The 7-Factor Loadings after Varimax Rotation						
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
NEED23	.713						
NEED25	.686						
NEED20	.670						
NEED22	.648						
NEED24	.636						
NEED21	.589						
FREE38	-.522						
LEV33	.510						
COMM39	-.408						
REAL40		.735					
INTG31		.718					
JUST46		.702					
INTG30		.625					
UK42		.606					
US41		.536					.416
INSTRU27	.413	.424					
INSTRU29			.654				
Q2			.591				
Q3			.541				
INSTRU28	.451		.540				
Q7			.509		.432		
Q1			.496				
Q12			.408				
INSTRU26			.399				
Q13				.737			
Q10				.674			
Q5				.639			
Q14				.549			
Q6				.546			
Q4				.522			
Q11				.459			
Q8				.455			
GAP16					.732		
GAP15					.724		
GAP18					.680		
GAP17					.595		
ATT35						.754	
DELAYS37						.664	
SAME36						.642	
ATT34						.391	
HKUSE44							.728
NATIVE48							.646
WRONG43							.595
ACCEP45			-.417				.501
EXPOS47							.464

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 6.4 An Analysis of Teachers’ Attitudes Towards the Use and Teaching of Discourse Markers in Upper Secondary English Medium Instruction Schools in Hong Kong

Item no.	Statements	Mean (St. Dev.)	Factor loadings
<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Pedagogic value of DMs</i>		
23	DMs are only small words in conversation and it is not worth the time to teach them.	3.86 (.81)	.713
25	DMs are redundant and sub-standard features in speech and there is not much teaching value.	3.98 (.72)	.686
20	It is necessary to create and develop linguistic awareness of DMs and promote proficiency in the actual use of them.	3.92 (.77)	.670
22	Students should be helped to exploit DMs to improve their speaking and listening skills.	3.95 (.74)	.648
24	DMs do not carry specific meaning and there is not much teaching value.	3.90 (.70)	.636
21	There is no need to promote spontaneous understanding of DMs as a fluency device in spoken language.	3.53 (.89)	.589
38	Students should be left at their discretion to learn to speak with DMs in the future when other interaction opportunities arise.	3.07 (1.02)	-.522
33	It is an appropriate time to highlight DMs in spoken text at upper secondary level.	3.58 (.85)	.510
27	It is important for students to learn to incorporate DMs in their speech which is an essential speaking skill for the public oral examination.	3.67 (.93)	.413
39	My students do not need to speak with DMs as frequently as most native speakers do, but only need to progress to a speaking proficiency level capable of fulfilling their communicative purpose.	3.48 (.94)	-.408
<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Identification with the native speaker norm</i>		
40	It is realistic to require my students to use DMs like native speakers of English.	2.70 (1.03)	.735
31	Students should be taught to speak like a native in order to be a member of the local English speaking elites.	3.05 (1.09)	.718
46	It is justifiable to require my students to use DMs like native speakers of English.	3.04 (1.01)	.702
30	Students should be taught how native speakers use DMs and follow their way of using them.	3.70 (.84)	.625
42	The British way of using DMs should serve as a model for my students.	3.05 (.86)	.606
41	The American way of using DMs should serve as a model for my students.	2.71 (.85)	.536
<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Pragmatic value of DMs</i>		
29	Students can understand native speakers better in their future workplace if they know what DMs are.	4.02 (.81)	.654
2	Knowledge of DMs helps processing information in listening.	4.21 (.76)	.591
3	DMs can display to listeners the speakers’ attitude.	4.36 (.63)	.541
28	Students can follow a university lecture better in the future, especially those conducted by native speakers, if they know the meanings DMs point to.	3.83 (.85)	.540
7	The sequence of the speakers’ mental thoughts can be displayed clearly through DMs.	3.61 (.91)	.509
1	DMs can oil the wheels of communication.	4.33 (.66)	.496
12	Showing responses with DMs can yield a softening and facilitative effect on talk.	4.06 (.77)	.408
26	Students can benefit in public examinations, especially in listening comprehension, if they know what DMs are.	3.77 (.83)	.399

Item no.	Statements	Mean (St. Dev.)	Factor loadings
Factor 4	<i>Dispensable value of DMs</i>		
13	Without DMs, the conversations are still coherent and interpretable.	2.50 (.88)	.737
10	I can still understand the conversations using other linguistic clues rather than referring to the DMs.	2.27 (.80)	.674
5	DMs do not necessarily help to orientate the listener to the overall idea structure and sequence in talk.	3.27 (1.06)	.639
14	DMs appear to be redundant in the conversations.	3.71 (.89)	.549
6	It is still an effective listening strategy for listeners to focus closely on the key words in talk without referring to DMs.	2.53 (.98)	.546
4	DMs are not very useful devices to guide listeners to understand the conversations.	3.69 (.99)	.522
11	DMs do not necessarily help to signal relationships between ideas in talk.	3.22 (.96)	.459
8	Without DMs, the conversations become bitty and incoherent.	3.27 (1.08)	.455
Factor 5	<i>Representation of DMs in the ELT classroom</i>		
16	DMs have been presented as a speaking skill in most oral materials I am using for my students.	3.28 (1.12)	.732
15	DMs have been presented as a listening skill in most listening materials I am using for my students.	3.15 (1.12)	.724
18	I always highlight DMs in listening lessons.	2.92 (1.10)	.680
17	I always highlight DMs in oral lessons.	3.02 (1.06)	.595
Factor 6	<i>Prioritising teaching of DMs for receptive purpose</i>		
35	At secondary level, we should prioritise teaching students to learn DMs mainly for listening purpose.	2.74 (.91)	.754
37	DMs as an aspect of speaking skill should be delayed until awareness of DMs as a listening skill has been grasped.	2.88 (.92)	.664
36	DMs as a linguistic device for both listening and speaking purposes should be introduced at the same time at secondary level.	2.27 (.76)	.642
34	It is too ambitious to expect students to learn DMs for both listening and speaking purposes at secondary level.	2.47 (.86)	.391
Factor 7	<i>Acceptance of the local usage</i>		
44	We should respect and accept a Hong Kong style of using DMs.	3.11 (.91)	.728
48	It is not necessary to stick to the native speaker norm of using DMs because English language teaching should seek relevance to local culture while trying to enable global transaction.	3.40 (.93)	.646
43	It can be regarded as a wrong usage when Hong Kong learners use DMs differently from native speakers.	3.07 (.93)	.595
45	We should help students to recognise and accept different national and regional uses of DMs.	3.87 (.71)	.501
47	It is necessary to expose students to different varieties of using DMs for purpose of comprehension, though not of production.	3.82 (.81)	.464

- Notes
- Only items with factor loadings greater than 0.39 are shown in the table. The statements are ordered within each factor according to the magnitude of factor loadings.
 - The mean score was calculated on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5).
 - Scores for negatively-worded statements are reversed, that is, ‘strongly disagree’ (5) and ‘strongly agree’ (1).

As observed from Table 6.4, Factor 1 receives appreciable loadings from ten variables. This factor corresponds to the pedagogic orientation of DMs in relation to its linguistic value. Therefore, it is best labelled as reflecting the **pedagogic value of discourse markers**. The teachers in the study mostly disagree that *DMs are only small words in conversation and it is not worth the time to teach them* (Item 23 mean=3.86, 5=strongly disagree) and that *DMs are redundant and sub-standard features in speech and there is not much teaching value* (Item 25 mean=3.98, 5=strongly disagree). Likewise, they also disagree that *DMs do not carry specific meaning and there is not much teaching value* (Item 24 mean=3.90). On the contrary, they mostly specify that students should be helped to exploit DMs to improve their speaking and listening skills (Item 22 mean=3.95, 5=strongly agree), and also to create and develop linguistic awareness of them (Item 20 mean=3.92). They ranked it important for students to learn to incorporate DMs in their speech as an essential skill for the public oral examination (Item 27 mean=3.67). To the extent of the strong consensus towards the teaching value of discourse markers, the results indicate an apparent contradiction. This is shown in Item 39 *My students do not need to speak with DMs as frequently as most native speakers do, but only need to progress to a speaking proficiency level capable of fulfilling their communicative purpose* (mean=3.48, 5=strongly agree). An ambivalent attitude is shown in Item 38 *Students should be left at their discretion to learn to speak with DMs in the future when other interaction opportunities arise*, with its mean falling on the uncertain level (mean=3.07). That explains the negative factor loadings with regard to these two items. Despite that, it is clear that the teachers favour teaching discourse

markers at upper secondary level as indicated in Item 33 (mean=3.58, 5=strongly agree).

Factor 2 receives strong loadings from six variables which focus on identification with the native speakers' use of discourse markers. The factor is therefore labelled as **identification with the native speaker norm**. The factor loading indicates a tendency for teachers to adopt an exonormative speaking model. The subjects take quite a strong view that *Students should be taught how native speakers use DMs and follow their way of using them* (Item 30 mean=3.70, 5=strongly agree). However, they hold a less consistent and definite view that *Students should be taught to speak like a native in order to be a member of the local English speaking elites* (Item 31 mean=3.05). While showing uncertainty in Item 46 that *It is justifiable to require my students to use DMs like native speakers of English* (mean=3.04), they do not agree that *It is realistic to require my students to use DMs like native speakers of English* (Item 40 mean=2.70). This indicates that, while justifying the claim to learn to speak like a native speaker, the teachers are fully aware that it is something nearly impossible to attain. Nevertheless they express uncertainty over which native speaker variety should be adopted in the Hong Kong classroom as the speaking model for Hong Kong students. They are uncertain whether the British model should be adhered to (Item 42 mean=3.05, 5=strongly agree), but definitely disagree that the American way of using DMs should serve as the model for their students (Item 41 mean = 2.71). In essence, while confirming most teachers' orientation for an exonormative speaking model, they tend to

vacillate between the justification for this rationale and the reality of adopting the native speaker norm as the speaking model.

Factor 3 is defined by eight items, suggesting that knowledge of discourse markers is related to success in communication, in workplace and in academic setting where there are native speakers. Therefore, this factor represents the **pragmatic value of discourse markers**. There is a consensus towards this factor as indicated by the magnitude of the standard deviations of the item responses, which just narrowly ranges from 0.63-0.91. On the linguistic side, teachers agree that DMs can display to listeners the speakers' attitude (Item 3 mean=4.36, 5=strongly agree), oil the wheels of communication (Item 1 mean=4.33), help to process information in listening (Item 2 mean=4.21), yield a softening and facilitative effect on talk (Item 12 mean=4.06), as well as displaying the sequence of a speaker's mental thoughts (Item 7 mean=3.61). On the pedagogic side, with the knowledge and awareness of what discourse markers are, students can understand native speakers better in their future workplace (Item 29 mean=4.02), follow a university lecture better in the future, especially those conducted by native speakers (Item 28, mean=3.83) and succeed in public examinations, especially in listening comprehension (Item 26 mean = 3.77).

Factor 4 indicates significant loadings from another eight items which attempt to investigate the usefulness of DMs in a negative way, therefore reflecting the **dispensable value of discourse markers**. While the pragmatic values of DMs from both the linguistic and pedagogic dimensions are asserted in Factor 3, Factor 4 shows a

tendency that discourse markers are dispensable. On the one hand, figures reveal in Item 6 *It is still an effective listening strategy for listeners to focus closely on the key words in talk without referring to DMs* (mean=2.53, 1=strongly agree), in Item 13 *Without DMs, the conversations are still coherent and interpretable* (mean=2.5, 1=strongly agree), and in Item 10 *I can still understand the conversations using other linguistic clues rather than referring to the DMs* (mean=2.27, 1=strongly agree) suggest the subsidiary role discourse markers play in a spoken discourse. On the other hand, consistent with the highly important role of discourse markers perceived by the teachers in Factor 1, they do not agree that DMs are redundant in the conversations (Item 14 mean=3.71, 5=strongly disagree) and that DMs are not very useful devices in guiding listeners to understand the conversations (Item 4, mean=3.69, 5=strongly disagree). They also do not accept that DMs neither help to orientate the listener to the overall idea structure and sequence in talk (Item 5 mean=3.27, 5=strongly disagree), nor help to signal relationships between ideas in talk (Item 11 mean=3.22, 5=strongly disagree). Similarly, they endorse the view that conversations would become bitty and incoherent without DMs (Item 8 mean=3.27, 5=strongly agree). Therefore, the attitude that DMs are dispensable yet important is affirmed by these findings.

Factor 5 indicates four variables which reflect the representation of discourse markers in the present teaching context in upper secondary schools in Hong Kong, both in terms of the listening and speaking materials the subjects are using for their students and their actual teaching. Therefore, this factor is labelled as the **representation of discourse markers in the ELT classroom**. The wide variation in the standard deviations of the

item response (1.06-1.12) shows a less consistent view over this issue. The result indicates that the teachers are not quite certain if DMs have been presented as both a speaking and a listening skill in most oral and listening materials they have been using for their student (Items 16 & 15, mean=3.28 & 3.15, 5=strongly agree). But comparatively speaking, they are even less certain that they have highlighted DMs in their oral and listening lessons (Item 17 & 18, mean=3.02 & 2.92). In contrast to the consistently high evaluation of the linguistic and pedagogic values of discourse markers, there exists a large gap between their perceived importance and the actual representation of discourse markers in Hong Kong classrooms.

Factor 6 receives loadings from four variables which distinguish teachers' preference to teach discourse markers either for receptive and productive purposes or just for reception. Therefore, this factor is labelled as **prioritising teaching of discourse markers for receptive purpose**. First of all, they tend not to agree to prioritise teaching students to learn DMs mainly for listening purposes at upper secondary level (Item 35 mean=2.74, 1=strongly disagree). Consistent with this attitude, they do not agree that *It is too ambitious to expect students to learn DMs for both listening and speaking purposes at secondary level* (Item 34 mean=2.47, 1=strongly disagree). They feel that *DMs as a linguistic device for both listening and speaking purposes should be introduced at the same time at secondary level* (Item 36 mean=2.27, 1=strongly agree). Whilst holding the view that both the receptive and productive skills of using discourse markers should be enhanced, teachers hold a cautious view towards the perspective that

DMs as an aspect of speaking skill should be delayed until awareness of DMs as a listening skill has been grasped (Item 27 mean=2.88, 5=strongly agree).

The five variables loading on Factor 7 reflect the attitude relating to the acceptance of the Hong Kong variety in using DMs. This factor can be best represented as the **acceptance of the local variety**. The two items that the teachers agree on most are Item 45 *We should help students to recognise and accept different national and regional uses of DMs* (mean=3.87, 5=strongly agree) and Item 47 *It is necessary to expose students to different varieties of using DMs for purpose of comprehension, though not of production* (mean=3.82, 5=strongly agree). They seem to adopt a rather open attitude towards the recognition and acceptance of different varieties despite the fact that they are to a large extent exonormative as reflected in the response in Factor 2. They also tend to agree that *It is not necessary to stick to the native speaker norm of using DMs because English language teaching should seek relevance to local culture while trying to enable global transaction* (Item 48 mean=3.40, 5=strongly agree), acknowledging that it is natural to have DM usage with local colourings. However, when coming to the more specific issue of whether we should respect and accept a Hong Kong style of using discourse markers (Item 44 mean=3.11, 5=strongly agree), an ambivalent stance prevails. It is even harder to judge if *It can be regarded as a wrong usage when Hong Kong learners use DMs differently from native speakers* (Item 43 mean=3.07), resulting in a mid-3 uncertain answer. In sum, figures reveal that teachers possess a global concept that different national or regional varieties should be respected but the extent to

which the Hong Kong variety should be accepted is still yet to be explored. The results inform us that it is still premature for teachers to acknowledge the Hong Kong variety.

6.2.3 Scale orientation

After yielding the 7-factor solution, a more detailed analysis was conducted in order to depict the level of endorsement of each orientation. To obtain the scale orientation, the mean score for each multi-item scale (that is, each aggregated index) was computed. This is calculated by summing up all the item scores based on the items loaded on each factor (Table 6.3) divided by the number of items in each scale. Then an aggregated single attitude index (hence-forward labelled as a Scale) is constituted which helps to define the overall intensity of each attitude scale. Table 6.5 illustrates the mean and standard deviations of the seven scales.

Table 6.5 Mean and Standard Deviations of the 7 Scales

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SCALE1	132	2.50	4.70	3.6886	.4028
SCALE2	132	1.33	4.67	3.0429	.6669
SCALE3	132	2.75	5.00	4.0265	.4955
SCALE4	132	1.50	4.63	3.0388	.5918
SCALE5	132	1.00	5.00	3.0985	.8148
SCALE6	132	1.25	4.00	2.5909	.5928
SCALE7	132	1.80	4.60	3.4318	.5391
Valid N (listwise)	132				

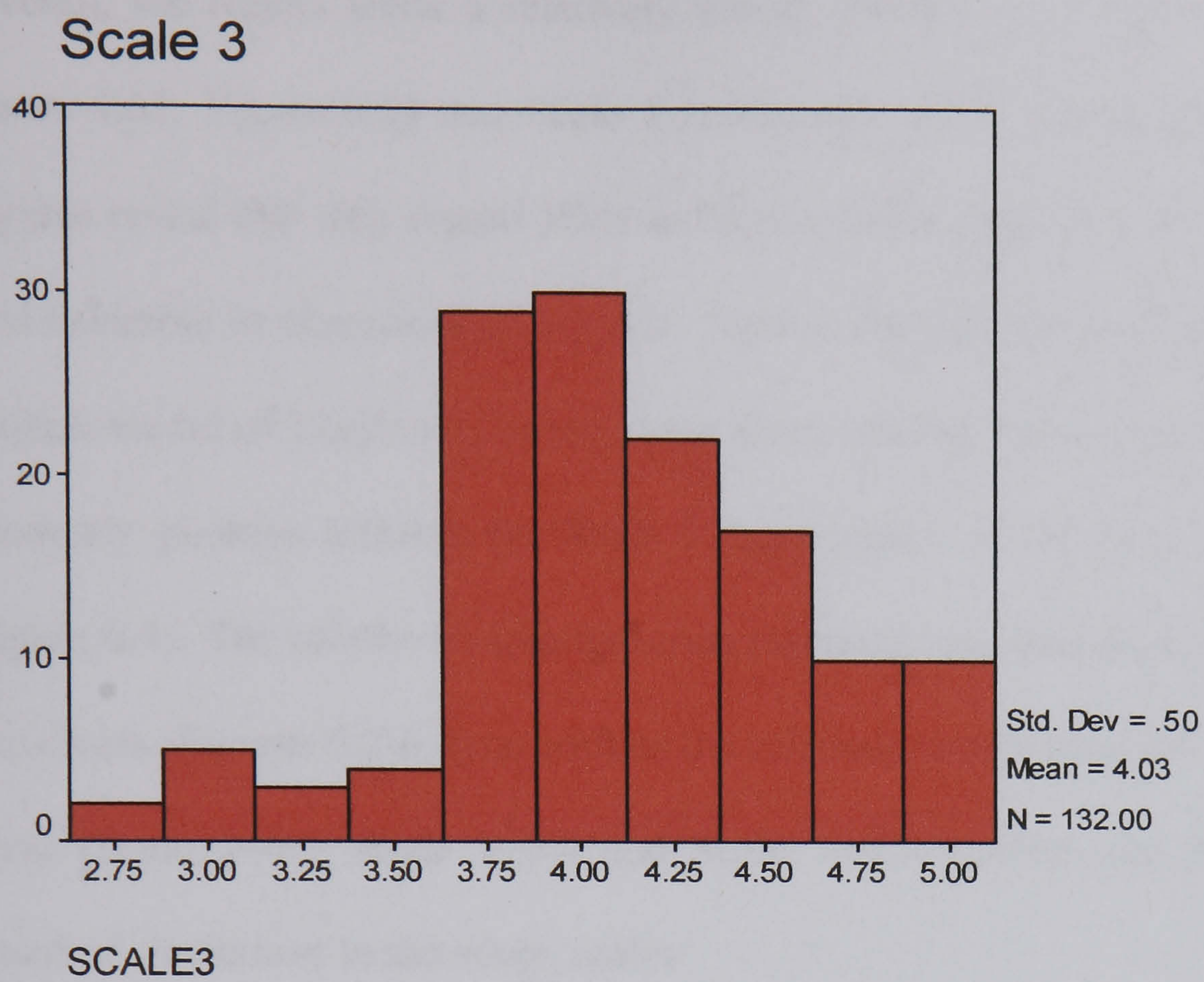


Figure 6.2 Scale 3: Pragmatic Value of DMs

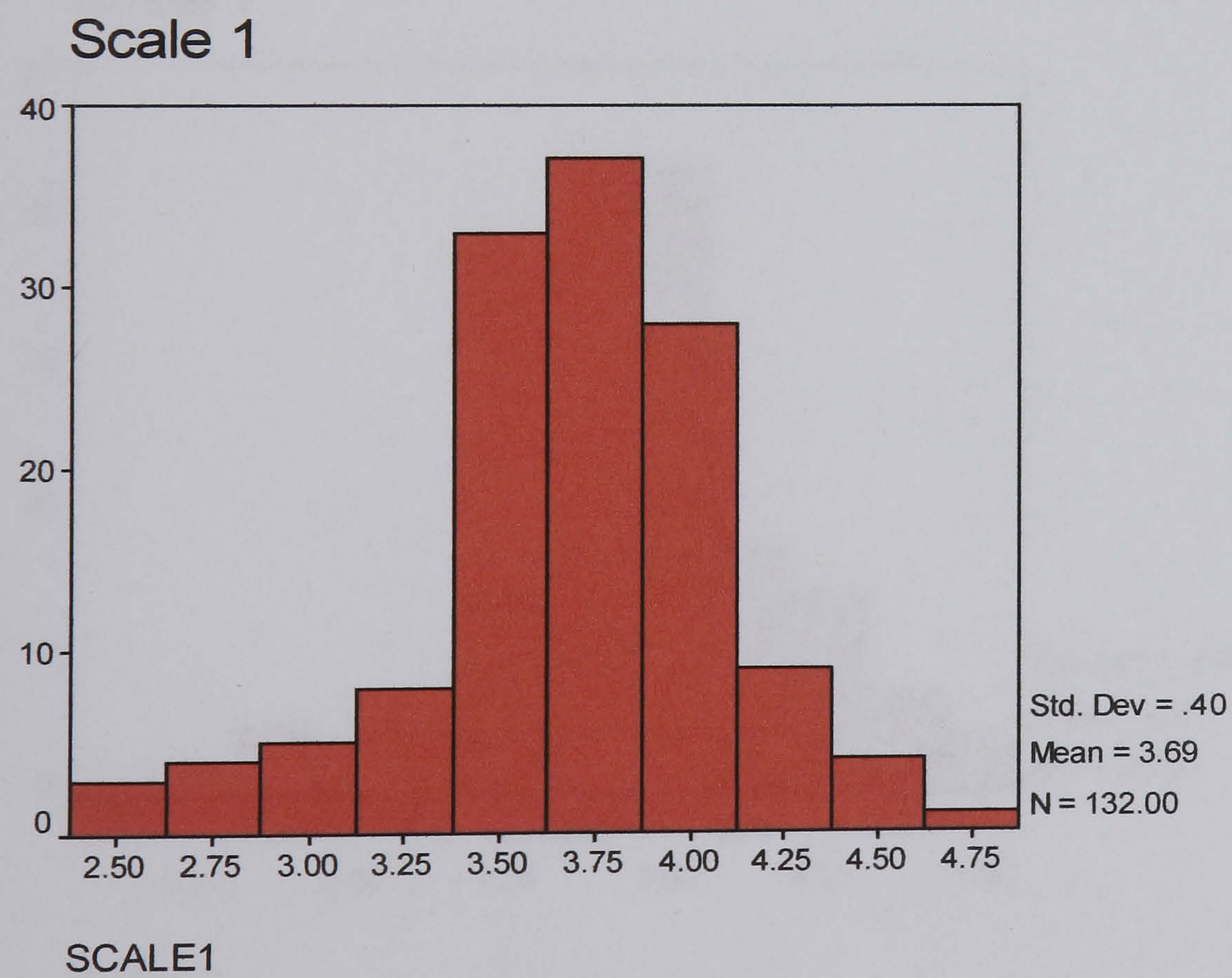


Figure 6.3 Scale 1: Pedagogic Value of DMs

Overall, the results show a relatively strong orientation in Scale 3 (pragmatic value, mean=4.03, Figure 6.2) and Scale 1 (pedagogic value, mean=3.69, Figure 6.3). The figures reveal that they regard DMs as highly useful linguistic devices which are useful and desirable in classroom instruction. Against the colonial influence and input from a British model of English as in the Hong Kong setting, the results surprisingly reflect a modestly positive attitude for Scale 7 (acceptance of the local variety, mean=3.43, Figure 6.4). The relatively homogeneous response was indicated by the distribution of the charts (Figures 6.2-6.4) as well as the relatively small standard deviations they each have (Scale 3=0.5, Scale 1=0.4 and Scale 7=0.54) which are amongst the smallest standard deviations in the seven scales.

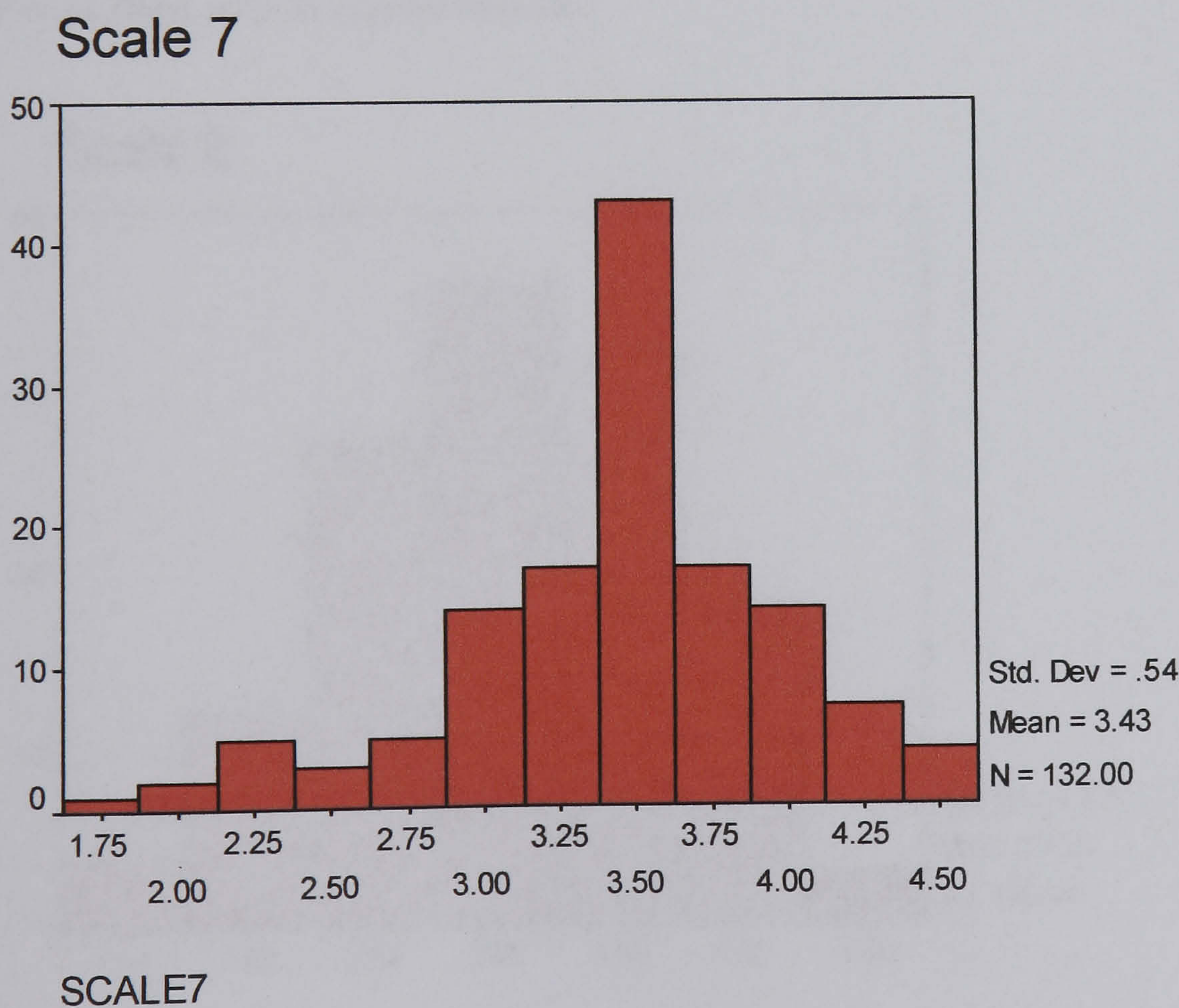


Figure 6.4 **Scale 7: Acceptance of the Local Variety**

Despite that, there is a relatively neutral orientation for Scale 2 (identification with native speaking norm, mean=3.04, Figure 6.5), Scale 4 (dispensable value of DMs, mean=3.04, Figure 6.6) and Scale 5 (representation of DMs in the ELT classroom, mean=3.1, Figure 6.7), indicating that the subjects hold a less assertive view or a relatively middle-of-the-road attitude towards the issues under discussion. Although factor analysis indicates a positive relationship between the pragmatic and dispensable value of DMs which should apparently hold a reverse relationship, yet the weak mean score of Scale 4 (mean=3.05) suggests that the teachers just hold marginal support regarding their dispensable value. This explains the optional nature of DMs which do not contribute to the propositional meanings of utterances and also confirms my previous claim that DMs are small words and look trivial in conversations, yet they play an important role in conversations.

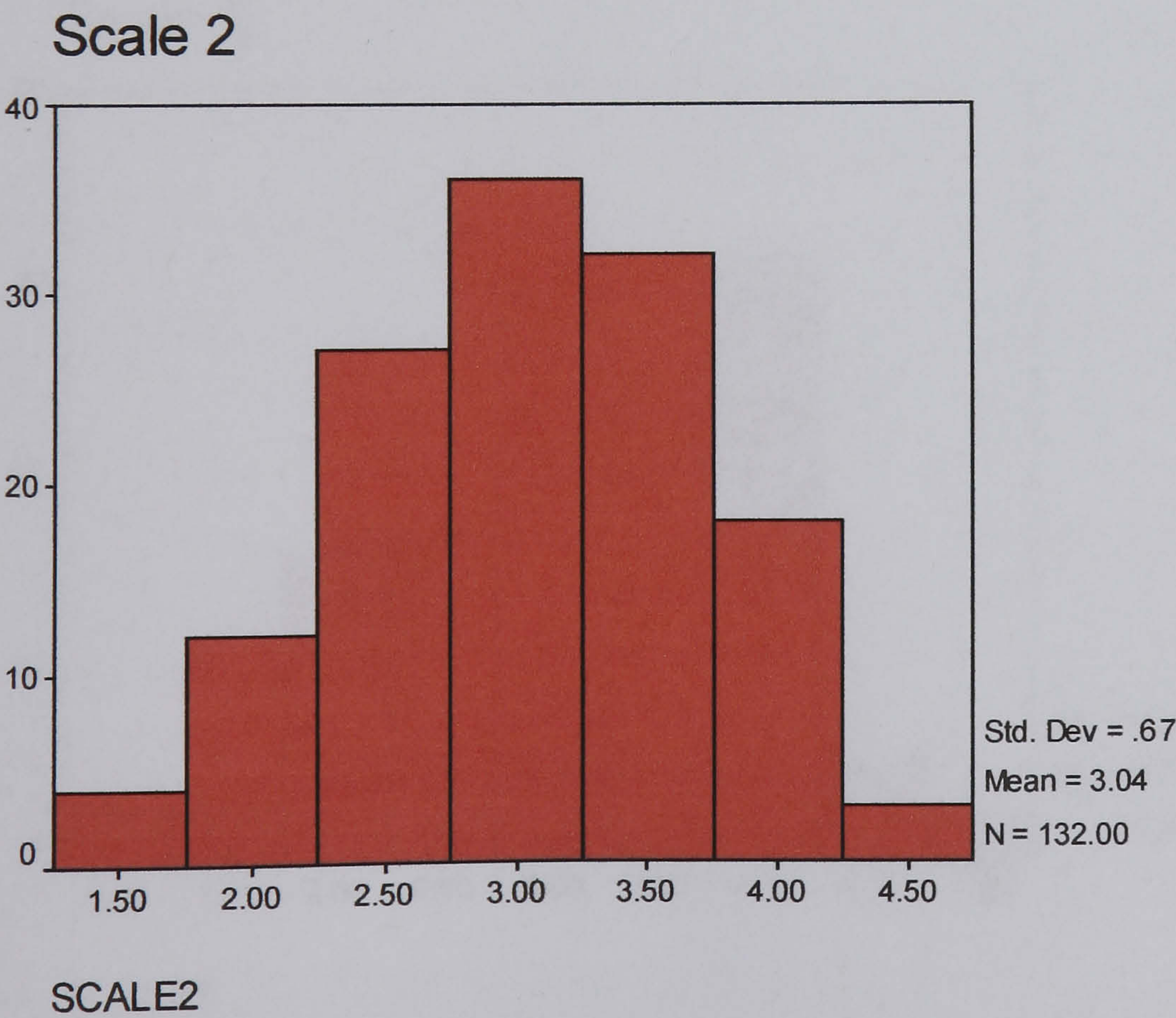
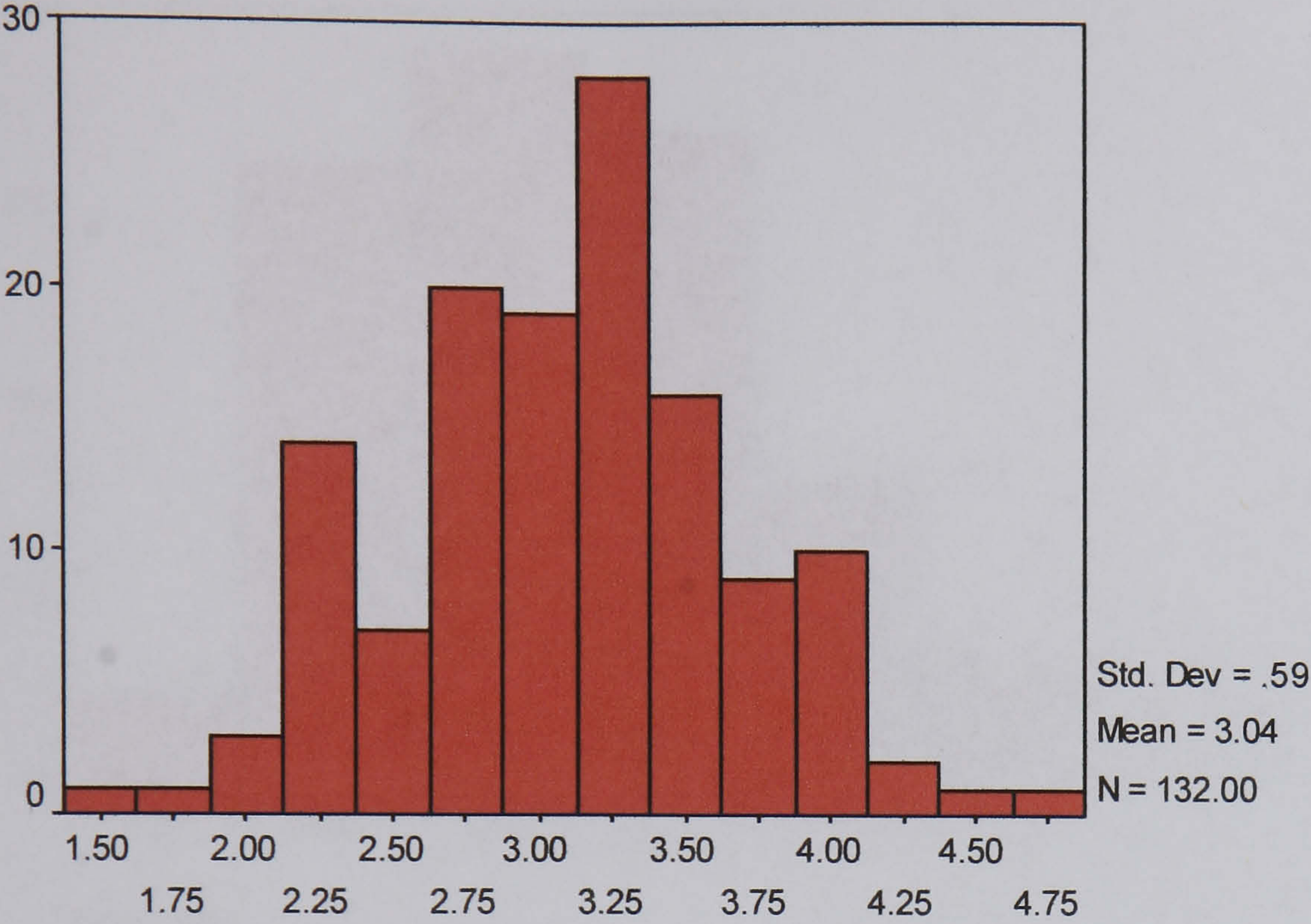


Figure 6.5 Scale 2: Identification with the Native Speaker Norm

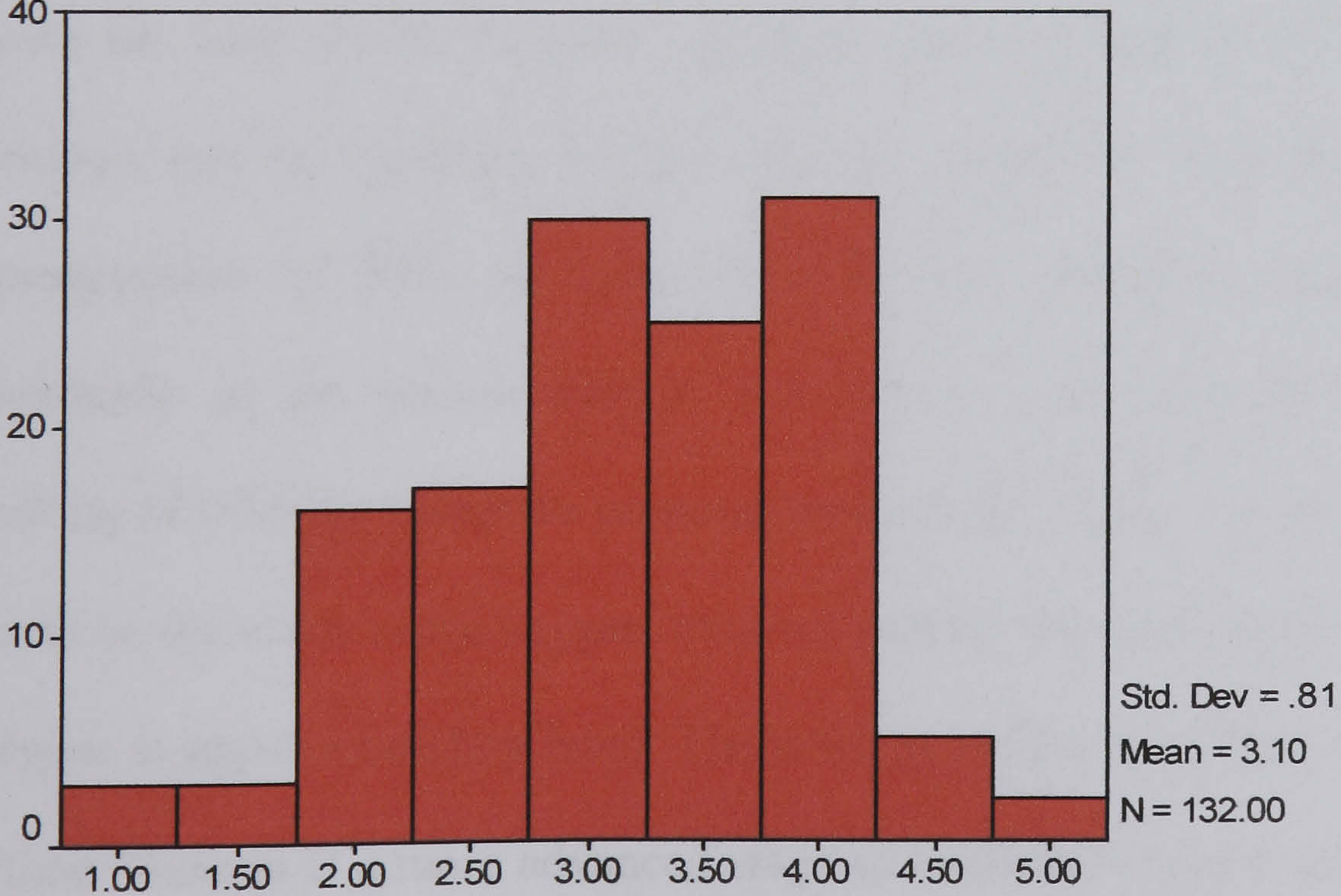
Scale 4



SCALE4

Figure 6.6 Scale 4: Dispensable Value of DMs

Scale 5



SCALE5

Figure 6.7 Scale 5: Representation of DMs in the ELT classroom

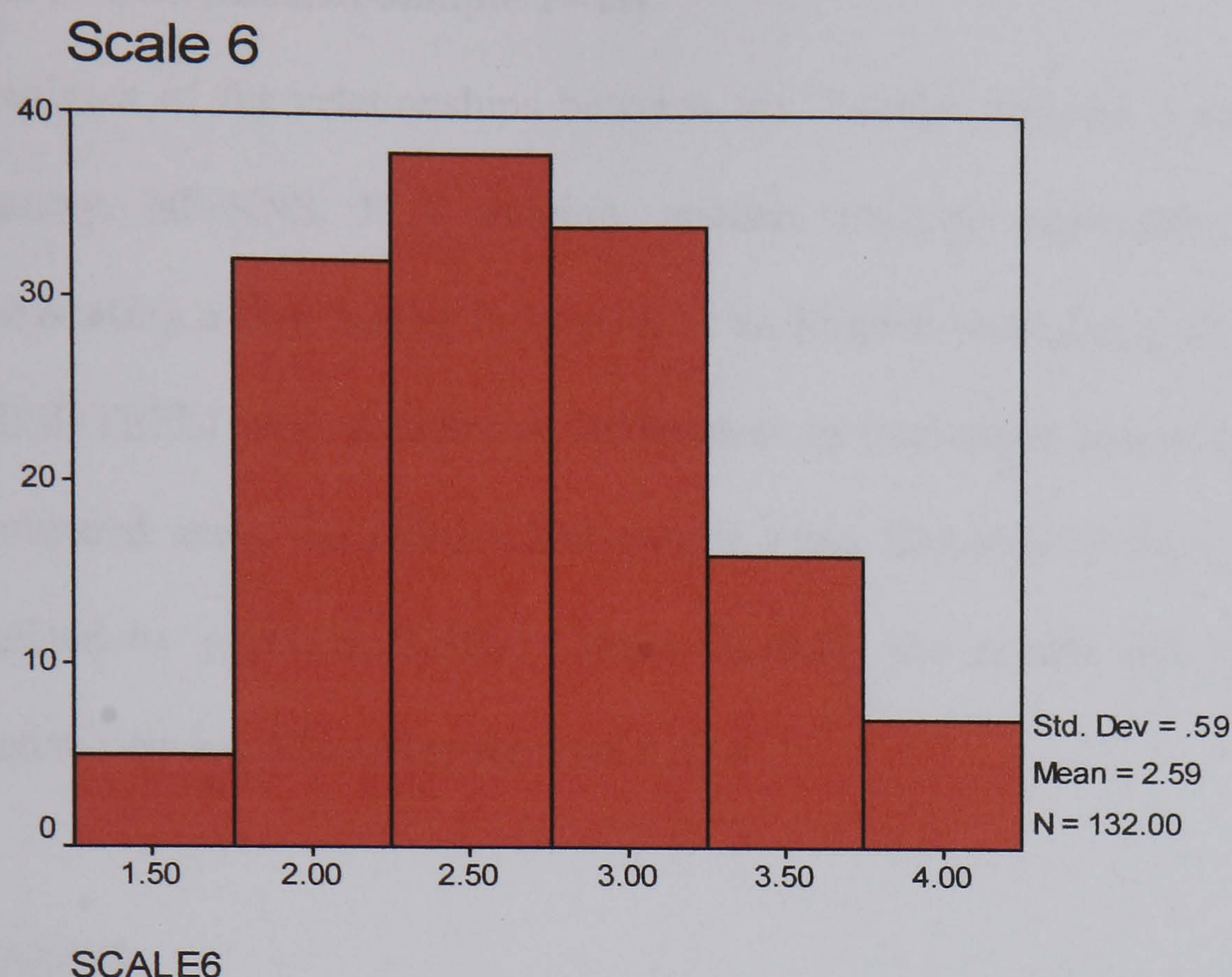


Figure 6.8 Scale 6: Prioritising Teaching of DMs for Receptive Purpose

Furthermore, the high standard deviation in Scale 5 (mean=3.09, SD=0.81, Figure 6.7) shows the most diverse opinions regarding the representation of DMs in the teaching materials and the teaching by the teachers concerned. This indicates a gap in the representation of DMs, as their linguistic and pedagogic importance is justified empirically in the present survey. The lowest mean score in Scale 6 (prioritising teaching of DMs for receptive purpose, mean=2.59, Figure 6.8) and the tendency of the scores on the lower range suggest minimal support for teaching DMs only for receptive purpose at upper secondary level. The teachers believe that DMs should be introduced to their students at a more advanced stage and endorse a more ambitious view that the teaching of DMs should be both for receptive and productive purposes in classroom instruction.

6.2.4 Independent-sample T-test

Analyses of the relationships between the 7 scales and the 5 independent variables, namely, NS-NNS, ELT training, gender, teaching experience, language expertise (possessing a first degree in English or an English-related subject/a master's degree in TESL/TEFL) were conducted. Differences in total mean scores between groups were compared using the independent-sample t-test. Statistically significant difference was defined by $p \leq 0.05$. Tables 6.6-6.8 illustrate the results and the findings that are statistically significant are reported below.

NNS/NS

With regard to accepting the native speaker norm as the speaking model (Scale 2), there is a statistically significant higher mean score among the NNS teachers than the NS teachers (mean score: 3.13 vs 2.64, $t\text{-value}=3.41^{***}$) (Table 6.6), reflecting the perpetuation of a comparatively dominant exonormative attitude among the local English teachers after the colonial period.

Gender

As far as Scale 5 is concerned (representation of DMs in ELT classroom), there exists a statistically significant gender difference, with the male group believing that DMs were less represented in classroom than the female group (mean scores: 2.59 vs 3.20, $t\text{-value}=-3.45^{***}$) (Table 6.7). In addition, the result indicates a tendency of gender difference concerning the acceptance of the local variety (Scale 7) (mean scores: 3.23 vs

Table 6.6 A Comparison of the Total Mean Scores for the 5 Variables in Scale 2 - Identification with the Native Speaker Norm

Variables		N	Total Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	T-value
NS-NNS	NNS	108	3.13	0.65	3.41***
	NS	24	2.64	0.58	
ELT training	Yes	124	3.04	0.66	-0.45
	No	8	3.15	0.79	
Gender	Male	23	2.84	0.77	-1.61
	Female	109	3.09	0.64	
Experience	Young	19	2.97	0.67	-0.47
	Experienced	79	3.05	0.69	
Possessing a first degree in English language	Yes	101	3.06	0.63	-0.52
	No	30	2.99	0.80	
Possessing a master's degree in TESL/TEFL	Yes	31	3.05	0.69	-0.13
	No	99	3.04	0.67	

Remark: **p*<0.05; ***p*<0.01; ****p*<0.001

Table 6.7 A Comparison of the Total Mean Scores for the 5 Variables in Scale 5 - Representation of DMs in the ELT Classroom

Variables		N	Total Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	T-value
NS-NNS	NNS	108	3.14	0.80	1.28
	NS	24	2.85	0.88	
ELT training	Yes	124	3.08	0.83	-0.43
	No	8	3.22	0.67	
Gender	Male	23	2.59	0.96	-3.45***
	Female	109	3.20	0.75	
Experience	Young	19	3.00	0.74	-0.67
	Experienced	79	3.12	0.79	
Possessing a first degree in English language	Yes	101	3.12	0.82	-0.57
	No	30	2.98	0.85	
Possessing a master's degree in TESL/TEFL	Yes	31	3.23	0.82	-1.04
	No	99	3.04	0.83	

Remark: **p*<0.05; ***p*<0.01; ****p*<0.001

Table 6.8 A Comparison of the Total Mean Scores for the 5 Variables in Scale 7 - Acceptance of the Local Variety

Variables		N	Total Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	T-value
NS-NNS	NNS	108	3.48	0.55	0.91
	NS	24	3.34	0.51	
ELT training	Yes	124	3.45	0.55	-0.77
	No	8	3.58	0.41	
Gender	Male	23	3.23	0.65	-1.95
	Female	109	3.50	0.51	
Experience	Young	19	3.68	0.51	2.12**
	Experienced	79	3.38	0.56	
Possessing a first degree in English language	Yes	101	3.43	0.54	0.78
	No	30	3.53	0.54	
Possessing a master's degree in TESL/TEFL	Yes	31	3.45	0.63	-0.19
	No	99	3.46	0.52	

Remark: * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$

3.50, $p=0.53$) (Table 6.8). This suggests that future research is required to verify if males are more conservative and therefore, less tolerant than females towards the acceptance of the local norm.

Experience

Interestingly, the result indicates a statistically significant difference between the young and experienced teachers regarding the acceptance of the local variety. Young teachers (with a teaching experience of 1-4 years) show a more liberal attitude towards accepting the local variety than the experienced teachers (with a teaching experience over 10 years) (mean scores: 3.68 vs 3.38, $t\text{-value}=2.12^{**}$) (Table 6.8), reflecting a different mindset regarding the issue between these two groups of teaching professionals.

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 Pragmatic Value of Discourse Markers (Scale 3)

It has well been attested that DMs, being small words and phrases, contribute to the management and development of a discourse and perform important structural and interactive functions (Schiffrin 1987, Fraser 1990, 1999). Use of DMs with respect to their referential, structural, cognitive and interpersonal roles in marking textual relationships, sequence, transition and continuation of topics, conclusion, repairs, hesitations, and very often as a solidarity building device to mark shared knowledge, attitudes and responses have been illustrated and discussed in the Part I study. It was found that Hong Kong learners are underexposed to DMs and do not fully utilise and reap benefit from them in communication. The teachers responding to the questionnaires (Part II study), nevertheless indicate substantial agreement about the pragmatic and pedagogic values (Scales 3 and 1, Table 6.5) which DMs bring. The results from factor analysis are categorised and discussed in terms of extrinsic motivation in the following three broad areas.

6.3.1.1 Practical value

The respondents assert the instrumental value of DMs. They agree that knowledge of DMs can facilitate communication in areas like work, business, education and examinations in Hong Kong, the senior positions of which are dominated by native speakers of English. As a cosmopolitan city, increased trade, communication, technology, international businesses and travel in Hong Kong have greatly enhanced the need for English as a lingua franca and increased its pragmatic value. Therefore, essential discoursal features like DMs that are embedded in interaction are highly regarded as

useful devices. From this perspective, the need to use English as a world language provides an *extrinsic motivation* for teachers to value DMs as desirable items.

6.3.1.2 Communicative value

Analysis of the results indicates that teachers agree very strongly that DMs have a useful role in communication. They are a salient set of devices which a speaker can use to orient the listener to the overall structure of the discourse and assists in the on-line detection of common ground and facilitates the constant adaptation of interlocutors' language (Jucker and Smith 1998) to fulfil their communicative goal, and without them problems of comprehension can be created (Tyler, Jefferies and Davies 1988). Parallel to the essential steps of mirror-signal-manoeuve in driving, this speech repertoire constitutes a useful strategy for interlocutors to prepare listeners for a change in direction in the flow of discourse. In serving as instructional markers, DMs provide orientation to what the speaker takes to be the discourse relationship (Fraser 1990). Moreover, DMs can convey to listeners how segments of talk and the interrelationships among ideas are linked together as a coherent whole and provide more spacing capacity for information processing. In secondary language learning, use of DMs can lead to an impression of fluency as they play a part in oiling the wheels of communication, signposting sequences of thoughts, marking attitudes, softening the tone and consequently, manoeuvring meanings as communication goes on, etc. They are perceived by the respondents as virtually important in communication with native speakers in their students' future workplace. A piece of conversation, if conducted without DMs, may result in misunderstanding, and communication breakdown may occur.

6.3.1.3 Academic advancement

Academic benefit forms another aspect of extrinsic motivation for teachers. Being proficient in the use of DMs is perceived to be beneficial to understanding university lectures. There is research evidence on academic discourse showing that effective communicators use DMs to orient their listeners to the relative importance of ideas within the discourse and to convey the interrelationships between these ideas (Tyler, Jefferies and Davies 1988). Research also indicates the useful roles of macro-organisers in interactional phrases and micro-organisers in transactional phrases in academic lectures (Nattingher and DeCarrico 1992). Flowerdew and Tauroza (1995) showed in their study that the subjects comprehended lectures better when DMs were included. Segal, Duchan and Scott (1991) also asserted a positive role of DMs towards comprehension of a text and a recent study by Williams (1992) indicated that a reduced use of DMs makes the speech of ESL speakers appear less coherent and comprehensible to L1 listeners.

Considering the importance of public examinations in determining educational options and opportunities in Hong Kong, the motivation for incorporating DMs in secondary classrooms is undoubtedly high. Overall we can see that most of the motivating forces for teaching DMs are instrumental in nature, more economic than socioculturally-oriented, and this reflects the linguistic climate in Hong Kong and the concern of this group of teachers to help their students to achieve academic advancement and social mobility.

While the mean suggests an overall positive orientation of this factor, the NNS subjects nevertheless give DMs more weight than NSs. This can be partly explained by the fact that NSs are less conscious of their own use of this linguistic device, as found by Watts (1989) who stated, for example, that ‘markers do seem to display an automaticity characteristic of the more routine aspects of speech’. As L2 speakers, NNSs tend to be more conscious of the rules and formality of features in the target language, and therefore, are more aware of their linguistic value.

6.3.2 Pedagogic Value of Discourse Markers (Scale 1)

Teachers’ positive perceptions of the above aspects of extrinsic motivation in achieving effective communication, passing exams and enhancing career prospects on the part of their students implies that teaching DMs is likely to yield pedagogic value. This postulation is reaffirmed by the positive orientation of Scale 1 which indicates unanimous support for teaching DMs. Regardless of the light semantic content of DMs and their dispensable value (Scale 4), the respondents by no means treat them as redundant lexical items. On the contrary, they strongly support the need to exploit their role in developing and enhancing their students’ linguistic awareness as well as their listening and speaking skills. This indicates their perception that satisfactory L2 performance links communication with DMs.

The present findings are in line with what has been suggested by McCarthy (1998) that it is important to identify those features which are natural in L1 performance and desirable in L2 performance and to offer short-cuts to the necessary lexico-grammatical knowledge to realise such features. Further to this, the high factor loading in this scale also confirms

his claim that DMs should be part of the most basic lexical input in teaching syllabuses and materials, ‘... for they are indeed very useful items and, lexically, usually quite simple and straightforward and often familiar to learners from their basic semantic meanings’ (McCarthy 1998: 60). Recent publications in the teaching of spoken language have included examples of how DMs in spoken language can be properly and effectively introduced to advanced learners of English in examples based on authentic conversation (Carter *et al.* 2000).

Having established the desirability of incorporating DMs into the second language classroom, it is necessary to decide which DMs should be included in the curriculum and their sequence in teaching. So far no research has been done in this area, but for teaching purpose, one useful guideline is to refer to spoken corpora and select the most frequent DMs from genres that learners are likely to come across in their everyday encounters. Based on the information from CANCODE (refer to Table 4.1), these may include common markers such as *and, yeah, you know, so, but, well, right, I think, just, I mean, like, or, oh, really, sort of, (you)see, because/cos, say, now, OK, actually, anyway, also, then*, etc., many of which are familiar to students because they are either highlighted in written forms of grammar or have their Chinese equivalents in Cantonese. These markers can be carefully arranged in slots, developed into different awareness-raising reading or listening activities and integrated into different teaching units with their roles and usages highlighted in context. Though there may not be an absolute need for second language learners to imitate the native speakers in every way they speak, it is beneficial for them to understand what DMs are, the roles they play in conversational exchanges and the reasons why the speaker makes such a choice.

6.3.3 Identification with the Native Speaker Norm (Scale 2) vs Acceptance of the Local Variety (Scale 7)

6.3.3.1 Threat to hegemony of the native speaker norm

The 21st century is characterised by a growing interdependence among culturally and linguistically diverse groups for the purposes of commerce, education and tourism. With the overwhelming globalisation of English, over 80% of spoken interactions in English are between non-native speakers. According to Crystal (1997), the English language ceases to be the sole property of the British or the Americans. Even the largest English-speaking nation, the USA, turns out to have only about 20% of the world's speakers. It has been predicted that within fifty years, L2 speakers will outnumber L1 speakers by 50% and a new form of English – World Standard Spoken English (WSSE) will arise (Crystal 1997). This linguistic scenario is embraced in the concept of 'World English' by Kachru (1988) who suggests that there is a repertoire of models for English and that regional varieties should hold a central and pragmatic place. Nevertheless, 'a totally uniform, regionally neutral, and unarguably prestigious variety does not yet exist worldwide' (Crystal 1994: 113). This inevitably sparks off intense debates with regard to issues like the hegemony of the native speaker standard, the variety that should take the lead as the model for World English, the problem of mutual intelligibility of regional varieties once they have gained status and the educational suitability of the chosen variety, etc. The arguments on these ideological, pragmatic and pedagogic planes can by no means be resolved easily.

6.3.3.2 Torn between two standards

Results from the present study show a tendency for the respondents to expect their students to identify with the native speaker way of using DMs. This can be viewed as an *intrinsic motivation* or an expectation that students will integrate into the second language community, though it is not strong enough to be conclusive as indicated by the mid-3 value. Yet in a study investigating the mixing of English into Cantonese in Hong Kong, Luke (1998) found that the most commonly used discourse markers *and*, *but*, *otherwise*, *but then*, *and then*, *in a way*, *anyway* and *after all* are indications of⁵ orientational mixing, and there is a significant absence of any expedient mixing. This exonormative orientation in Hong Kong, especially in formal registers, has for long been endorsed by the government, educational authorities and the public at large particularly prior to independence in 1997. The same trend is also affirmed in recent research as in Axler *et al.* (1998) who found that Hong Kong students do not feel that the use of English is associated with a threat to their ethnolinguistic identity. Regarding attitudes towards native English speakers, the subjects in Richards' (1998) study rated native speakers more favourably in terms of status and competence because of their superior English fluency, to which goal Hong Kong learners very much aspire. As a learner's personal and social identity is inextricably bound up with their way of speaking, it is interesting to find that most of the local teachers of English in the territory view the exonormative norm as the only conceivable standard and do not greatly endorse the

⁵ Orientational mixing refers to the type of language mixing in which identification with the better educated and a western outlook are the primary motivations. Expedient language mixing refers to the type of language mixing in which expedience and pragmatic needs are the primary motivations. (Luke 2000: 148-149).

functional and pragmatic values which a culture-bound local variety could bring. It is even interesting to see that in Hong Kong ‘the cultural situation falls not only between localization and globalization, but also at the cross roads between Asia and the West, the (de)colonized and the colonized’ (Tam 1998: 78).

Seemingly contrary to the above finding is the slightly positive attitude among this batch of EMI (English as medium of instruction) teachers towards accepting the Hong Kong variety in Scale 7. Despite this, I would not regard the two scores as contradictory or irreconcilable. In fact, they truly reflect the complicated concern of the local teachers in seeking a balance between two seemingly opposing tendencies - that is, on the one hand, they uphold the central place of the native speaker norm as the pedagogic standard, yet on the other hand, it is obvious that they have a growing awareness of the existence of a local variety, a perspective recognising that local models should be recognised as part of the total repertoire of international Englishes. Indeed the present dilemma between supporting an exonormative standard and upholding an ideologically sound practice is a clear reflection of the current ambivalent stance, as manifested by the mid-3 value in both scales and the relatively high standard deviation in Scale 2. To be sure, the current linguistic scene in Hong Kong is dominated by debates on the medium of teaching, a more imminent problem in the language education arena than any other issues.

6.3.3.3 An innovation or a mistake?

As mentioned above, the tradition of approximating to a native speaker norm has been very deep-rooted in Hong Kong where the learning model for English has been established language standards functioning exonormatively. Any variation is regarded as

an error and learners try to avoid using them, especially in formal registers. Similarly, Jenkins (2000: 53) also points out that the entire EFL endeavour is basically directed towards standardising learners' speech to bring it in line with an imagined L1 standard. According to Richards (1998), the problem of acceptance of the localised or regional uses of Englishes has motivated a three-way variety-specific set of distinctions, namely, innovations, deviations and mistakes (errors). While innovation is connotative towards any difference from the norm, deviation and mistakes are derogatory terms pointing to a usage different from the Inner Circles (British or American Englishes). But these distinctions have not been clearly made in the Outer Circles.

The tendency to a marginally positive attitude among respondents yields the following interpretation. Firstly, despite the fact that many local linguists have argued for the emergence of a Hong Kong variety (Bolton 2000a, Bolton and Lim 2000), it is still arguable whether there is currently such a standard (Luke and Richards 1982), which is labelled as a 'local pseudo-norm' (or simply a non-standard form) (Newbrook 1993). Contrary to the present findings among this specific group of teachers, a majority of Hong Kong teachers tolerate no deviation from standard British English in their wider speech, least of all at the level of grammar (Wong 1981). Secondly, even if there is really an endonormative standard, Hong Kong English has not undergone the extensive indigenisation and stabilisation necessary for it to become a target of second language acquisition in its own right, let alone the fact that there will definitely be a lack of official endorsement and recognition of its status. Most teachers, of course, are ignorant of what it *is*, and of how the variety differs from the British norm, not to mention what it *should be*. The fact that only around 30% of the candidates passed in the newly launched

⁶Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (English Language) has exaggerated worries in the Education Department and the community over the language standards of teachers, and consequently their ability to teach. To date, the language policy in Hong Kong is far too confusing to allow for the issue of a native speaker norm to come under discussion. There are other language issues, like mother tongue teaching, rather than the issue of the supremacy of native speaker norm, that need to be dealt with. So it would be right for Newbrook (1993: 3) to comment that the imminent issue in Hong Kong is ‘a question of relative proficiency of English rather than an indigenised local variety’. Despite this, there are publications on the differences between Hong Kong English and the British standard (Bunton 1989, Newbrook 1991), though they are by no means comprehensive. More research effort is needed to explore the regularities of the local usage, and to examine different aspects of English besides DMs, so as to properly codify what Hong Kong English is, as with the case of ‘Singlish’ in Singapore, and so as to distinguish what have been until now labelled local ‘errors’, or ‘interlanguage’ as distinct from innovations or acceptable variations among learners at various levels. It is only through establishing these distinctions that we will be in a stronger position to claim if it is a matter of innovation, style or error.

⁶ The language benchmark tests are set for English teachers to assess their language ability for the effective teaching of English in primary and secondary school classrooms in Hong Kong. Language benchmarks provide an objective reference against which to gauge a teacher’s proficiency to help teachers pursue professional development. They will be given five years to meet the benchmarks.

(Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2000)

6.3.3.4 Double standard

The present results suggest that such complicated issues may not be simply addressed by a yes-no answer, but should be approached with expediency and appropriateness with reference to the linguistic, sociolinguistic and also political profile of the local context. In addressing to the issue of Hong Kong English, Pang (2003: 17) also comments that ‘an attitude of ambivalence towards language and pragmatic norms is very obvious in the community’ where there is a tension between upholding linguistic purism by the public and the creative use of English and Chinese in actual practice. To accommodate the conflicting ideologies regarding language norm within a unique linguistic situation in Hong Kong, I would suggest a ‘double standard’ as a guideline for the language norm which makes specific distinctions of language use both at intranational and international levels, as well as the use of English now and in the future. My standpoint finds support in Tam (1998: 77) who claims that how the English language will be taught in the classroom in Hong Kong ‘remains not only a question of political concern related to the new identity of Hong Kong in the post-1997 period, but a matter of practicality, if both the Hong Kong people and China wish Hong Kong to play an active role in global business.’

In every second or foreign language context, there lies a continuum of use along the international and intranational dichotomy in terms of English usage. I would propose that if language use is mainly for intranational purposes, regional varieties should be actively considered as the norm, whereas if the language use is largely for international purposes, then a native speaker norm must inevitably be retained. At the intranational level, we

need to consider the extent to which English is used among people for personal communication, in journalism and the media, correspondence, arts and literature, on the telephone, at home and in daily shopping exchanges, etc. At the international level, there are questions like the extent to which English is used in areas like business and work, courts, the media, education and outside communication. The needs for communication at these two levels can serve as an indicator in assessing and defining language norms and standards of acceptability, which can significantly influence different aspects of ELT, for instance, teacher education and materials development. But when coming to the question of how this double standard could be implemented, there is no easy and clear-cut solution.

English in Hong Kong is largely used as the medium for international rather than intranational purpose. It has not acquired a wide range of functions. With rare exceptions, the majority of Hong Kong children use Cantonese at home and at play, and very often they do not feel a genuine need to use English. It has been commented that English is performing a role intermediate between those of a second language and a foreign language (Newbrook 1993) and it has even been described as an ‘auxiliary language’ (Luke and Richard 1982). Regarding language proficiency, there exists a speech continuum ranging from a pidginised variety of English at the very bottom of the scale, to near-native proficiency at the top (Wong 1981). Unlike Singapore and Malaysia whose use of English have broken away from ‘colonial English’, a local variety of English has not been well developed, and neither is there a significant local literature or writing to serve as a source of English learning. Given the political and economic ties with the mother country where Chinese serves as the official language, I predict that there will not

be a significant increase in the use of English in everyday exchange intranationally. But it still rests on the future policy of Mainland China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as to how to shape Hong Kong in the world stage.

The linguistic situation in Hong Kong undoubtedly requires a double standard which can embrace both an outside standardised code and also an internal norm which should begin with a change of attitude. This perspective can offer a plausible solution to the seemingly contradictory results in the survey: desiring the native speaker norm (Scale 2) versus a respect for the local usage (Scale 6). Standard English, as a particular powerful variety, is the language for maximum advancement and mobility at the international level and all learners deserve access to it. It has been stressed in Carter (1994) and Crystal (1994) that teaching the standard form is necessary so as not to deny students' choice in their learning, especially nowadays when consumer choice is much stressed in any enterprise. Given that, learners can be shown how to use a native model as a point of reference but at the same time be empowered to understand how their variety is different from the norm in order to maintain intelligibility. Having access to a range of 'Englishes' which learners can select from, they are able to meet the needs of different situations and audiences as appropriate. This dual approach is also endorsed by Canagarajah (1999: 181) who claims that learners should be taught the contextual appropriateness of certain varieties including both a standard variety and another form that has to be personally and communally appropriate in order to be meaningful and relevant for its users.

In learning English in Hong Kong, learners should be equipped for daily contact with expatriates and have their sociocultural and intellectual interests fostered (Lin 1997).

Therefore, the range of context of English use requires the standard and local varieties. So it is the responsibility of ELT professionals to enable students to learn the different varieties so that they are armed with a repertoire of linguistic knowledge to meet the learner's own personal, social, cultural and communicative needs (Lave and Wenger 1991). It may even be possible to capitalise on children's L1 resources to help them to expand their linguistic and sociocultural repertoire to include English as the interaction point of a different language and culture (Kramsch 1993). It seems that to Hong Kong learners, it is linguistically more prudent to adopt this double standard in view of the fluidity of Hong Kong identity manifested through a lack of stability in its cultural and language policy (Tam 1998).

6.3.3.5 *ALTER for a change*

Recent decades have witnessed a counter-trend against the hegemony of the native speaking norm. This debate was sparked off by Kachru in the 1960s who proposed the adoption of endonormative standards based on the local educated varieties:

The architects of each tradition, each strand, have moulded, reshaped, acculturated, redesigned, and - by doing so - enriched what was a Western medium. The result is a liberated English which contains vitality, innovation, linguistic mix, and cultural identity. And, it is not the creativity of the monolingual and the monocultural – this creativity has rejuvenated the medium from 'exhaustion' and has 'liberated' it in many ways.
(Kachru 1997: 23)

This school of thought is founded on the phenomenon that most spoken exchanges are between non-native speakers of English, so the significance for a non-native speaker to sound like a 'native' should be dismissed. It has even been criticised as an imposition to expect learners to acquire naturalistic and native-like English when learners simply do not need it (Phillipson 1992a). With its internationalisation the English language has

assumed new roles as an expression of social and cultural identity (Strevens 1981). It is perfectly justifiable therefore to acknowledge the wider role of world Englishes and for L2 educators to take on an internationalist perspective in the teaching paradigm. A language can never be removed from the historical, social, cultural, economical and political contexts in which it is used, and the necessity for fostering an intercultural communicative competence (Sercu 2001) in L2 learners seems to be the order of the day.

Despite the adoption of the exnormative standard as reflected by the response of the subjects, their positive orientation towards acceptance of the local norm acknowledges a wider respect for the potential of local varieties, an attitude that has been inadequately represented in the existing L2 curriculum. The following attitude-reforming strategy *ALTER* proposes a perspective for public enlightenment among language educators and learners in respecting a local variety without downgrading it as a deviant or sub-standard variety. This is especially of relevance to those ‘experienced’ teachers, as suggested from the result, who have entered the teaching profession for over 10 years and hold a more conservative view regarding the acceptance of the local norm than their younger counterparts.

A – acknowledgement and acceptance

L – liberal attitude

T - tolerance

E – exposure

R - relevance to local culture

Awareness-raising is the prerequisite condition for attitude change. First of all, it is necessary for learners to cognitively **acknowledge and accept (A)** that English *is* becoming or *has* become internationalised with the interconnective contacts through the mass media, business, travelling, Internet and communication, etc. More actively, a **liberal and open attitude (L)** towards different varieties of English, both at international and regional levels should be fostered. Language practitioners should appreciate the reality that for the sake of intelligibility, a variety needs to be chosen and as a result of linguistic ecology it is the Standard British and American English which stand out as the dominant models at present. They should also be prepared to relinquish the long-held ‘linguacentric’ attitude (termed after Trifonovitch 1981) that standard English should be the sole pedagogically-suitable model as proposed by Quirk (1990) and observe the potentials and functions that local varieties can fulfil. Moreover, a **tolerant (T)** rather than a condemning attitude towards utterances which do not measure up to a native speaker standard but manage to communicate nevertheless should be maintained. Similarly, prejudice against the local usage (being derogatively labelled ‘Chinguish’ in Hong Kong) and an uncritical disposition towards the native norm should be relaxed. It is only through greater tolerance and acceptance of the diversity of peoples and cultures and their own varieties of English that we can go a step further towards mutual intelligibility (Wong 1981). In order to enrich and extend a speaker’s linguistic repertoire and to sharpen their linguistic competence in the process of second language acquisition, **constant exposure (E)** to different varieties is crucial and is an essential route to attain at least comprehension proficiency. Meanwhile, links between the native and non-native varieties should be established in the pedagogical setting in order to broaden students’ contact with and understanding of other varieties. Unfortunately, it is this kind of

linguistic environment that is lacking in Hong Kong, and this explains why so many students studying abroad encounter difficulty in comprehending spoken discourse, especially in informal contexts. This phenomenon has been pointed out by Brown and Yule (1983) who argue that L2 learners are habitually exposed to a model of speech that differs from authentic speech, and more than that, to a single variety of English. Therefore, learners should be exposed to different varieties as far as possible and be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to detect and accept various cultural styles of speaking English. Up to this stage, the issue does not solely rest on the linguistic and ideological planes, but cultural elements come into play. English is moving away from the status of a national and colonial language to that of a world language and has indigenised and become a language for all users. Therefore, it is necessary for it to seek **relevance to the local culture (R)** because language and culture are inextricably linked. The present survey indicates that the teachers of the elite group in Hong Kong are aware of and value local usage of DMs, a good step towards fostering an intercultural communicative competence.

As discussed previously, an exonormative model is the only conceivable norm for English in Hong Kong, especially among the educational authorities, business circles and the local community. It has been argued that the acceptance or rejection of norms of standard English ‘frequently depends on attitudinal variables, particular on the relative sociolinguistic status of the sources of an innovation’ (Lowenberg 1990: 124, cited in Tsui and Bunton 2000). Bamgbose (1998) argues that acceptability is the ultimate test of admission of an innovation. In general, the attitude that the Hong Kong public holds towards the local form of English is one of resistance rather than acceptance. Consistent

with that observation though with a lesser degree of resistance, the present study reveals an indifferent or a less endorsing attitude towards the Hong Kong variety. Despite this, it is encouraging to see an awareness of and a respect for local varieties on a general basis among teachers as revealed in Scale 7. The high correlation of the acceptance of the local norm with teaching experience, with younger teaching professionals demonstrating a more liberal attitude calls for a need to enlighten teachers' perspective, especially those have entered the teaching profession for many years. Continuous effort in bringing about public and professional enlightenment about variety in order to combat prejudice and ignorance (Streven 1981) is desirable, the consequence of which does have important repercussions on the way spoken English should be taught.

Another interesting observation from the results is that NNS teachers generally show a positive orientation in conforming to the native speaker norm whereas the NS teachers show a negative attitude. This can certainly reflect the perpetuation of an exonormative attitude among the local English teachers after the colonial period. Contrary to this, the NS group from norm-providing countries such as Britain and America have more opportunities to be exposed to different varieties and are therefore, fully aware of the other varieties. They therefore, regard them as separate autonomous norms and are more aware of the fact that English now belongs to the world, and they demonstrate a more tolerant attitude towards NNSs' variety and style. This is, to a certain extent, an appropriate response to Trifonovitch's (1981) suggestion that NSs must be prepared to replace linguistic chauvinism with an attitude of linguistic tolerance.

6.3.3.6 *Choice of model*

Findings also reveal that British English, with its mean score slightly on the 'agree' side, is receiving a greater degree of support than American English as the model of English. Whilst disfavours the use of American English for their students and showing a neutral response towards British English, this leaves a gap for the desired model to follow. At this initial stage of the postcolonial period, it is still too early for Hong Kong to turn to an endonormative norm, but it is still likely for British Standard English to continue to serve as the model for communication before a truly World Standard Spoken English (Crystal 1997) enters the linguistic stage. It is worthwhile to continue to investigate the present issue as British influence draws away. In looking ahead, it remains to be seen if society will support a more dynamic polymodel concept which recognises individual needs, social realities and pedagogical implications (Kachru 1981) as the linguistic order of the future.

6.3.3.7 *The reality - mismatch between goal and outcome*

Results also indicate that idealised notions about how language *should be* learnt will give way to what it *is* really like. The respondents basically endorse the view that it is justifiable to require their students to speak like a native, yet they are aware that it is an imaginary standard rather than a realistic goal. This is echoed by Jenkins (1998) who argues that while treating a native norm as the goal for production, teachers should be aware that this is 'neither a desirable nor, in fact, a likely outcome' (Jenkins 1998: 124). Factors such as transfer from L1 to L2 in the process of acquisition can possibly account for the mismatch because it is only through extensive exposure to the L2 that any native-like target can be achieved in second language learning. Given the fact that 80% of

English spoken interaction is between non-native speakers, it is unrealistic, and an imposition to expect learners to acquire naturalistic, native-like English when they simply don't need it (Phillipson 1992a, Prodromou 1996a, Cook 1998).

6.3.4 Underrepresentation of Discourse Markers (Scale 5)

6.3.4.1 *Modifying textbooks as a source of input*

The overall weak mean value concerning highlighting DMs in teaching materials in Hong Kong does indicate that insufficient attention has been given to the representation of DMs in L2 teaching locally. It is true that DMs remains a relatively unexplored conversational discourse area. Where markers are focused upon as a teaching point, it is often those associated with written texts that are presented (*and, or, moreover, furthermore, but, nevertheless*), while those that occur in conversations are not taught systematically. While these markers do not pose difficulties to NSs, they pose severe problems for NNSs. That is why L2 learners often fail to recognise and comprehend these signals for top-down processing in lectures (Nattinger and DeCarrico 1982).

Moreover, ESL/EFL materials often focus on conversation as the finished product of the act of communication, rather than on the process that underlies conversational discourse (Richards and Sukwiwat 1983). Spoken exchanges in the current oral and listening materials in Hong Kong reveal the same problem. Examination of a representative set of listening materials locally produced for advanced learners of English by native speakers of English reveals that the conversations do not lack DMs at all. Rather they contain a lot of DMs that closely resemble real speech. But as has been pointed out, the focus of listening is always on information exchange rather than on the process of

communication. DMs have not been exemplified or properly exploited to help students understand the dynamics of the conversation.

Take the following extract as an example. It was written by a native speaker of English for Form 5 (Grade 11) students to prepare them for the public exam. The DMs (in bold) account for more than 10% of the total number of words in the transcript. They mark functions that are interactional rather than transactional in nature and form useful devices in signposting the sequence of discussion. Nevertheless, the questions set to test students' listening power are mainly information-focussed.

- Woman: ***Now**, the next thing we've got to decide is when to have the conference in June.*
- Man 1: *That's a four-day conference, **right**?*
- Woman: ***Well**, originally, yes, **but** we've had to cut one day...we can't really afford four days. **Now**, it's got to be over a weekend so that people will be able to attend.*
- Man 2: *Yes, a weekend is good – Friday to Sunday. **But** we've got to be careful about holidays. Keep in mind that the Dragon Boat holiday's on the third Thursday...*
- Woman: *Yes, the twenty-first...*
- Man 2: ***Right. And** lots of people will be away on holiday. If we begin the conference on the next day, on the twenty-second, we won't get many people.*
- Woman: *Starting on the fifteenth, **you mean**?*
- Man 1: *Yes. That sounds good.*
- Woman: ***Right, then.** We're agreed.*

JUNE						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u>	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

(Source: Pottor, J. 1997. *Steps and Skills. Integrated Listening, Reading and Writing 5. Paper III. (revised edn.). Hong Kong: Witman. pp.243, 245.*)

A similar viewpoint is found in the study of Scotton and Bernstein (1988) who show that real direction-giving contains many discourse features that are outside the request for directions and the actual directions. These include, for instance, fillers (*um, okay*), pause and space fillers (*well, let's see*), orientation checks and hedges (*I think, probably*), etc. A careful examination of the aforementioned markers reveals that many of them, in fact, perform their functions as DMs rather than contributing directly to the propositional content of direction-giving. This observation, coupled with the interpersonal, referential, structural and cognitive functions they perform in spoken exchanges (Chapter III), gives further support that there is a need to modify existing textbook materials and their accompanying activities to add a taste of authenticity and interactiveness to teaching spoken dialogues. Scotton and Bernstein (1988) conclude that unless classroom materials contain the interactional and peripheral elements characteristic of real direction-giving, the learner will have little chance to develop selective listening skills.

As a way to enhance learners' understanding of spoken discourse, questions in listening materials can be modified to focus on the attitude of the conversationalists rather than purely on the message itself. Contextual bases as in most natural conversations offer an excellent ground for illuminating meanings of DMs. But to my knowledge most listening materials in Hong Kong do not give learners practice on DMs. It is possible that corpora of real recordings marked with the contexts students are likely to meet locally and abroad and in radio broadcasts, TV programmes and movies or even lectures can be adapted and supplemented to illuminate the functions of DMs and have them presented systematically.

6.3.4.2 Teacher training as professional enlightenment

In contrast to the consistently high evaluation of the linguistic and pedagogic values of DMs, the respondents are on the whole uncertain if they have taught DMs in their speaking and listening lessons. This inadequacy has implications for professional enlightenment about language and variety. In training learners to become good observers of language at discourse level, it is essential that English teachers first need to be adequately trained in pre-service and in-service programmes in order to facilitate uptake of DMs as a significant linguistic feature. They should be equipped to have a sound understanding of what they are, the role they play in spoken discourse and how they can be properly taught. Experienced teachers can be offered specialist training in applied linguistics courses so that they will be ready for service as language advisers, syllabus designers, materials writers and teacher trainers, etc. In achieving this, access to corpus data and regional variations and recordings from different speakers and from different

genres are potentially effective ways, particularly in Hong Kong where exposure to authentic formal and informal English conversation in classroom settings is limited.

6.3.5 Practices in Language Learning and Teaching Processes (Scale 6)

Having established the essential roles of DMs in linguistic and pedagogic perspectives and having asserted the desirability to stick to the native speaker norm as well as the need to expose students to varieties at different levels, it is necessary now to explore how they can be effectively taught and the degree of competence teachers should expect their students to achieve.

6.3.5.1 Teaching strategy

As far as teaching strategy is concerned, recent research has emphasised the importance of linguistic awareness in the acquisition of a new language. In empowering L2 learners as a language learner and a language user, DMs could be introduced by methods of observation, noticing or conscious exploration (McCarthy and Carter 1994) and learners are led to draw conclusions from what they notice and to organise their view in the light of conclusions they have drawn (Willis and Willis 1996). Explicit contrasts and comparisons have also been recommended as effective ways of approaching spoken language which make students aware of pragmatic differences and linguistic and cultural differences. Practically speaking, this can be achieved through access to different types of language data, depending on level: real data, textbook data, students' own production, and their first language. Contrastive consciousness-raising activities could offer substantial input for language classes and open to learners different ways of how spoken language can be reproduced.

In order to facilitate acquisition of DMs, raising awareness of their widespread role in spoken language through discussion and exemplification could be introduced through contextualised examples, which might begin with learning them as lexical items. Observation of natural data instead of a word-learning approach is recommended and lends its support from the discipline of corpus linguistics (Tomlinson 1998). More opportunity should be created to reflect on language use and build in their analytical power.

6.3.5.2 Teaching priority

As far as the teaching priority is concerned, there is an overall consensus among the respondents that both reception and production targets should be achieved for advanced learners of English, a sequence in contrast with McCarthy's view that it is better to allow production to be delayed until suitable natural opportunities arise (McCarthy 1998). Despite the consensus among respondents, there are still grounds to support the view that a receptive purpose should take precedence in the learning process.

Firstly, in oral communication, the responsibility in communication does not rest with the speaker alone. The listener also has responsibility to make the necessary adjustments in order to ensure mutual intelligibility and to avoid miscommunication (Samonte 1981).

Good listeners should make every effort to understand aspects of NS or NNS usage and operate with the expectation of a tolerable degree of mutual comprehension. It seems it is unjustified to solely require NNSs to sound exactly like the NSs. It is necessary for them to be equipped with the necessary knowledge of the important roles of DMs in interaction, so that they can automatically exploit their use, and at the same time develop

awareness and make necessary adjustment to the usage of other interlocutors, either L1 or L2 speakers. Therefore, teachers must be clear about the rationale for any pedagogic focus on DMs so that learners are able to exploit the functions automatically while listening. It will be useful to encourage practising different skills in identifying relevant DMs and topics within a text to facilitate listening comprehension. Promoting instantaneous understanding and the use of discourse items typical of speech prove to be beneficial (Brown and Yule 1983).

Secondly, communicative teaching methodology often treats four skills in second language teaching as an integrated skill rather than discrete and isolated skills. Though it is justified to help students to achieve fluency in all aspects of language skills, taking into consideration the fact that artificiality in production is a strong argument against stressing DMs in ELT classroom, I would argue that getting students to learn DMs initially for reception purpose to facilitate better comprehension seems to be more desirable and realistic. In this respect, it is justified to delay the process until a future opportunity arises. But the extent to which this claim is justified and how far DMs should be taught to fully optimise their linguistic value with respect to the situation in Hong Kong remains an interesting issue to pursue. More empirical studies with respect to this acquisition aspect are warranted.

Furthermore, findings concerning the teaching priority have reflected a different perspective between NS and NNS teachers. While the NNS local teachers favour a more ambitious approach to teaching DMs concurrently for both receptive and productive purposes, the NS teachers mainly support a receptive approach. This finding is consistent

with the dominant exonormative perspective endorsed by most NNSs (Scale 2) and reflects their eagerness to expect their students to conform as closely as possible to the NS norm, whether it is for reception or production.

6.4 Summary of the Findings

In conclusion, the present quantitative questionnaire survey (N=132) suggests a very positive attitude by the teachers towards DMs in terms of their pragmatic value (Scale 3) which provides extrinsic motivations in three broad areas: (1) practical value in work, business, education and examinations, (2) communicative value in orienting the listener to the overall structure of the spoken discourse, in signposting to the listener of the interrelationships of different segments of talk, in marking one's attitudes and responses to the propositional meanings in talk, and (3) their value in academic pursuit such as facilitating comprehension of university lectures, demonstration of good communication strategies in public examinations and hence, the accompanying added value in achieving upper social mobility. Besides, teachers also perceive the very positive pedagogic value of DMs (Scale 1) and regard them as a highly useful and desirable linguistic device in classroom instruction, without which communication is deemed unsatisfactory and inadequate. Yet teachers are still exonormative, favouring the British model in their choice of speaking model (Scale 2). The results also show that the teachers are torn between two standards – while denigrating Hong Kong English as a sub-standard variation and perceiving the native speaker norm as the pedagogic standard (Scale 2), they acknowledge that local models should be recognised as part of the total repertoire of international Englishes (Scale 7). Therefore, a proper understanding of Hong Kong English is called for and I suggest a 'double standard' as a guideline for the linguistic

norm in Hong Kong which makes specific distinctions of language use at intranational and international levels to embrace both an outside standardised code and an internal norm. Teachers are also challenged to adopt an attitude-reforming strategy to *ALTER* for a change: to acknowledge and accept (*A*) that English has become internationalised; to take on a liberal (*L*) and tolerant (*T*) attitude towards different varieties of English; enabling learners to have constant exposure (*E*) to different varieties so as to sharpen their linguistic competence and helping them to foster a wider world English perspective that English should seek relevance (*R*) to the local culture. The results also indicate underrepresentation of DMs in both speaking and listening lessons and in teaching materials. Suggestions are made with regard to modifying textbook materials as a source of input and teacher training for professional enlightenment. In terms of classroom practice (Scale 6), the teachers agree that awareness-raising activities are effective ways where students at intermediate-advanced level are challenged to acquire them for both receptive and productive purposes. The teachers are challenged to take on a world perspective towards the internationalisation of English and the development of 'New Englishes'.

CHAPTER VII QUALITATIVE SURVEY

7.0 Introduction

Recent development in research methodology has witnessed a growing emphasis on a pluralistic or multi-method approach to research. Wedded to the previous quantitative questionnaire survey which provides a general pattern of the attitudinal profile of English teachers in EMI schools in Hong Kong towards DMs, an attempt was made to illuminate and to confirm the results in the light of a qualitative process through a semi-structured in-depth interview. This chapter outlines the methodology for the pluralistic approach, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses and presents the sampling of the interviewees. This is followed by a description of the data collection instruments and the interview procedure. Finally, the views of the teachers obtained from the interview are discussed.

7.1 Methodology

7.1.1 Design

According to Robson (1993), the interviewer in a semi-structured interview has worked out a set of questions in advance, but is free to modify the question order based on his/her perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of the conversation. In the same vein, by using a small number of prepared questions and then some further questions improvised to follow up the interviewees' response to the original questions, the present interview aims at providing a close-up and detailed explanation relevant to the established observations. While the previous chapter on the quantitative measurement is largely hypothetical-deductive, the present qualitative investigation is inductive and

looks for the emergence of unanticipated categories. Through this interview process as a means to understand social meanings in a unique sociolinguistic context like Hong Kong, the overall response obtained from the prior quantitative study can then be cross-referenced and validated. As a supplementary research tool, I would argue that the validity of the overall analysis can be further enhanced rather than affected through the semi-structured interview. Patton (2001: 193) raises the merit of this confirmatory technique:

‘Follow-up interviews with a subsample of respondents can provide meaningful additional detail to make sense out of and interpret survey results. Qualitative data can put flesh on the bones of quantitative results, bringing the results to life through in-depth case elaboration’.

It is hoped that through this process, I can test and confirm my initial hypotheses and arrive at a deeper understanding of the complexities of the teachers’ precepts and views for greater trustworthiness.

7.1.2 Participants

Upon completion of the questionnaire in the first phase quantitative survey, all the 132 English teachers involved were asked to indicate their interest in taking part in a follow-up interview. Out of the pool three respondents were chosen to be the sample group for a semi-structured telephone interview. Owing to geographical limitation, they were contacted through long distance telephone call and email correspondence.

The way I made my choice is grounded in the established observation in the quantitative survey that there is a distinction between native speaker and non-native speaker teachers in perceiving the role and importance of DMs and therefore, its pedagogic priority.

Furthermore, language expertise as a variable also accounts for the appropriate assessment of the treatment of DMs in the unique Hong Kong sociolinguistic context. Since the majority (59.8%) of the EMI senior form English teachers who filled in the questionnaires were experienced teaching professionals, in order to bring the discussion to a more focused level, only members of this batch of experienced teachers were selected for an interview and I believe that their expertise in the teaching field can offer a very insightful assessment regarding the linguistic and pedagogic values of DMs. Besides, the selection was made more balanced with the representation of one male and two female subjects. As far as their nationality is concerned, one interviewee is from Hong Kong and two from dominant English-speaking countries, namely, Britain and Canada, all of which account for the origins of 90% of the population in the quantitative survey. The native and non-native English teacher components offer a good ground for comparison.

Table 7.1 shows the profile of the candidates in detail. Candidate A was a local female teacher who was very experienced and had taught in secondary schools in Hong Kong for over 20 years. She was well-qualified and possessed a master's degree in Language Studies from Britain. She received teaching training in a College of Education in Hong Kong, which had been combined with the other Colleges of Education and formed the present Hong Kong Institute of Education. Consistent with the general pattern of response from the quantitative survey, she endorsed the important role DMs play in spoken discourse and agreed that her students should identify with the native speaker norm.

Table 7.1 Profile of the Candidates

Candidate	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
Nationality	NNS – Hong Kong	NS – Canada	NS – United Kingdom
Gender	Female	Female	Male
Teaching Experience	<div>➤ Very experienced</div> <div>➤ Teaching over 20 years</div>	<div>➤ Very experienced</div> <div>➤ Teaching over 14 years</div> <div>➤ Overseas language instructor</div>	<div>➤ Very experienced</div> <div>➤ Teaching over 10 years</div> <div>➤ Private tutor, materials developer</div>
Qualification	<div>➤ Well-qualified</div> <div>➤ With teacher training</div> <div>➤ With a master’s degree in Language Studies</div>	<div>➤ With no relevant degree in the English language</div> <div>➤ With teacher training</div>	<div>➤ Well-qualified</div> <div>➤ With teacher training</div> <div>➤ With a master’s degree in TESL</div>
Orientation (based on the questionnaire)	<div>➤ Affirm value of DMs</div> <div>➤ Support using NS norm</div>	<div>➤ Don’t regard DMs as useful</div> <div>➤ Don’t support using NS norm</div>	<div>➤ Affirm value of DMs</div> <div>➤ Support using NS norm</div>

Candidate B was a female teacher from Canada. Graduated as a Home Economics teacher she had no relevant degree in English though she had received teacher training in language and education. She had taught in Hong Kong for 14 years and took up private tutoring after school and also served as a materials writer for a local publisher. Her crude orientation indicates that neither did she regard DMs as very important language features nor did she support following the native speaker norm. She ranked DMs very low priority in the teaching curriculum and suggested trimming down DMs in the teaching materials.

Candidate C was a male English teacher from Britain. He was equally as experienced and well-qualified as Candidate A, and had a master’s degree in TESL. Other than his teaching experience in Hong Kong, he had also taught in places like Saudi Arabia and

Zambia. The present school in which he was teaching is very reputable in the territory and has an intake of very high calibre students. Similar to Candidate A, he affirmed the roles of DMs and supported following the native speaker norm as the model of speech.

7.1.3 Materials

The pre-interview materials included a collection of samples of DMs and a session summary sheet. The former are extracts of transcriptions from CANCODE which had been used in the prior questionnaire survey with some more examples added. They go with some textbook data on DMs selected from a popular textbook used in Hong Kong (see Appendix 20). The session summary sheet (Appendix 21) basically contains all the relevant research questions that would be addressed in the interview which are framed as the guiding questions for the interview. This session summary sheet serves as a memo for marking down candidates' responses to safeguard against any unforeseeable accident that might arise from tape-recording.

7.1.4 Procedure

7.1.4.1 Pre-interview

1. The procedure began with a self-introduction explaining the purpose of the interview through a pre-interview long distance telephone call. In explaining the interview emphasis was given that the telephone interview would take 45 minutes. Upon confirmation of their participation, time for the interview was arranged and the interview was conducted within one to two weeks. The candidates were requested to be free from interference during the interview.

2. Permission from the candidates to tape record the interview was then sought and anonymity was assured.
3. The details of the interview were confirmed by email and the pre-interview materials were sent as an attached document prior to the interview. The interviewees were expected to read the materials so as to orientate themselves to the concepts of DMs as defined in the present study.

7.1.4.2 Interview

1. Telephone contact was established as scheduled. Candidates A and C could be connected but Candidate B had forgotten the interview. Another arrangement was then made for her. The interviews took place on the following dates and times:

Candidate A - 24 November 2001 10.30 AM

Candidate B - 26 November 2001 1.00 PM

Candidate C - 18 December 2001 12.30 PM
2. All the interview data was tape recorded and transcripts were produced to provide a reliable record of the naturally-occurring interaction.
3. In order to ease the atmosphere, the conversation started off with a brief warm-up chat to settle down both the interviewee and the interviewer and let both parties get used to each other's voice. Considering that telephone interview is not a face-to-face communication, the interviewees were requested to tolerate intermittent silence.
4. Towards the end of the interview, invitation to talk about other aspects of views and experiences that had not been covered in the interview was made to elicit and illuminate further points of interest.

7.2 Results and Discussion

The interviews were all recorded and transcribed with a running word of 17,086 (refer to Appendices 22-24). The data were coded in the categories that arose from the initial set of interview questions which help to organise and synthesise the data so that useful and informative patterns emerge (Brown 2001) and conclusion can be drawn. The arrangement also formed the framework for the results section of this part. I attempt to compare similarities and differences of their responses and find relationships between teachers' stated beliefs and practices. Observations on any unstated beliefs as well as discrepancies from the quantitative results were also noted.

7.2.1 Pragmatic Value of Discourse Markers

Basically the interviewees adhered firmly to the linguistic value of DMs with regard to their role in communication, especially Candidates A and C. The dominant pattern was to acknowledge the naturalness they bring to conversation as expressed by A:

- A: I compared to the original version of the script with Script B where the discourse markers have been taken away and I notice there is a big difference. Em I think everybody uses DMs very naturally in their speech without realising it. So I think em without all these, the language sounds terribly unnatural. I think people use it all through I mean even in em the texts or sentences...
(Appendix 22)

Also Candidate A claimed that serving as an indexical instrument in the process of communication, DMs help to indicate the speaker's attitudes and provide linkage for the relationship between two statements, which correspond to the referential and interpersonal functions made earlier:

- A: I think it will indicate the speaker's attitudes, whether em that hesitations throughout or whether to support the idea or I can feel very strongly DMs not only the words themselves but also the tone in which they are spoken+...
...the relationship between two statements would not be so clear with those discourse markers because they include what like *because*... I mean the meaning itself would be in piece because this what will sort of link up the relationships between two statements, or two phrases or the relationship between ah one thing and the other. I mean they have these functions naturally. If they are taken away the relationship between the first statement and the second statement will much become unclear.
(Appendix 22)

Candidate C furthered the important role of DMs by claiming that they are a means to gather thoughts and serve to mark hesitation in speech. So this functions on the cognitive realm:

C: Well from time it gather own thoughts it's one function I draw attention most to students you know to point out that certain can be useful reflect of thoughts...Taking taking his time to gather own thoughts
(Appendix 24)

Another useful quality DMs can bring to speech is the softening effect they have, without which the speech would sound blunt and impolite. Candidate A raised the point that examples like *'em well'*, *'em yes'*, *'but'* and *'right'* are structurally much simpler and better choices than relatively formal expressions like *'I disagree'*, *'I'm afraid I don't agree with you here'* in making polite disagreement and refusals.

A: +sometimes if I will teach them an expression em like *I'm afraid I don't agree with you here* em sometimes they can pick it up sometimes most of the time they don't. They find the expressions completely formal. So if they can use discourse markers like *well yes* I also think that er that I see it that way so I think some discourse markers are much simpler to learn rather than expressions like *I'm afraid I don't agree with you here...*
(Appendix 22)

However, the above viewpoint was not endorsed by B who had hesitation in asserting the usefulness of DMs and claimed that she seldom included DMs in her talk:

B: I believe that it's not 100 percent necessary because I actually repeat myself without them.
(Appendix 23)

Yet a study of her speech reveals that she had incorporated a very extensive use of DMs, as manifested in the use of *I see*, *well*, *you know*, *I mean*, *yeah*, *well*, *but*, *cos* and *right* in the following utterances:

B: *I see well you know I mean* I can't think of any British British style. I'm most an American.
(Appendix 23)

B: *Yeah yes yes I see. Well those ones some of them they would know but cos they know it from very young age. Yeah I know the gentleman who wrote it. Right I think the word ...*
(Appendix 23)

It seems that DMs had been used unconsciously, a typical conversational phenomenon raised by Watts (1989) who has shown how native speakers use DMs unconsciously. Her rationale stems from the belief that DMs are redundant elements in speech and they would confuse learners, therefore, keeping speech simple is a more effective way of communication. Despite her objection to the linguistic value DMs have, she acknowledged the naturalness and informal nature they can bring to spoken discourse, a point in line with the opinion of Candidate A. On the same grounds as C, she agreed that DMs can serve social purposes such as softeners and facilitators in talk and can encourage speakers to continue with their contributions.

B: *Em I really don't think it's completely necessary BUT we use them to make each other feel better, to eh show that you understand and a lot of that is going on conversation between friends or people that you know well. Anyway I don't think it's necessary BUT I do think that it soften the conversation mm mm I mean here in Hong Kong they use it quite a bit but I think I mean NSs do use this hm hm and I mean this is not so necessary but you hear that you do really want to continue to speak even more and it's a kind of pushes you forward inspire you on to speak more.*
(Appendix 23)

Overall, all three experienced teachers, especially A and C, were very inclined to value the pragmatic use of DMs. In line with the literature, they firmly believed that DMs, as discourse organisation devices, perform chaining integrative functions and contribute to discourse coherence (Schiffrin 1987, Fraser 1999). They also agreed that DMs help to contribute to fluency at the discourse level (Ejzenberg 2000) and perform particularly important interpersonal functions. With these perceptions the interviewees had no reservations about exploiting the linguistic value of DMs for pedagogic benefit and supporting students to apply understanding of DMs for their own purposes in different spoken settings.

7.2.2 Underrepresentation of Discourse Markers in Classroom

7.2.2.1 Representation in teaching materials

DMs have traditionally been undervalued and neglected, especially in spoken language. This was raised by Candidate B:

- B: The only place I have seen any reference has been em in books for writing these words *however, moreover, but*, in a in a written text but never for oral never for oral listening.
(Appendix 23)

Candidate C also strongly agreed that DMs occupy very low status in the Hong Kong classroom. Sharing a similar viewpoint, Candidate A elaborated that their teaching materials do carry a lot of DMs but not much attention had been drawn to this aspect of language.

- A: On oral it may take a lot of them but the teachers seldom bring students' attention to them. So they are just there but students don't realise the importance em and they don't try to learn and pick up these. Em I don't think there is any effort made by both teachers and students+
- I: OK
- A: +because they think this is not important+
- I: OK
- A: +only the vocabulary will play a major role in expressing meanings and in picking up what other people mean so none of us I mean neither teacher nor student have paid enough attention to them at all. Even though we see them very often because they don't come with the answer anyway. That's also one reason why we've neglected them. Just pay attention to words like *fourthly secondly thirdly* because they indicate a point. For Form 6 students they need to have this knowledge em if they are looking for an appropriate answer, then *oh certainly* it's the first point. Or *on the other hand* which the sequence bring out a contrasting idea we do bring their attention to these connectives but other than these em not much attention have been paid.
(Appendix 22)

Whilst much of the present day pedagogic effort has been channelled to expanding the vocabulary capacity of the learner, the low lexical content of DMs has devalued their pedagogic importance and therefore, their pedagogic priority. Again emphasis on the transactional nature of most textbook dialogues only highlight DMs that help to arrive at the appropriate answer in listening comprehension (like organisational ones, e.g. *first, next, then, etc.*) and therefore, further undervalue those markers that

contribute to reflecting the interpersonal dimension (attitudinal ones e.g. *well, you know, I mean*, etc.) in speech.

7.2.2.2 Representation by teachers

Regarding the representation of DMs by the teachers, the subjects admitted that not much effort had been spent on introducing DMs to their students. Candidate A stated that only those conventional ones like *firstly, secondly, or next, or on the other hand* were mentioned in class:

- A: But I have never done that before honestly. Em the only thing we did is ah words like to tell them to listen out to words like *firstly, secondly, or next, or on the other hand* which brings out a contrasting meaning+
(Appendix 22)

Likewise, Candidate B made this remark:

- B: The only place I have seen any reference has been em in books for writing these words *however moreover but* in a in a written text but never for oral never for oral listening. So I haven't any training BUT I have read a book in books with regard to em writing English.
(Appendix 23)

Despite the low representation, Candidate A did recall her experience of learning DMs from her ex-teacher who stated that they are small words in speech but can perform more than small functions:

- A: I don't think anybody has paid much attention to that no. But when I was in my secondary school I once heard my English teacher called to a native speaker she was talking about she was teaching us oral. She did mention something like even if you hear someone talking on the phone the person may not be speaking anything at all just *ha ha well then*+
I: I think these are discourse markers then.
A: +that shows communication she tried to show us em that linking words these are useful in our oral. But it's for only once that I can remember and she was only talking about this for a couple of minutes only (.) never again.
(Appendix 22)

Despite the low representation, a positive affirmation of the pragmatic value of DMs by the interviewees suggests that there is a need to put them into proper focus through

explicit teaching. Candidate C used *yeah* as an example:

- C: ...there are certain point in speech where we intend to make pauses helping our listeners will encourage them to go on to show our attention you know by saying *you know what I mean yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah*... Well to some extent I keep telling *yeah* to get them naturally but there's no harm there's no harm in being explicit.

(Appendix 24)

As a step towards incorporating DMs in the spoken curriculum, Candidate A proposed the idea that emphasis can be geared towards markers like *OK*, *right* and *sort of* which have seldom been touched upon. She furthered that learners can acquire DMs naturally since their mother tongue contains DMs as well:

- A: I don't think we have given much attention to this area in our curriculum in Hong Kong. We teach part of it like connectives *so* and *because but despite* but not *OK right em sort of* but we don't teach things like these. Students will have to em to I mean pick these up as they listen to the teacher, as they listen to the language being used in genuine situation and naturally they pick it because I think DMs is present in their mother tongue too.

(Appendix 22)

Viewing from this perspective, it is possible that the learner's mother tongue can be exploited as a resource for consolidating DMs in the target language. But in presenting DMs to students, Candidate C raised that teaching should avoid overloading learners with grammatical terminology.

In sum, the views gathered are consistent with the findings from the quantitative survey that there is no strong orientation towards representation of DMs in either teaching or in teaching materials and hence, confirms the hypothesis that DMs are underrepresented in the second language classroom.

7.2.3 Identification with Native Speaker Norm

7.2.3.1 Norm of speaking

As far as the speaking norm is concerned, all the interviewees expressed the idea that not much consideration had been given to the issue, a result that is in line with the

state of ambivalence indicated in the quantitative survey. Yet they all showed a tendency to view an exonormative norm as the only conceivable standard. There was general sympathy towards variations in spoken discourse and nativised varieties, the key criterion of acceptability being whether or not the listener would be likely to understand it. Despite that, there prevails a negative attitude towards Hong Kong English.

While claiming her ignorance towards the issue, Candidate A, as a non-native local English teacher, also stated that it would be advantageous to cling to the native speaker model so as to meet the criterion from the examination and the economic forces which significantly shape career opportunities in Hong Kong. Taking the sociolinguistic demand of Hong Kong into consideration, Candidate C strongly upheld the argument at approximation to native speaker intonation, markers and tenses should be the goal for his pupils, though he regarded sticking to the native speaker norm as a justified but not a realistic goal. The attitude as represented by A and C is typical of the view endorsed by most teaching professionals, employers, learners and parents in Hong Kong and even in most other countries. It is because they are faced with the situation that performance of the learners is assessed according to L1 approximation in terms of examination standard and career opportunities. As long as these criteria are in force, it is unlikely that a new model of English as the target of achievement would be adopted. On the contrary, Candidate B, as a native speaker teacher, viewed the speaking norm issue purely from an educational perspective and found it too demanding and unrealistic to expect students to stick to the native speaker norm.

B: I think that's expecting too much too much I mean my colleagues can get them and they are educated professionals so em I mean you know it would be grand it would be great if they could... or my students I think much to ask but it would be great a wonderful thing but I don't think it can happen.
(Appendix 23)

Their introspection brings forth another dimension of the issue raised by opponents of linguistic imperialism. For instance, Rajagopalan (1999) asserts that '[t]he concerted rhetoric currently being orchestrated against the pretensions of English...can understandably lead to an increasing unease and a nagging guilt complex among those who are involved in the enterprise of spreading the English language'. Ideologically, neither of the two NS interviewees (Candidates B and C) showed any trace of such a guilt complex. Even Candidate B, who held an opposing view, still claimed that it would be 'wonderful' if her students could achieve a near native standard. Overall, pursuing native-like usage and proficiency as the goal of language learning seems to remain a dominant trend in a cosmopolitan city like Hong Kong. The closer the approximation, the better it will be although they acknowledge the fact that it may not be a realistic goal to attain. While the attitude of the non-native teacher is in accord with the global trend gauged from the quantitative survey in endorsing an exonormative standard, there exists individual variation between the two native teachers.

7.2.3.2 Which model to choose?

Taking into consideration the support for an exonormative norm by most interviewers, there arises another issue: Which model should we follow? All three candidates showed a reverential attitude towards British Standard English, though the intensity of inclination varied. As far as their attitude towards different variations is concerned, Candidate A was not very assertive and adopted a more tolerant and open

attitude to other varieties, be they Australian, British, American, Singaporean Englishes or Hong Kong English. Taking a wider perspective, she highlighted the importance of mutual intelligibility as the criteria for accepting other regional variations. In her opinion, it would not matter if one speaks /dɑns/ or /dæns/; /kɪləmi:tə/ or /kɪləmɪtə/ as long as the pronunciations do not impinge on the meanings in the process of communication. More importantly, she asserted that mutual intelligibility must be guaranteed.

- I: So you don't have any particular favour preference for any particular variety?
A: Well not really. But for spelling em for safety sake we still ask them to keep to the British style
I: OK but for the way we speak you don't mind.
A: Right no.
(Appendix 22)

But as far as the written mode is concerned, she undoubtedly opted for the exonormative British model and insisted her pupils write grammatically correct sentences.

As a British, Candidate C showed a non-egalitarian position and gave a high value to his own British variety. The following two excerpts reveal his viewpoints:

- C: ... I think the original English is eh richer eh original language is somewhat of greater potentiality yeah that particular feature English which is the ability to achieve you know prestigious in terms of time sequence aspect action you know and they I've raised suggestion that you know English-speaking people may have probably do have a distinctive distinctive perception of time just through the the moulding effect of the perception of the very nature of the language itself.
- C: +People from different countries speak different English you know people... and yeah obviously some eh language groups will be less easily perceptible comprehensible than others em yeah.

(Appendix 23)

The value-laden descriptions of his own variety like 'richer', 'more prestigious' and 'greater potentiality' and his claim of the lesser perceptibility and comprehensibility of other language groups clearly reflect his strong perception of the British variety as more powerful than the other varieties, though he had not explicitly claimed that the

British variety is intrinsically superior to other varieties. Moreover, he raised the grammatical inadequacy of the present perfect tense in American English. He favoured the British model, as he claimed, because it is what he was most readily able to offer as a British teacher.

As for Candidate B, she also viewed British English most suitable to Hong Kong and she ranked Canadian English the second:

B: I'm most an American. I can't bring off the British way because it was a British colony for so long and they have been more exposed to British accent em specifically in the HKCEE exam they just only recently brought in American accent and I've been here for 14 years so I go mostly tell them British and then Canada Commonwealth form. I go more for the British...
(Appendix 23)

The dominant trend in favour of the British model is not difficult to understand. The dispersal of English to Hong Kong designated as a British colony a century ago has idealised the British model, and therefore, legitimately reinforced the long-held assumption that British English is more original, comprehensible and perceptible. Furthermore, support from the economic and educational sectors consolidates the supremacy of this exonormative norm. Motivated by the instrumental role English plays in the economic development of Hong Kong and its commanding position as a meeting place for East and West, the majority in the public sector still conform to the colonial norm in the present post-colonial era and adopt a less welcoming attitude to the local variety. But from a linguistic and a sociocultural perspective, it is not justified to assume one's language as more normal, natural or better as opposed to other varieties (Trudgill 1983, Phillipson 1992a). In asserting his egalitarian position Trudgill (1983) made following claim:

'Standard English is only one variety among many, although a peculiarly important one. Linguistically speaking, it cannot even legitimately be considered better than other varieties. The scientific study of language has

convinced most scholars that all language, and corresponding all dialects, are equally “good” linguistic systems’.
(Trudgill 1983: 20)

Since language is inevitably bound up in a wealth of local, social, cultural, economic, educational and political complexities (Pennycook 1994), it is by no means a simple issue to deal with. On a similar stance, the question ‘Whose English should we teach our students?’ has also gone far beyond a purely linguistic issue but is a matter related to the sociology of power relations (Rajagopalan 1999). Despite the complexities, Quirk’s (1990) view that Standard English should be the sole pedagogically suitable model for teaching English all over the world is continually under challenge among scholars nowadays.

7.2.3.3 Hong Kong English

The interviewees held different attitudes towards Hong Kong English, which according to them, is a kind of interlanguage as a result of transfer from Cantonese and having inadequate exposure to the target language. As a well-qualified and experienced teacher, Candidate A showed an enlightened attitude in acknowledging that it was natural and inevitable to have a local variety. She was fully aware that a language cannot be divorced from its culture and they are so closely intertwined with each other that they could never be treated as separate entities.

A: Em I think it’s inevitable. Even if you go to Singapore Malaysia there are may be terms more favoured than any other place in the world, in English basically in English. I think language itself basically cannot be detached from the culture eh the place where it is spoken where it is used the people who use it a lot of things will influence it.

(Appendix 22)

This is in line with the attitude of most linguists who regard transfer as a natural phenomenon from the perspective of language evolution. As noted by Odlin (1989: 27), ‘transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the

target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired'. But to many of the policy makers, language teachers and even lay-people in Hong Kong, transfer has been largely viewed as production errors constituting divergences from target language norms, as a result of insufficient learning and ineffective teaching. So it is not surprising to find that Candidate A (despite her apparently enlightened perspective) still considered Hong Kong English (derogatorily labelled 'Chinguish') a deviation, a non-standard form rather than an innovation. Candidate B held a similar view. The following extracts capture the opinions of Candidates A and B:

I: How do you view it do you think Chinguish is an innovative thing or just a deviation from the native speaker norm?

A: Oh I have looked upon it as a deviation having not enough exposure to the eh how it used in the West but they have more exposure they may do it away eventually...

(Appendix 22)

B: Deviation em you know they don't want I believe they want to know the right way I don't think they do from my experience of colleagues they do want to hear the right way of they want me to explain and I'll say this is Chinese I mean I do know quite a lot of the Chinese language this is what you know maybe this is what your opinion of your language there is another one *I gave something I gave a book to her* and in English *I gave her a book* and I will correct that and explain. So I think it's a deviation in the end they do want to know better English they do.

(Appendix 23)

There are occasions where students display features in their speech which resemble usage in their mother language. The following example on the use of connectives '*although*' and '*but*' offers evidence of positive transfer. Candidate A explained that in an English utterance, only '*although*' is required to express a contrastive meaning; whereas in Cantonese, both connectives '*although*' and '*but*' have to be used as a pair to express the contrast:

A: +because they are expressed in that way in Chinese. They use two pairs of connectives sorry one pair of connective in Chinese, whereas in English one word will include the meaning of that two phrases in Chinese, one word 雖然 (*although*) one word 但是 (*but*) being included but in Chinese we use two connectives to bring out the meaning. That's why we translate it directly into

- English they will keep using this pattern. I keep correcting them in written English but then in spoken form it may be a bit irritating to native speakers. This will not impinge meaning at all. Right.
- I: So they can still understand what they are talking about although you use *although* and *but* at the same time.
- A: Yeah this is one very typical example I think certainly.
(Appendix 22)

Similarly, Candidate B referred to a syntactic structure of Hong Kong English as compared to the British variety, which is also an obvious transfer from Cantonese:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>I don't think it's right.</i> | <i>(British variety)</i> |
| <i>I think it's not right.</i> | <i>(Hong Kong variety)</i> |

Since the British norm has become the orthodox standard in language teaching, she thought any deviation from that norm is a mistake no matter how widely and extensively the transfer form has been used.

- B: ...there's a lot of Chinese direct translation and this doesn't mean that it's correct for example *I think it's not right* that's Chinese but that's supposed to be *I don't think it's right*. So if just because on this basis *I think it's not right* doesn't make that a correct sentence in Hong Kong so anyway...
(Appendix 23)

To account for the negative attitude towards Hong Kong English, Candidate A claimed the responsibility of the local examination authority. Though it has recently incorporated American and Australian Englishes into the public oral exams, the following episode she raised reflects a compromising attitude on their side which marginalises the growth of a local variety and perpetuates the hegemony of the dominant British norm.

- A: Ah no because there have been complaints. Students have to listen to Australian accent English dialogue in the listening exam. They received quite a lot of complaints saying that this is not that common in Hong Kong Australian accent English so they say they'd rather most of the time all the teaching periods the kind of English that students are being exposed to are sort of BBC English, the kind of English used by the teachers. So I think the Examination Authority seems to have accepted these cases and they try to use less of the student type the most difficult abbreviation they try to refrain from using them anymore in public exam. This is what I heard of but I don't remember in which occasion I heard about this. But I heard about comp= I know people complain and then the Exam Authority compromised and said and we won't incorporate so much Australian

accent, or Irish people or Scottish people speaking English. Try to use the more standard kind.

(Appendix 22)

Nonetheless, Candidate C was reluctant to acknowledge the evolution or existence of a Hong Kong variety from his experience and claimed that he had not identified any transfer in his students' speech:

C: ...tend to come out here and read the relevant book called Learner Englishes you know that Learner Englishes about second language learners from different language group em I haven't haven't seen anything in Hong Kong which gives me a sense of you know there is a specific there's a specific evolution of a distinctive Hong Kong variety of English.

(Appendix 24)

A reason that accounts for his view is that his school has an intake of high calibre students in the territory who have better language proficiency and more exposure to English than their counterparts in other non-EMI schools. As he observed, they did not find his students' speech heavily involved with transfer. This confirms Benson's (2002) view that transfer is likely to decline with proficiency. However, he later made a contradictory claim and identified a Chinese DM '*la*' in his students' English which is an obvious transfer from Cantonese. '*La*' in Cantonese serves as an emphatic particle at the end of an utterance:

C: There are some cases you know I I agree in Chinguish you know that they keep on saying *no la* you know+

I: No *la*

C: +they speak *la* at the end of the sentence. In fact you know what particularly *la* is quite a number of kids what I'm particularly interested is what they speak in Chinese the other day that she has picked up the habit from them.

(Appendix 24)

The use of *la*, as a hybrid form borrowing from Cantonese, can be interpreted from an affective dimension where speaking Cantonese is an important marker of Chinese identity (Axler *et al.* 1998). As put by Kachru and Nelson (2001), people's language affiliations are a significant part of themselves, and their images of themselves. Equally true is that an individual's language provides the symbol of one's public and

private identity. Nevertheless, findings from Bolton and Kwok (1990: 165) showed that Hong Kong young people are seeing themselves as a distinct and characteristically bilingual group of pragmatic Chinese who do not feel 'un-Chinese' when called upon to use English. They claimed that English no longer poses a threat to Hong Kong Chinese identity, nor do they feel unpatriotic when they speak English, which is perceived as an international and no longer primarily a colonial language.

Moreover, I have demonstrated in the earlier chapter that Hong Kong learners produced very few DMs in their speech which can be regarded as a form of negative transfer. This underuse was mainly due to inexperience and unfamiliarity with English DMs. Under such conditions, pedagogic intervention is necessary because without them, communication may prove difficult. Very often negative transfer tends to be equated with production errors, but I would argue that it is not always so as there are other ways in which an individual's second language performance (like the inclusion of '*la*') may differ from the behaviour of native speakers and this warrants respect and toleration. A negative attitude only prevents any local form from developing, not to say to maintain its integrity.

In general, I would claim that the teachers interviewed need to foster a wider World English perspective. The spread of English suggests that there is a repertoire of models for English and English as a global language now belongs to all those who use it (Kachru 1988). Sooner or later native speakers will become a minority group (Graddol 2001). By hesitating to accept the local form as illustrated through the language features cited above and by upholding the dominant Anglo model as the speaking norm, the teachers explicitly passed a strong message to their students: British English is linguistically superior. Such an attitude establishes a narrow view

of the language and marginalises students speaking a local variety. They can be largely seen as suffering from ‘paradigm myopia’, ‘a short-sighted view of the fast-increasing English-using community in the new contexts of diaspora...’ (Kachru 1996). As English is becoming more widespread, the ownership of the language as the exclusive property of either US or UK has come under challenge, a reality envisaged by Graddol (1997):

‘The centre of authority regarding the language will shift from native speakers as they become minority stakeholders in the global resource. Their literature and television may no longer provide the focal point of a global English language culture, their teachers no longer from the unchallenged authoritative models for learners.’
(Graddol 1997: 3)

But to be sure, teachers’ attitudes towards the pedagogic variety are strongly affected by the needs of the learners which will in turn be crucially determined by the educational, cultural, economic and political forces at work in the society. Their attitude will certainly change as these forces change.

7.2.3.4 Exposure to different varieties

Despite the narrow World English perspective held by the interviewees, they showed a consensus towards the standard ELT ideology of exposing students to different varieties and indicated a willingness to accept cultural and linguistic diversity as a desirable state of affairs. For instance, Candidates A and C declared with certainty that she was in favour of exposing students to different varieties and stated that the current materials can at least keep them exposed to American, Australian, British and occasional Indian and Chinese varieties. Yet a demand for learning an exonormative norm by the Hong Kong public is reflected in Candidate B’s tutoring practice outside her teaching hours. Private tutors in Hong Kong, especially expatriates, are highly

paid for correcting ‘non-orthodox’ local forms and teaching ‘proper’ forms of English. To many language practitioners and publishers, the commercial value that goes with teaching a ‘standard’ variety seems to take precedence over the pedagogic responsibility of introducing different Englishes.

7.2.3.5 *Tolerant attitude*

Whilst being exonormative in attitude, the teachers also indicated a tolerant attitude towards different speaking norms although they were consistent in demonstrating a less favourable attitude towards the Hong Kong variety as discussed above. Candidate A adopted a compromising stance between maintaining international intelligibility and taking the British norm as the model for which she considered self-contradicting to take a ‘double standard’. Her tolerant attitude, as mentioned before, is based on mutual intelligibility and that the way of speaking would not affect the meaning. She illustrated this with an example of interjection usage in Cantonese and English:

- A: Well I think it's a good issue if an American coming to Hong Kong, you'll get used to it and you can tell that this is something that being influenced by L1 to second language learner's mother tongue em but somehow they they cannot understand what's being conveyed so I think they will not hear you I can't tolerate this the kind of interjections it's Cantonese I don't understand what you're saying. Sometimes I mean they don't impinge the meaning at all so they use it in a language why not? Em like instead of saying *Ouch* when feeling hurt em they'll just say (哎 哟) in Cantonese so but I think they can work out the equivalent em they can stand the meaning right away.

(Appendix 22)

Her introspection finds support from Crystal (2001) who offers a balanced view by asserting that a focus on diversity does not necessarily mean a dismissing of standards. He argues that the need to maintain international intelligibility demands the recognition of a standard variety, and at the same time, the need to maintain local identity demands the recognition of local varieties of English. Therefore, I think there

is always a possibility of accommodating a 'double standard' in a unique speech community like Hong Kong, in which 'the cultural situation falls not only between localization and globalization, but also at the cross roads between Asia and the West, the (de)colonized and the colonized (Tam 1998: 78). Such a 'double standard' which I have proposed as a guideline for the linguistic norm in Hong Kong (Section 6.3.3.4) suggests that we can make specific distinctions of language use both at intranational and international levels, as well as the use of English now and in the future. If the language use is mainly for intranational purposes, the local variety should be the norm, whereas if the language use is largely for international purposes, then a native speaker norm or even EIL (English as an International Language) should serve as the standard. Then it is the responsibility of ELT professionals to enable students to learn the different varieties so that they are armed with a repertoire of linguistic knowledge to meet their own personal, social, cultural and communicative needs.

Also Candidate A pointed out that while localisation occurs naturally, accommodation towards different speaking styles will take place automatically in exchanges among speakers from different cultures. She proposed that it is the dual responsibility of the speaker and the listener to make the necessary adjustment in the process of communication.

- A: Say it's spoken in HK em bound to be some incorporation of some Cantonese interjections not all are native-like I must say but if live in another country I'd try to pick up em things that how are being used from the people all around me. I think it's very much affected by the environment by the people by the culture all around you. If I go to Singapore, maybe I'll pick up some of their ah em intonation maybe.
- I: So that means while picking up the native speaker standard you can tolerate
- A: I can tolerate yes people incorporating some of the mother tongue em DMs.
- (Appendix 22)

Accommodation has a role to play in real life exchanges (Jenkins 2000) and unconscious sociolinguistic accommodation normally takes place (Crystal 2001).

Not just L2 learners need to adjust or accommodate towards the L1 speaking style, but L1 speakers should share the responsibility to converge towards or diverge from the speech of the interlocutors as a form of societal accommodation. This skill, according to Jenkins (2000), is difficult to teach but awareness towards this phenomenon can be highlighted and some pedagogic help is desirable.

Amidst cries for a minimisation of the dominant use of standard British or American norms in favour of the promotion of an indigenous language as a result of the colonial legacy, it is undeniably true that Hong Kong still looks to external reference points. Such a sociolinguistic climate in favour of an exonormative standard is unlikely to change as long as pragmatic and utilitarian concerns remain dominant. In sum, the interviewees have adopted a tolerant rather than a resistant attitude towards the new varieties but there is still scope for them to take on a genuine world perspective as raised by Brown (1995) or come to acknowledge that multilingualism rather than monolingualism is the order of the day. Such attitudes are yet another cause of complexity in the larger English-using world.

In the light of Crystal's concern for linguistic rights in the humanising tradition and in bridging the reality of social division, he takes a positive view by encouraging the idea that new varieties should be learnt and a greater social and linguistic toleration fostered.

‘There will always be social division, and so there will always be linguistic variety. We can't remove this variety, but we can learn about it, and try to understand the way it shapes our attitudes and outlook. At the very least, it's a pleasant enough way to pass the time. At best, some good might come out of the enterprise, in the form of greater linguistic – and therefore social – tolerance. It's no coincidence that ‘communication’ and ‘community’ are closely related words.’
(Crystal 1984: 11)

7.2.4 Practices in Language Learning and Teaching Processes

7.2.4.1 *Ideologically justified*

One obvious implication arising from the strong perception of the pragmatic value of DMs is support for explicit instruction in the second language classroom. This is something upon which most of the interviewees agreed. It is a form of linguistic enrichment to equip learners with a tool to achieve goals, whether for academic, social, or personal ends. For instance, Candidate A found it necessary to draw explicit attention to DMs in oral lessons from Form 4 onwards but stressed that care must be taken to maintain naturalness of speech.

I: Do you think there is a need to say to put more emphasis on the teaching of discourse markers say teaching materials then at least to mention them?

A: Em I think it's worth mentioning that we may not need not to elaborate a lot. Em may be in a oral lesson once or twice at least we should mention how these DMs help to convey meaning em so students will instead of speaking simple sentences as many Cantonese-speaking students tend to do so ah I think they write relatively more complicated sentences than they can speak. When they speak, maybe there is a factor of interaction, pronunciation and and they become suddenly scared, and they tend to narrow down the sentence pattern to very simple basic structures em to sounds terribly unnatural sometimes when you listen to the students during their discussion.

...And then if they are aware of these DMs, they may borrow these and em try to link up their speeches without sounding having to sound too unnatural or expect silences sometimes dead air sometimes in between their discussion. Of course, we should not encourage them to use too much or too often, but then if they know how to use them, it may be a good thing to link up certain points in their arguments+

(Appendix 22)

Candidate C suggested that DMs could be treated as a separate category, though students should not be overloaded with grammatical terminology. Again a discordant voice was heard from B who argued that underrepresentation of English DMs among Cantonese speakers and the potential confusion DMs would bring to students suggest that there is no need to include them in the spoken curriculum:

B: ...I don't think they're really useful because I mean I teach in my environment in my workplace I think there are three native speakers only three or four of us, we don't really converse so much because we're so busy but I do work a lot with Chinese I mean I do a lot of Chinese I mean I don't use many DMs when I speak to them or my students.

- I: Why?
B: I think it confuses them quite often.... and I find the students just more confused
I think I keep everything there simple.
(Appendix 23)

Whilst acknowledging the frequent occurrence of DMs among NSs, she claimed that she just communicated with her students in simple sentences based on a ‘won’t-understand-won’t-teach’ presupposition. She explained that in a primarily monolingual classroom situation and sociocultural context in Hong Kong, students are mainly exposed to teachers of English (be they NSs or NNSs) with limited audiovisual inputs in English. Coupled with the fact that people around are not using DMs and even when they graduate they will still be ensconced in the local community, she argued that the priority of teaching DMs is low. Another pragmatic concern she raised is that the curriculum is already cramped and the need for acquiring DMs seems not to be imminent.

Beside that, Candidate B further emphasised two other disadvantages of including DMs in teaching. First, overuse of DMs can be annoying to the listener. Second, use of DMs does not sound ‘professional’ enough. She cited one of her pupils from an international school as an example who repeatedly used *yeah* in her speech and some of her other students started every sentence with *well*, which she claimed, would make the listener feel uncomfortable. Whilst appreciating the possible constraints in teaching DMs, it is perhaps a gross oversimplification for B to claim that ‘*I don’t use really use that you know in professional language*’. As pointed out by McCarthy and Carter (2001), ‘realisation of registers, attitudinal features and topics are inseparable from coherence and its manifestation in surface cohesion’. Her claim demonstrates an insufficient understanding of the range of speech, genres and registers in a socially defined variety of language in which DMs play a key interactive role in enhancing the flow of conversation, especially in informal language. With support from Aston

(1988) that a syllabus based on interactional language is as important as one based on transactional uses of language, there is no reason why DMs as one form of interactional language should not be represented as part of their communicative competence. In my interpretation, I would regard the use of DMs as a form of discourse and strategic competence which are sub-categories of Canale and Swain's (1980) notion of communicative competence. Of particular interest is that Candidate B used many DMs in her dialogue in an apparently unconscious manner.

Taking into consideration the present government's wish for Hong Kong to continue to be a 'world class metropolis' and to function as a centre of economic and cultural interchange between China and the West in the post-colonial era, it is likely that English will still hold an instrumental role in the territory's economic development and career opportunity. Viewed from this perspective, I still find that teachers should have a professional obligation to introduce DMs both as linguistic enrichment and as a language choice no matter whether they have opportunity to interact with other speakers of English in the future, or not.

7.2.4.2 Teaching strategy

Awareness-raising as the first step

The interviewees all expressed the necessity of raising learner's awareness as the first step to approaching DMs. They believed that awareness-raising teaching and learning strategies can, to a great extent, support non-native speakers in their effort to communicate effectively. For instance, Candidate C suggested that awareness can be developed through analogy examples where similarities and differences between English and Chinese DMs can be demonstrated and highlighted under specific circumstances. It is indeed a valid pedagogic strategy is for teachers to explain or

elicit differences between L1 and L2 usage. In addition, Candidate A raised the importance of eliciting this kind of awareness through real life interaction or the 'natural context' raised by Candidate C. Similarly, Candidate B suggested that teachers, as professionals, first need to have this awareness:

B: ...I think it is necessary for them em to become more aware of it. I think they should become more aware of it as much in their discipline as possible I mean doctors do it accountants do it. So I think they should made aware of it yeah. Whether they use it or not it's another matter.

(Appendix 23)

There is support from literature showing the benefit of awareness-raising activities which can bring about an increased awareness of and sensitivity to language where learners are 'encouraged to notice particular features of the language, to draw conclusions from what they notice and to organise the view of language in the light of the conclusions they have drawn' (Willis and Willis 1996: 64).

Widening exposure

Research has pointed out that SLA is facilitated by opportunities for L2 learners to interact with speakers (native and non-native) and use the L2 in a substantive and meaningful ways (Spolsky 1989) and they must have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language and receive as much comprehensible units as possible (Canale 1983). On that ground it is sympathetically justified for Candidate B to claim that teaching DMs would be pedagogically effective only if it was accompanied by significant exposure outside the classroom which provides a realistic second language situation.

B: ...I don't think they worth hang on that UNLESS they are exposed quite a bit more in other place besides classroom...we're not using it and exposed to the proper use of them ...

(Appendix 23)

Unfortunately, limited exposure to different varieties of English is a real constraint in the Hong Kong classroom, with this sociolinguistic situation, she established that it is unnecessary to expose young learners to different varieties.

- B: ... I mean OK Singaporean English Korean English when will they ever get exposure to that? I'm thinking of my own students they're pretty the kids in HK are not like the kids in England and Canada who who have the freedom you know I think there's really they don't really have the opportunity to get exposure. Kids in the international schools I think they do but I really don't think any of my students have up till right now any of my 120 have that let's see even none of them have a conversation with the Singaporean Korean none of them have had any any Malaysian unless so I don't think any of them have any exposure to them so it's not necessary to expose them in the classroom I don't think so, not think so at all.

(Appendix 23)

Candidate A agreed with B to a certain extent and found that students are more likely to be exposed to the American culture from films and videos. However, she took a more positive stance than B by endeavouring to look for possible avenues to widen students' exposure to different varieties of English through field research. She recounted one teaching experience as follows:

- A: I once send students out to the streets interviewing tourists and they are bound to come across of course there is not guarantee what sort of variation they will come into contact but and then they realise that people in different parts of the world may mediate I mean speak slightly differently from each other even though we are all speaking English. Actually this will em boost their confidence they know that even if they are not speaking the kind of standard English em no big deal so do a lot of people around the world I mean they are not speaking the kind of ah BBC English or standard American English that we always hear that we're being exposed to as it is. That's OK I mean some of my students they have interviewed em people in Europe. Most of these are from most of these people English is not their mother tongue. It's very much a second language to them and they come across people from Africa, India, Singapore who speak fluent English but we can tell the difference from the kind of BBC English or the kind of standard they normally listen to or they can come into contact.
- I: So your students were aware of the differences weren't they?
- A: We don't have a lot of those chances I'm afraid. It's only once or twice a year and they can em get into actual experiences. That's good.
- A: For most of these people their mother tongue is not English is very much like a second language to them em they came across people from Africa, em India as well Singapore they speak fluent English but you can tell the difference from the kind of standard they normally listen to or they come into contact with.

(Appendix 22)

A street interview of this kind can heighten students' awareness of different varieties of English and widen their understanding of different repertoires of English. They can come to know that communication in English is not confined to native speakers of English alone who in fact have become a minority group (Graddol 2001), but is even more popular among non-native speakers of English. It is an enriching experience to provide evidence of how real language works differently from that provided through textbook resources based on the language excerpts they collect, and certainly, language corpora have a role to play in teaching and learning English.

In enhancing students' exposure towards other varieties, Candidate A also suggested organising overseas summer study tours but the cost involved makes it a less popular option. Other effective means she raised include inviting English speakers from different origins to present talks at school, and mobilising existing non-local students as an input to promote multicultural communication. Likewise, Candidate C also agreed that street interviews and games could provide opportunities for observation of real life language behaviour.

On top of the aforementioned activities, recorded audio-video interviews, taped excerpts that go with student texts, movie clips and TV programs, etc. both in L1 and L2 can provide valuable resources for comparing language differences in focused areas and heightening language awareness. As Graddol (2001: 60) puts it, in order to help their learners meet the ever-expanding English world, 'teachers need to prepare their students for a world of staggering linguistic diversity and expose them to as many varieties of English as possible, especially those which they are most likely to encounter in their own locale'.

Support from publishers

Besides lacking sufficient exposure to different varieties of language, resources are the second most constraining factor facing teachers in Hong Kong if they want to bring DMs to a proper focus. Candidate A appealed for support from local publishers in preparing appropriate materials.

A: I think we have to depend on the publisher to come out with more of these teaching aids there isn't much we can do to limited resources we can encourage them to surf the Internet but then most of things from the Internet would be written texts+

I: That's right

A: +oral and spoken. I think it's the spoken language em that makes the difference much more stand out.

(Appendix 22)

However, Candidate B held an opposing view. As a materials writer involved in publishing local textbooks, she claimed that she would intentionally trim most of the DMs in oral materials because of the difficulty they are likely to bring to a spoken text. This certainly serves as a counter force in introducing DMs in the spoken curriculum.

B: ...I myself have written books and listening materials for XX Publishing and we specifically don't put in many many of these words because we just don't make it more difficult we're aiming at market for kids so we keep it quite simple but I don't know that the A-Level pa= listening books and those those will contain more of that...

(Appendix 23)

The local publishers are likely to follow markets. It is the examination bodies, the institutionalised authorities and the attitudinal profiles of the teaching professionals that shape the demand of the market, and determine whether discoursal features like conversational DMs and other localised linguistic features should be incorporated in the curricula, teaching materials and resources. In contrast to this phenomenon, Graddol (2001) predicts that the most likely scenario in the current global ELT industry seems to be a continued 'polycentrism' for English.

7.2.4.3 Attainment level

Mastery level

With regard to the appropriate level at which DMs should be introduced, the three interviewees held a similar view that learners at higher forms can benefit more, though some slight variations exist. Candidate A posited that from Secondary 3 onwards, students are quite capable of learning DMs.

A: Em not for the lower form I don't think the lower form should be required to do like that. So maybe about Form 3 Form 4 Form 3 to 7 they can be exposed to...
(Appendix 22)

Yet Candidate B felt that DMs should only be introduced to advanced learners in Secondary 7. As discussed before, she had a more negative perception of the role DMs play in conversation and regarded them as devices that would complicate an utterance rather than facilitating understanding of it. Treating these devices as something that would confuse beginner and intermediate grade learners, and with a view to protect the commercial interest of the publishers as a textbook writer, she deliberately wanted to delay teaching them till A-level. Students would then be, as she argued, cognitively more ready for the input:

B: ...there's only a few Form 1 sorry ⁸Band 1 or 2 schools or so I mean the publishers don't want it because it's too difficult for Band 3, 4 and 5. I would not put too many of them in there now I do put *mm* in my writing because it gives the kids time to catch up with the previous previous sentences or statements you know em that's a lot of it used for HKCE level but I would not complicate that text+

I: I see your point.

B: +the scripts the scripts it will really confuse the weakest and that's Form 5 (?) that's the question advanced learners? I think I probably worth teaching Form 7 students simply because they will be striving a little bit more effort than the Form 5 were.

(Appendix 23)

⁸ Band 1 and 2 schools refer to good banding schools with academically better intake of students out of 5 bands. But since 2001 all the primary children have been graded into 3 bands.

Receptive and/or productive?

The teachers did not hold a very definite attitude to the pedagogic strategy. Candidate A supported the idea that DMs should be learnt as part of the speaking and listening skills, that is, for both receptive and productive purposes based on the belief that the two skills are closely intertwined with each other.

A: I've mentioned before for for higher form we teach students the functions of discourse markers just to expect the answer for listening part of the. But then I'd like to see if they use it or being taught or their awareness being drawn on the drill of their oral in the spoken language as well. That's why I mean that it's worthwhile to have a chapter even on their oral book talking about the use of discourse markers. They don't only use it for drilling the answer from listening context speaking context from a spoken context sorry I got confused but they should be offered to be able to produce it like this.

I: Do you think the two procedures should come as the same time or say for receptive purpose come first and then come the productive one. How do you think?

A: Em not for the lower form I don't think the lower form should be required to do like that. So maybe about Form 3 Form 4 Form 3 to 7 they can be exposed to. Of course listening is closely related to speaking em so I don't see why they should be separated.

(Appendix 22)

In line with her position but with a slight difference, Candidate C expressed the view that understanding of DMs in the listening mode should come before production, but eventually he expected students to be able to use DMs in their speech. So he supported the argument that reception should take precedence over production at an initial stage and eventually aimed at achieving both at the advanced stage. His rationale finds support from Canale (1983) who states that the comprehension stage must precede a production stage in second language learning, that is, production of the second language must not be forced during the initial stage. In the same direction, McCarthy (1998) also supports the idea that production should be delayed until suitable natural opportunities arise. Drawing all the views together, it is perhaps feasible to provide opportunities for intermediate grade students (Secondary 3-4) to get exposure to DMs in their listening or reading lessons as an automated stage, then

followed by more use at the advanced level in a classroom setting (A-Level/Secondary 6-7).

However, Candidate B did not find it necessary to teach DMs and claimed that they could learn them naturally in context. Furthermore, she raised the point that students would be penalised for being indecisive in exam. Furthermore, she stated that local teachers would look down upon hesitations in oral communication.

B: I mean I just think it'll make I think if a child if a student Form 7 student with using these words in the group discussion occasionally if they were using *yeah gosh ah I mean ah mm* if they favour doing that in the F7 final A-level oral exam I believe they will probably be marked down for being indecisive I know I hear it before I personally don't mind it myself cos' I mean I've been I've been an oral examiner for Form 5 I do know local teachers look down upon hesitations and that's what some of these *you know sure alright great OK* I think they've been marked down for hesitating. So now I don't I think for Form 7 students it's in listening if anything if anything to help them to understand if the characters in the listening I mean if they understood it would be valuable to know that to clarify themselves and the students could listen again if to say *I mean you know* but I I just I don't think it's going to help them much...

(Appendix 23)

If local teachers did look down upon hesitation in discussion manifested through the use of DMs, I consider this a gross oversight. In the notion of communicative competence advocated by Canale and Swain (1980), good language learners possess sound strategic competence in manoeuvring verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in communication, among which I view using DMs like *well, right, I mean, you know, etc.* as manifestations of this kind of strategic competence. A new perspective by teachers is called for to view students' communication if DMs are employed in meaningful real life exchanges, even for examination purposes if it is deemed necessary.

Discourse markers to be taught

As reported above, Candidate B insisted that DMs should not be overused, nor should they appear too much in professional language. She illustrated with the example of *yeah*:

- I: You find that overuse of the word *yeah*.
B: *Yeah yeah* at the end of a sentence. I think that's quite a that's sort of downtown London phrase maybe I don't know. I don't think it's I know I know a lot of British here in Hong Kong and only really (?) I don't use really use that you know in professional language or...
(Appendix 23)

Interestingly, Candidate C got a different perspective. Instead of avoiding using DMs like Candidate B, he tried to explicitly exaggerate the use of them in class in order to achieve interactional fun.

- C: ...if you try to exaggerate the some features you know if you would say something like WELL YOU KNOW like that exaggerating a little bit it'll do a bit funny you know they will perhaps you know indicate some interaction pleasure on it you know you get that you know you can sort of that.
(Appendix 24)

Despite the fact that B held almost diametrically opposing views from the other interviewees regarding the linguistic and pedagogic values of DMs, her initial firm position began to soften towards the end of the interview. She raised the point that it would be worthwhile to point out some commonly used DMs such as *cos*, *right*, *yeah*, *and*, *but*, many of which as she claimed, children have been exposed to at some younger age. However, she had reservations over teaching relatively difficult ones like *I mean*, *you mean* and *now*. On the contrary, Candidate A found it useful to highlight markers like *you mean* and *I mean*.

One observation that arises from the results is that perception towards DMs varies with qualification and the amount of training received. The better trained and well-qualified teachers like Candidates A and C showed a tendency to perceive DMs more

positively and therefore, to see their pedagogic value, while the one with less qualification and training, Candidate B, tended to perceive DMs more negatively, a finding that is consistent with the quantitative study.

Empowering learners to become explorers of language

Despite her opposition stance, Candidate B found it useful to approach this topic using strategies like highlighting, questioning, explaining, identifying as well as analysing. She also raised the point that it is useful to attend to the conversation of group members in discussion and identify the markers accordingly. Effective teaching, according to Candidate C, can be achieved through analogy (cross-language exploration cf Willis and Willis 1996), especially using the students' mother tongue and having the behaviour demonstrated under a specific situation. He also raised the point that approaching DMs in natural contexts such as telephone conversations can help foster awareness. This is especially true because DMs are highly context-dependent language items which are so central to natural discourse that the mechanical-based *PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production)* approach may need to be supplemented to include procedures so as to involve students with greater language awareness (McCarthy and Carter 1995). The analytical-based *III (Illustration-Interaction-Induction)* approach proposed by McCarthy and Carter (1995), mediated through activities like language observation, problem-solving and cross-language comparisons, can perhaps be more illuminating in bringing out the meaning and usage of various markers in a natural manner. In retrospect, the interviewees seemed to be on the right track, acknowledging the significance of providing learners with opportunities to become observers and explorers of language and eventually, finding out how DMs work.

7.2.5 Professional Enlightenment

A delicate issue that emerged from the interview data is the teachers' professionalism. According to Candidate A, who was an experienced and fully-qualified teacher, there was nothing at all to equip teachers to understand DMs in teacher training. Candidate B was initially trained as a Home Economics teacher with no relevant training in the ELT field, though she assumed some other professional responsibilities like materials developing, private tutoring, and she was an adjudicator at speech festivals. So it was not surprising to see her negative perception towards DMs. Candidate C claimed that his colleagues knew what DMs are based on the postulation that they displayed markers like *well* in their speech, yet further investigation is required to verify his statement.

The findings offer insights into at least two areas related to teacher education. First, Hong Kong teachers can be actively involved in the 'language ecology' mindset, and take on a spirit of internationalisation and globalisation of English through a respect for variations, (both the local and other regional ones) while preserving their unique identities. This change of mindset embraces replacing the absolutistic concept of 'correct English' by relativistic models (Crystal 2001: 60).

Second, a genuine reflection on the traditional practice which positions the educational standard for English as being based on a British variety is called for. An open, flexible and forward-looking international examination of the language conducive to better cultural understanding should be developed. It is essential to have an understanding that the old paradigms may not be sufficient to account for the great cultural and social diversities of different speech communities. However, such change will not be an easy task since teachers' attitudes tend to be derived from their own

experience as learners, their training and the values and norms of the society in which they work (Carles 2001).

7.3 Summary of the Findings

In sum, the qualitative results reveal a similar pattern to the quantitative findings. The in-depth interview yields consistency with most of responses from the prior questionnaire survey. This research instrument provides a valuable supplementary tool in validating and explaining the global pattern of the teachers' attitudinal profile towards DMs while highlighting individual variations. With the overall responses cross-referenced, the predominant outcome extrapolated from most interviewees is their positive attitude towards the linguistic value of DMs with regard to their role in communication, especially Candidates A and C. All three interviewees were consistent in claiming that DMs have been generally underrepresented in teaching. This is especially true with the interactive markers, whereas those highlighted are conventional ones related to the written mode (*firstly, secondly, next, on the other hand*) which mark textual relationship on a referential level, such as to indicate sequence or contrast. This observation is validated by students' underproduction of DMs as compared with CANCODE in Part I study. The interviewees did show a vacillating stance on the issue whether it is justified to adopt the native speaker norm, but admitted that they largely conformed to an exonormative norm as the conceivable speaking standard in response to the economic forces and examination requirement in Hong Kong. Consistent with the global trend, the non-native speaker teacher indicated her exonormative orientation in favouring to identify with a native speaking norm. Yet contradicting with the survey result that native speakers tend to show a lesser support for an exonormative model, the other two native speaker teachers gave a high value to British Standard English. Other than this, there is consensus to regard

Hong Kong English as non-standard language performance which is perceived to be a result of language interference and inadequate exposure despite the seemingly tolerant attitudes toward language variations they showed. Their responses call for a wider perspective towards world Englishes in the international community. Furthermore, except Candidate C, all other interviewees expressed that it is ideologically justified to bring about explicit pedagogic intervention in upper secondary level to help students understand the role of DMs in communication with awareness-raising as the first step coupled with more exposure to real language. There is generally less consistent view in deciding the mastery level of DMs. While Candidate B considered this pedagogic effort unnecessary, Candidate A preferred her students to learn DMs for both reception and production purposes. Candidate C claimed that reception should take precedence over production at the initial stage and eventually aimed at achieving both at the advanced stage. Despite that, the stance of Candidate B began to soften towards the end of the interview with regard to the functions and teaching value of DMs. They all endorsed a more analytical approach in teaching DMs so as to empower and elevate the position of learners from being passive recipients to active observers of language.

CHAPTER VIII CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

8.0 Introduction

The present study is motivated from the observation that discourse markers are pervasive in native speaker speech. They rank among the top ten frequent words in corpora of spoken interaction (Allwood 1996), yet they have not been given the attention they deserve in either language research literature or in the second language classroom. It is postulated that these seemingly small and unimportant lexicons should have a role in conversation. This inspires the first part of the study where quantitative frequency is drawn from CANCODE and 14,000 word corpus data from group discussions of 49 intermediate-advanced learners of English in a Hong Kong secondary school. Based on the real data, the quantitative survey is geared towards a comparative study of the use of discourse markers between British native and Hong Kong non-native speakers of English in pedagogical settings. It examined the general functions they have in spoken discourse in both sets of data, and particularly their differences in the use of DMs, the manner in which they differ and the reasons for the differences. The Part I study analysed DMs from a discoursal approach on a contextual basis. Seven criteria were proposed to be useful guidelines or principles to determine their status: position (primarily occupying turn or utterance initial position but can be in medial and final positions), multigrammaticality, prosodic separability, indexicality, optionality, contextual dependability and multifunctionality in organising discourse. However, it should be noted that any criterion alone is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for DM status. Instead, a combination of criteria needs to be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, I believe that students' language production, being under the influence of teachers' model, is concurrently and intricately affected by their pedagogical beliefs, be they explicit or implicit. So an attitudinal study of the perception of Hong Kong English teachers towards the use and teaching of discourse markers was conducted and presented in Part II. The second section made use of reliability tests to check the reliability of all the questionnaire items, and categorised and analysed teachers' responses using factor analysis and t-test. The quantitative process was followed by an in-depth interview of three teachers who had filled in the questionnaire as a way to cross-reference the results.

This chapter summarises the findings of the 2-part research which include the comparative differences between NSs and NNSs regarding production of DMs (Part I) and the global trend of the teachers' attitudinal orientation elicited from the questionnaire and interview results (Part II). Moreover, it discusses the strengths and limitations of the study and the implications of the findings offer suggestions for further research.

8.1 Summary of the Findings

The Part I study seeks to explore research questions 1-3:

1. What specific functions do discourse markers serve in spoken interaction?
2. How do Hong Kong non-native speakers of English differ from British native speakers in their use of discourse markers? How can we account for a relative lack of use of discourse markers with particular reference to students of English in Hong Kong?
3. What contributes to the differences in the use of discourse markers among the two groups of speakers?

The following observations were made in response to the research questions:

Research Question 1

What specific functions do discourse markers serve in spoken interaction?

1. Discourse markers form a part of the basic fabric of talk in pedagogic discourse and are found to serve as useful contextual coordinates by both NSs and NNSs to structure and organise speech on interpersonal, referential, structural and cognitive realms. The results accord with evidence from the literature that they contribute to the management and development of a discourse and perform important textual and interactive functions.
2. In a pedagogic discourse there exists a probabilistic relationship between a particular marker and its function(s), with some functions being more probable than others. Very often a DM exhibits a tendency to one general function, while other function(s) arises in other contexts. Within the four categorical functional realms, a marker can claim different functions intra-categorically and inter-categorically, through which a speaker can exploit its multifunctional versatility and dynamic nature to achieve his/her communicative purposes.
3. On the interpersonal level, DMs are specifically useful to serve as solidarity building devices to facilitate closeness between interlocutors and to mark shared knowledge, attitudes and responses. Referentially, they indicate textual relationships preceding and following the DM. These textual relationships include cause, contrast, coordination, disjunction, consequence, digression, comparison, etc. Structurally, they are used to orientate and organise the discourse in progress and signals links and transitions between topics, for instance, marking opening and closing of topics,

indicating sequence, topic shifts and topic continuation, and summarising opinions. Cognitively, they help in denoting the speaker's thinking process, marking repairs such as reformulation, self-correction, elaboration and hesitation in conversation, as well as marking speaker's assessment of the listener's knowledge of the utterances.

Research Question 2

How do Hong Kong non-native speakers of English differ from British native speakers in their use of discourse markers?

1. NNSs and NSs displayed great discrepancy in the use of DMs quantitatively, with NNSs showing an extremely low frequency of DMs. Commonly used DMs among NSs like *say, sort of, well, right, actually, cos, etc.* have just a few or even negligible occurrences in the NNS corpus.
2. Qualitatively, NNSs demonstrated more restricted usages of DMs in their speech when compared with the variety of functions performed by NSs. Especially conversations conducted by Hong Kong speakers are extremely low in interactive DMs (*e.g. and, right, yeah, you know, well, sort of*) who apparently lack the skills in utilising this interpersonal aspect of language through which solidarity is maintained and social meanings expressed.
3. A comparable use of DMs in both sets of data includes *like, oh, or, OK/okay, just* and *really*. Overused ones include *I think, yes, but* and *because* which are used predominantly in a highly negotiated and interactional context typical of the classroom discussion interaction type.
4. The three underused DMs, initial *and, yeah* and *you know* identified from the student data as compared to their occurrences in CANCODE were studied in detail. All of

them belong to the interactive type of discourse makers. This shows that Hong Kong speakers of English demonstrate a less interactional conversational style. It is speculated that the Chinese interactional style favours conversational participation not infringing on the other's turn space (Clancy *et al.* 1996) and tends to remain silent and allow the current speaker to reach a transition relevance point before starting their turn.

5 Initial AND

- a. DM *and* denotes the pragmatic meaning of 'continuation'. Utterance initial *and* conveys structural, referential and cognitive imports which provide cues to the listener concerning the communicative intent of the speaker and signpost to them the appropriate interpretation of utterances. But the three realms quite often intertwine with each other and lack a clear boundary for a unique function. This reflects the dynamic nature of *and* as a DM and its versatility as a textual coordinate.
- b. In NS speech, a significant proportion of initial *ands* are represented on the structural level as a continuer to mark continuation of speaker's action and on the referential level to mark temporal sequence. They are also frequently used on the cognitive level as a marker of hesitation. However, in NNS initial *ands* are represented primarily on the referential level to indicate an additive meaning and are used to mark temporal sequence, preface questions and indicate contrast. These functions link successive units of talk in a chain. The high occurrence of *and* in an additive sense can be explained by the fact that the nature of the classroom discussion predicts a more frequent use of initial *and* to organise an extended stretch of ideas together.

- c. A marked difference for the two sets of data is that NNS use of *and* as an initiator of utterance at turn boundary is significantly underrepresented.

6. YEAH

- a. The use of *yeahs* among NNSs is compatible with the use among NSs functionally but not quantitatively. In general, *yeah* functions as a solidarity building device at the interpersonal level to mark responses which listener would reasonably be expected to recognise or agree with. On the structural level, it serves as a reception marker to mark coherence within turn and between turns, and as a continuer to signpost intention to facilitate furtherance of extended talk by the primary speaker. In this way, conversational partners use *yeah* to keep track of each other's ongoing activity. But to a great extent Hong Kong learners do not exploit the range of possibilities available with *yeah* that English speakers do.
- b. Observation from the CANCODE data reveals that syntactically, *yeah* as a brief token of backchannel marking and organising responses, appears mostly in turn initial position, whereas *yeah* as a continuer for the upcoming utterance occurs in turn medial position. This usage also tends to combine with other DMs to emphasise the propositions made in the prior discourse. On this basis, *yeah* is backward-pointing in its role as a DM. In contrast to the CANCODE data, the syntactic environment in which *yeah* occurs is less varied in the student data which mainly occur singly in turn initial position.
- c. In contrast to *yeah* which was found to be the second most frequent DM in CANCODE, there is an over reliance on *yes* rather than *yeah* among the Hong Kong speakers. *Yes*, which is simply used as a marker of affirmative response to

the opinions expressed in the students' discussion, contrasts with *yeah* in CANCODE with which conversational partners use to mark continuation of speech and monitor the flow and development of talk, that is, as a means to organise responses. Beyond that, it is used to show rapport and acknowledgment to the listener, with implications for agreement, affirmation or facilitation.

7. YOU KNOW

- a. The current findings show that *you know* conveys interpersonal, structural and cognitive functions in native speaker speech, but only the first two functions are observed in non-native speech. Comparatively speaking, there is a high probabilistic occurrence of *you know* on the interpersonal realm which points to the affective dimension of discourse grammar where maintenance of social relationship takes precedence over information exchange (Stubbe and Holmes 1995). Structurally, it is used to claim a turn, to initiate a turn or to continue with a turn. Cognitively, *you know* is used by the speaker to assess the listener's knowledge of the propositional meanings. It also signals how information may relate to the speaker's cognitive environment, such as marking the speaker's attempt to clarify meanings, to reformulate, to elaborate, to making self-correction and to denote his/her thinking process in search of linguistic precision.
- b. No great difference was observed when *you knows* were used in utterance initial position. Both sets of data indicate that they serve a discourse-deictic function, marking topic in relation to the prior discourse. Of special relevance to the CANCODE data is its usage as a turn claimer and as an interactive focus to gain attention.

- d. There is a marked discrepancy both quantitatively and qualitatively when *you knows* are used in turn medial position. NSs tend to use more *you knows* in turn medial position but this is not the case for NNSs. What is common in both sets of data is that most speakers tend to use *you know* to appeal to addressees' mutual background knowledge so as to invite them to stand on their side, and possibly use it as a softener to mitigate a threat from a face-threatening act (FTA) (Brown and Levinson 1978). CANCODE findings also indicate that NSs tend to use *you know* to denote a false start or a word-searching process, and as a continuer to keep the conversation going. All these are extremely underrepresented usages in NNS speech.
- d. In both sets of data, the usage for utterance final *you know* is quantitatively different but qualitatively more or less comparable. Utterance final *you know* is mainly used as a marker to boost the strength of the speech act and also as a floor-yielding device. NNSs tend to place more *you knows* in this position but this is less obvious in NS speech.

Research Question 3:

How can we account for a relative lack of use of discourse markers with particular reference to students of English in Hong Kong? What contributes to the differences in the use of discourse markers among the two groups of speakers?

1. With the exception of initial *and*, the other two underused DMs *yeah* and *you know* are seldom represented in ESL coursebooks. Most of the scripted dialogues in listening activities, which are based on written grammar, the standard code that most ESL teaching conforms to, do not carry these informal and colloquial forms. This

also explains why *yes*, the formal equivalent of *yeah*, prevails extensively in the student data.

2. The scarcity of DMs in Hong Kong students' speech as compared with the native speakers' production can be accounted for by the traditionally prescriptive grammar-centred curriculum focus which has geared towards teaching the literal or propositional meanings of vocabulary rather than their pragmatic use in spoken language. Many materials writers' doctrine of linguistic absoluteness favouring the formal register and overlooking the informal register results in an insufficient understanding of conversational device like DMs, thus resulting in a more restricted and underrepresented usage both in quantitative and qualitative use. This explains why students seldom initiate an utterance with *and* as in students' discussion because it has been traditionally regarded as ill-formed, and their preference for a 'more proper' form of acknowledgement *yes* rather than the informal counterpart *yeah*. In addition, the transactional rather than interpersonal focus in many listening activities neglects the affective and strategic functions DMs can bring in interpreting a spoken discourse.

The Part II study focuses on research questions 4-6:

4. What are teachers' perceptions of the role and usage of discourse markers in the curriculum? Do teachers perceive that their students can understand a spoken discourse better with knowledge/awareness of discourse markers?
5. To what extent should discourse markers be represented in the teaching of spoken discourse, as a reception clue or a production agent, or both?

6. Do teachers expect their students to be taught to speak like a native? Are they exonormative or endonormative regarding the speaking norm?

The global trend of the teachers' attitudinal orientation and the major findings elicited from the questionnaire and interview results are summarised as follows:

Research Question 4

What are teachers' perceptions of the role and usage of discourse markers in the curriculum? Do teachers perceive that their students can understand a spoken discourse better with knowledge/awareness of discourse markers?

1. DMs are perceived by the respondents as having vitally important
 - a. *practical* value in areas like work, business, education and examinations in Hong Kong;
 - b. *communication* value in understanding speech signals, signposting sequences of thoughts, marking attitudes, oiling wheels of communication, allowing reflections of thoughts, softening tone and facilitating fluent and naturalistic conversational and communicative skills which are useful in exchange with native speakers in their students' future workplace; and
 - c. *qualification value* to their students to achieve academic advancement and social mobility.

These three aspects of instrumental value provide extrinsic motivation for their high regard towards the pragmatic value of DMs (Scale 3). There is quantitative evidence showing that NNS teachers give DMs more weight than NS teachers.

2. DMs are perceived to be highly useful linguistic devices which are desirable in classroom instruction (Scale 1). There is no strong orientation to perceive them as dispensable lexical items (Scale 4). Perception of a positive recognition of the roles of DMs correlates with NS/NNS distinction. NNS teachers tend to perceive DMs as more important than do their NS counterparts.
3. Whilst the pragmatic and pedagogic values are established, there is concern from interviewees about overuse of DMs. Excessive DMs in speech would sound redundant and irritating to the listener.

Research Question 5

To what extent should discourse markers be represented in the teaching of spoken discourse, as a reception clue or a production agent, or both?

1. Again a neutral orientation on the 5-point scale reflects a relatively low representation of DMs in the ELT classroom, both in terms of teaching and teaching materials. The characteristic low propositional meanings DMs have devalued their pedagogic importance, and hence contributed to their low status. It is only commonly used markers like *firstly, secondly, next, however, but, despite, so, because, moreover, etc.* in written language that have been frequently attended to in the classroom. Taking into consideration the overcrowded curriculum that students are facing, the priority for teaching DMs is low. This explains the extremely low representation of DMs in the student data and points to a pedagogic gap or vacuum in the existing syllabus.
2. It was reported that the present teaching materials at least expose learners to several national varieties such as American, Australian and British Englishes. While it is

ideologically justified to teach DMs, there is a consensus that DMs can be introduced at intermediate-advanced level when learners are cognitively more ready for reception. Teaching DMs purely for receptive purposes seems to be less endorsed by the teachers. Instead they supported teaching DMs for a dual purpose - reception and production. The NNS teachers tend to be more ambitious in expecting their students to acquire DMs both as speaking and listening skills at secondary level, whereas NS teachers tend to prefer teaching DMs initially for receptive purposes. Qualitatively, there were interview findings to show support for a sequential input at different stages, initially for comprehension followed by production, effectively in line with Canale (1983) and McCarthy (1998).

3. As far as teaching strategies are concerned, results also indicated that DMs can be better acquired through analytical strategies like highlighting, questioning, explaining, identifying, etc. The interviewees tend to acknowledge the importance of empowering learners to become explorers of language and agree that the teaching process can start with awareness-raising activities to bring about an increased awareness of and sensitivity to the target language. Significant opportunities should be provided for observation of real life language behaviour.
4. Beyond this, teachers' insufficient awareness of the globalisation of English points to a direction where teachers can be actively challenged for a 'language ecology' mindset within which the absolutist single standard should be replaced by a pluralistic model.

Research Question 6

Do teachers expect their students to be taught to speak like a native? Are they exonormative or endonormative regarding the speaking norm?

1. Teachers showed a slightly positive orientation on the 5-point scale to favour an exonormative model and expected their students to identify with the native speaker norm (Scale 2). This reflects the complexity of the issues which cannot be simply explained or captured with a yes-no answer. Qualitative findings revealed pursuing native-like usage and proficiency as the goal of language learning is still a dominant trend in a cosmopolitan city like Hong Kong.
2. On the quantitative side, it is the NNS teachers who endorsed the native speaker norm as the speaking model while the NS teachers did not conform to the supremacy of the native speaker norm. But based on the interview results, the two NS teachers still showed an inherent obsession with the British norm, largely due to the colonial background that has firmly asserted the status of British Standard English in Hong Kong and the utilitarian value attached to the exonormative model. The data do suggest the possibility of accommodating a ‘double standard’ in which English could be distinguished at both intranational and international levels. If language use is mainly for intranational purpose, an internal norm could be endorsed, whereas if language use is largely for international purposes, a native speaker norm or EIL (English as an International Language) or World Standard Spoken English can serve as the standard. But certainly this is not easy to implement.
3. There also exists a modestly positive attitude for accepting local varieties (Scale 7) and the interviewees agreed that exposing learners to different varieties is essential. As long as the way of speaking does not impinge on the meaning and mutual

intelligibility is guaranteed, a tolerant attitude was displayed. Yet the interview data revealed resistance towards acceptance of Hong Kong English which was viewed as a deviation and a non-standard form.

4. The generally derogatory attitude towards Hong Kong English revealed a lack of a World English perspective among teachers. They were ignorant of the fact that multilingualism rather than monolingualism has become the order of the day. The widespread use of English suggests that there is a repertoire of models for English and upholding an exonormative norm as the only conceivable standard establishes a narrow view of the language and marginalises students speaking a local variety.

8.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Research

The present study was a preliminary attempt to investigate the underexplored area with regard to DMs in spoken language in the Hong Kong context. Based on corpus data, differences between use of DMs between Hong Kong non-native speakers and British native speakers of English were compared and teachers' responses to the use and teaching of DMs in pedagogic settings were explored. The strength of the research design lies in its ground on empirical observation and its scope for practical pedagogic concern. Having focussed not only on the linguistic analysis of DMs, a wider perspective was taken in the discussion of Hong Kong English from a world English perspective. It is an inseparable issue if native speaker norm has been widely acknowledged as the linguistic norm in its sociolinguistic context. So the research took into consideration the empirical generalisability of the findings across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The study is original in that natural language data from CANCODE and classroom recordings were used to provide basis for the comparison between the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers' use of DMs. It includes an examination of random samples from the 460,055 word pedagogical sub-corpus from CANCODE, 12 tape recordings of 49 Hong Kong pupils' group discussions totalling 14,000 words, 132 questionnaires from 114 secondary schools which had been moderated and tried out by 20 teaching practitioners from UK, Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan. The questionnaire had gone through a preliminary reliability test before launching out and after the adaptation stage it finalised 48 questionnaire items which yielded an overall good reliability of 0.83. Coupled with the 17,000 word interview data gathered from the 3 native and non-native Hong Kong teachers, the rich data yield credible support for the conclusions to be drawn.

As far as the research methodology is concerned, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms forms the strength of the study. In Part I, the quantitative measurements of frequency go hand in hand with a qualitative analysis of three interactive DMs through a process of observing and describing the linguistic environments in which they occur. Likewise, the macro investigation of teachers' responses through statistical measurement using SPSS in Part II wedded well with a micro study of teachers' perspectives through three in-depth semi-structured telephone interviews.

Serving as a complementary research instrument to the use of questionnaires, the semi-structured telephone interview procedure has several merits itself. Firstly, whilst the

attitude scales are easier to analyse and permit comparability between subjects' answers, they compartmentalise people into fixed replies (May 1997). If the subjects do not consider carefully before choosing the answers, the reliability of the result can be affected. For instance, in response to the items related to the teaching of DMs in his oral and listening lessons (Questions 17-18), Candidate C confessed in the follow-up interview that he had lied. Moreover, a mid-3 value on a 5-point scale indicating a 'neutral' stance by the respondents has posed difficulties of interpretation. Interviews, as a process of entering a dialogue with the subjects, can yield rich, natural and spontaneous data, and therefore, uncover the 'cognitive and interpretative processes of people' (Patton 1987: 118) and provide insights into people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings (Mason 1996). In this respect, their strength lies in the opportunity they offer to the respondents to describe what is salient and meaningful and to have their stance elaborated and clarified. With that instrument the underlying motives of the interviewees can be investigated in a way that they cannot be in a postal questionnaire (Robson 1993). Moreover, although the order of answer in an interview is relatively structured and controlled, the technique of a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to probe beyond the answers, to provide immediate follow-up questions and to make invitations to expand potentially relevant and interesting issues that may not be consistent with the aims of standardisation in a quantitative survey.

Despite the aforementioned strengths that go with the present study, it should be acknowledged that owing to the constraints of time and resources, there are several limitations which warrant consideration.

First, the classroom data in Part I was limited to 49 Sixth formers from a secondary school in Hong Kong. Their class discussion was also limited to a topic from which the frequency of DMs was measured. This suggests directions for future research which can involve a larger sample of students from different schools. Moreover, while the research aimed at a more focused group of teaching professionals from EMI (English as medium of instruction) schools in Hong Kong, the teachers' response patterns cannot be viewed as stable characteristics of the other English teachers in the territory. By the same token, taking into consideration the local context, the findings of the study are reflections of the local situation in Hong Kong which may not be generalised to other second language situations. Therefore, it is also possible for future research to involve a mixture of different types of schools or a larger sample of teachers. Since it is the first research known of this type involving both linguistic- and pedagogic- based study of DMs with reference to a local context, it needs to be viewed as exploratory.

Second, there is no detailed transcription on prosodic information added to the orthographic transcription except pauses in both CANCODE and the student data, the presence of which may provide more detailed information that can facilitate the purpose of conversational analysis. But in retrospect, I felt that a simple and straightforward transcription could fundamentally provide the level of detail that is necessary for that purpose.

Third, the main drawback of using a telephone interview in the Part II study as a result of geographical restriction is that it is not a face-to-face communication and the subjects cannot have access to facial expressions like smiles, nodding and other paralinguistic

features as a way to understand perspectives and to build rapport which are essential to maintaining and encouraging the flow of contribution. Both the interviewer and interviewee might need to tolerate more ‘uncoordinated’ silence and overlap of turns than in a face-to-face conversation. To remedy the situation, all the interviewees had been briefed prior to the actual interview of this possibility in order to avoid potential embarrassment and psychological discomfort.

An interview is itself a dynamic activity involving spontaneous human interaction in which interviewees are actively constructing their social worlds through an exchange of unique experiences. It is this dynamic and spontaneous nature of the procedure that may cause a contradictory stance, as observed in the vacillating position of Candidate B. Sometimes, insufficient knowledge or unawareness of the research topic also leads to the interviewee’s ambivalent position. Other than that, the participants may have other reasons for not being truthful. Anyway, we must recognise that ambivalence is unavoidably a common condition of man and as argued by Oppenheim (1992), it is the spontaneous reactions in an in-depth interview that are wanted, not a carefully thought-out position.

Finally, in contrast to the neat and tidy findings obtained from the quantitative process, the huge amount of data that emerges from an interview can create an interpretative problem for the interviewer and make the synthesis and conceptualisation processes difficult. Researchers like Brown (2001) have also raised the problem that interviews have potential for subconscious bias and other inconsistencies. Interviewers may have tendency to drive the interviewees to their categories and likewise, interviewees may

provide ‘model answers’ to the interview questions. Hence the generalisability of the findings must be interpreted with caution. Despite all the shortcomings, the qualitative strategy employed in the present study is valuable in that the subjective framework of the respondents can be retained and their attitudes are magnified as categories emerged from the findings.

8.3 Implications for Teaching

The present research has highlighted many language issues arising from the discussion of DMs. To conclude, Figure 8.1 illustrates some areas of implications the study of DMs have for teaching.

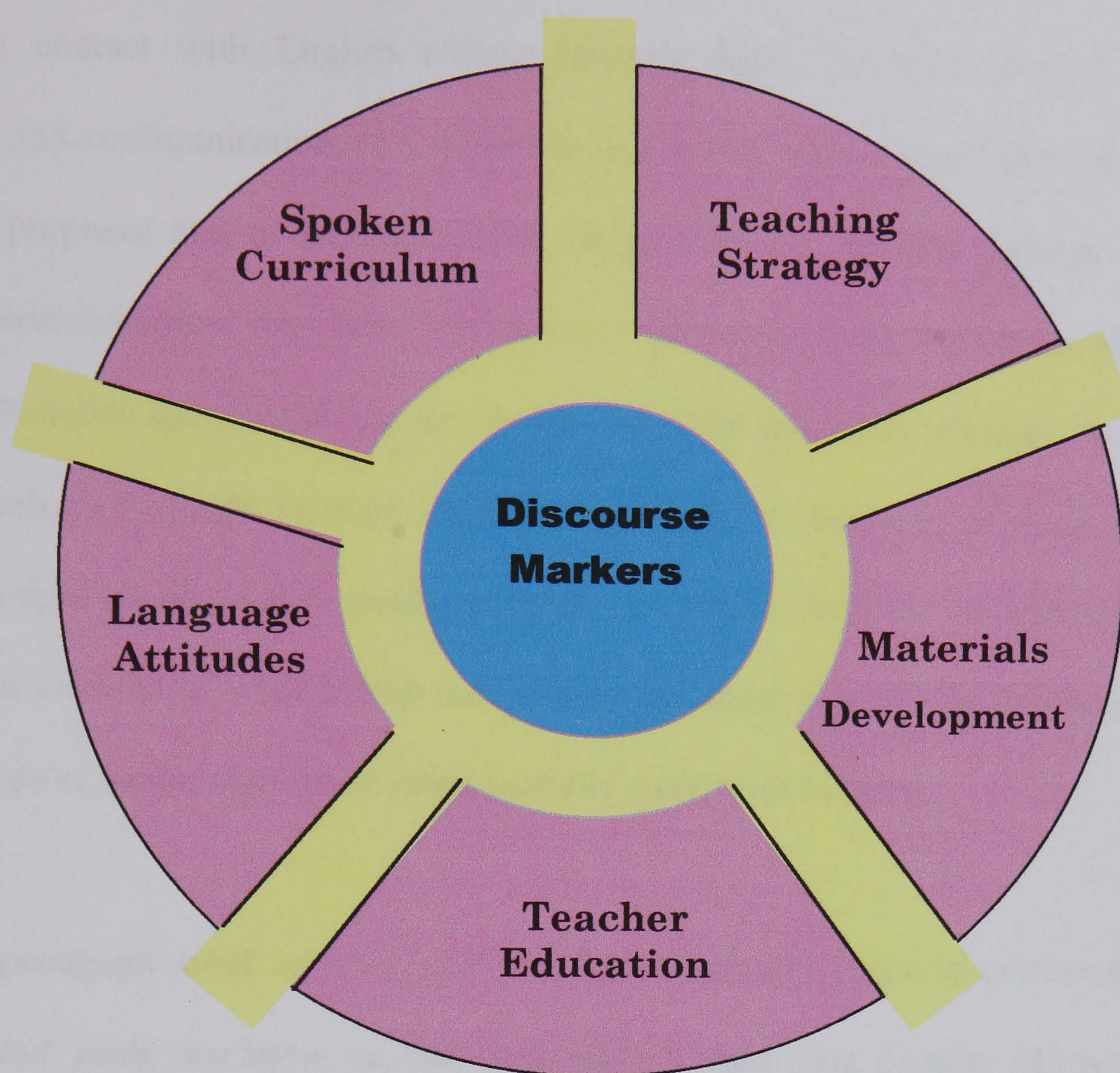


Figure 8.1 Implications the Study of DMs Have for Teaching

8.3.1 *Spoken Curriculum*

There is a need to create a new pedagogic paradigm in the teaching of spoken language and to create space to accommodate DMs. English DMs as part of our verbal repertoire help organise discourse and mark changes in pragmatic intentions. With their familiarity to learners from their basic semantic meanings, they serve well as a simple and straightforward choice (McCarthy 1998) to perform speech acts like disagreement and refusals. On the ground of their use as a communication strategy, this aspect of communicative competence should be strengthened to enhance learners' fluent and

naturalistic conversational skills and provide them with a sense of security in L2. With increasing contact with English culture through films, business, studies, Internet exchange and communication, it is essential to get students to learn DMs at least for reception purposes and to facilitate better comprehension. Though findings from the present research suggest that there is a tendency for teachers to expect their students to model after native speaker speech, the choice should be left to the learners. As teaching professionals, we should liberate our students from the bondage of concept that a competent speaker of English needs to speak native-like. Instead, we should open up choices for learners of what to say and how to say them appropriate for the speaking context so as to enable them to be interactionally competent L2 users.

With the pedagogic need asserted, markers that commonly occur in conversation, for instance, *and, yeah, you know, so, but, well, right, I think, just, I mean, like really, sort of, cos, I see, now, okay, actually*, etc. should be featured in listening materials, not only those associated with written texts. Providing opportunities for intermediate-advanced learners to understand DMs at least in classroom setting as an automated stage is highly desirable. It is even desirable to bring real data into the classroom as a first step to widen exposure and to provide L2 models of the use of DMs in various contexts.

The pluralism of English has theoretical, methodological and pedagogical significance for both language descriptions and the teaching of different varieties, and their status in language education. Beyond this, there is a need to devise pedagogical policies and practices to meet an international standard of intelligibility, both in speech and writing (Crystal 2001).

8.3.2 *Teaching Strategy*

The study has implications for the appropriate instructional strategies in the ELT classroom. One effective teaching strategy is the development of language awareness in learners - an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language to allow learners to develop their own affective and experiential responses to the language (Carter 2003: 64-5). This requires learners to exercise some intellectual effort and to make hypotheses (Willis and Willis 1996). As agreed by most respondents, it is valuable to build students' linguistic awareness and to draw their attention to the various roles and functions of DMs from a discoursal perspective through awareness-raising activities. This is an appropriate strategy since DMs are seen to carry meaning which cannot be brought to consciousness (Andersen 1998: 163). A comparative approach using authentic native and non-native data as in the Part I study is a good starting point. This strategy is supported by Kjellmer (1992) who claims that teaching would benefit from a compromise between the 'emphasis-on-typicality' approach typical of recent trends in EFL and a contrastive 'emphasis-on-difference' approach (Kjellmer 1992: 376, cited in Grange 1996: 22) in which the learner's language is recognised and their attested needs are addressed. It is also beneficial to pinpoint realisation of DMs as different from NSs as reported in Part I and to implement classroom activities that help learners to examine features of their own variety that may increase their perception of language distance (Siegel 1999). Though it is beyond the scope of the present research to investigate the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 use of DMs, that is, Cantonese vs. English, it would be beneficial if teachers could advance their knowledge of how DMs work in Chinese and how it influences their way of acquiring DMs in English and to establish what is typical of the Hong Kong usage. Since a lack of

awareness of differences may be one cause of the high degree of transfer (Ellis 1994), if students can be made more aware of the differences, be they subtle or gross, this will decrease the amount of negative transfer or interference (Siegel 1999).

8.3.3 *Materials Development*

‘Language professionals often fail to notice the most common forms and, as a result, those forms are often slighted in teaching.’ (Biber 2001: 335). Discourse markers are one of the many neglected aspects. The dramatic difference in frequency between NS and NNS use of DMs indicates great pedagogical space for developing methodology and teaching materials through corpus-based research which merits itself in grounding ‘its theorizing in empirical observation rather than in appeals to linguistic intuition or expert knowledge’ (Aston and Burnard 1998: 123). In line with this, Candidate C in the interview raised that one best methodology is to observe way of behaviour in real life. Corpus data reflecting real language in a real world offers a useful avenue for informing materials development. Research in corpus linguistics (e.g. Coates’ (1983) study of modal auxiliary, Biber’s (1988) study of register and text-type variation) has shown how the corpus linguistics methodology provides better models of linguistic performance because qualitative distinctions are quantitatively reinforced (Leech 1992, cited in Kirk 1996: 231). It is powerful in that it can tell us not only what is systematically possible but what is actually likely to occur in the language in general or in particular contexts’ (Kennedy 1998: 335). As illustrated through the contrastive analysis using concordance output from the corpora (Part I study), corpus texts with contextualised language data can yield insights into understanding the language. There are always possibilities of discussing the localised language and heightening learners’ awareness of the similarities

and differences between the localised form and the native norm and activate variation skills. But the pedagogic process or syllabus should be corpus-informed rather than corpus-driven (McCarthy 1998) in order to be beneficial. In contrast to the traditional approach where students are taught the grammatical rules, they can engage in an inductive process through close observation of the data, then move towards classifications, hypothesis-testing and generalisation-forming. With the advent of this computer-based learning skill, corpora have changed the role of teacher from an instructor to a facilitator and elevated the role of learner from a passive recipient to an active researcher.

8.3.4 *Teacher Education*

The present research reveals a positive perception of DMs both from a linguistic and pedagogic perspective, therefore, the relevance of raising teachers' competence and heightening their linguistic awareness of the identification and understanding of DMs as a discourse feature through pre-service or in-service training is asserted. Besides, teachers should be encouraged to engage in self-reflection on their own beliefs, assumptions, and expectations on the language norm as well. Teacher education and continuous refresher courses can endeavour to sharpen language teachers' capacity not just on the linguistic dimension but also to equip them with a World English perspective which can certainly necessitate a new pedagogy. As proposed by Kachru and Nelson (2001: 22), '[t]he spread of English provides a language teacher with an abundance of data for relating second language issues to pedagogical concerns'. Furthermore, language awareness work, as suggested by Bolitho and Tomlinson (1995: iv) seeks to bring to the surface and to challenge myths, preconceived ideas and intuitions about language. With

all the complicated educational, ideological and cultural issues arising from the study of DMs, misconceptions such as the ‘native speaker myth’ and the ‘near native performance myth’ need to be challenged. As language professionals, we need to examine the social consciousness of our profession, and concern ourselves not only with the immediate tasks inside the classroom.

8.3.5 *Language Attitudes*

With the rapid diffusion of information technology, new local Englishes and new hybrids of genres with their high social penetration are emerging. However, they are highly restricted in range and have not attained a similar degree of depth in language research and the level of acceptance as the standard form. Besides, there is always the problem of learner language in a sociolinguistic context where English is learnt only as a second language and it is difficult to determine where an interlanguage ends and educated English starts (Schmied 1996: 186-187). Even the subjects in the Part I study were at their 18+ years of age and had received English medium education throughout their secondary schooling, a significant proportion of ‘telegraphic speech’ which is typical of learner language is identified from the recordings, and therefore, it poses difficulty to distinguish patterns of feature, usage and style that are ‘performance errors’ and features that are recurrent, ‘legitimate’ features of local variety (Cheshire 1991: 7). As Schmied (1996: 187) suggests, ‘[the] borderline between intravariety and intervaryety stylistic improvement is very difficult to assess, particularly when ENL influence is constant and pervasive in certain contexts’. In view of that, more contrastive research along the goal and direction of the ICE corpora (refer to Section 2.2.2.2.3) should be pursued. When more corpus-informed research findings are available, the local authorities must establish

whether certain features are representative of Hong Kong English. Facets of language like the relationships between use and acceptance, standard, institutionalisation, and normative reference points in education and in society at large (Kachru and Nelson 2001) should be dealt with.

With regard to the language situation in Hong Kong, the notion of a distinct variety lies not only in the linguistic features, but also in the acceptance of a new space for the discourses of Hong Kong English (Bolton 2000). There is much scope for a reassessment of the status and role of a local variety like Hong Kong English; of what it is, how it should be taught, and the rationale for teaching it in the light of the globalisation of English. In looking ahead, a more sensible and balanced approach in ELT in Hong Kong is, microscopically to enrich the existing grammar-oriented language syllabus from a discourse perspective (McCarthy and Carter 1994) and expand our notion of grammar to include a grammar of spoken language. Macroscopically, while still adhering to the external reference points as the language norm, it is necessary to recognise that teaching methods, materials, and educational policies, need to be adapted for local contexts (Graddol 2001) as the English language has become internationalised. The practice should be grounded in a dynamic linguistic relativism that can comfortably exist alongside the old standard. But we should not ignore the probable shift in English's centre of gravity away from either the UK forms or US forms as second language learners outnumber first language speakers in twenty years' time (Arndt *et al.* 2000). By then, the power of native speakers as the sole owner of the English language might be dissipated.

8.4 Avenues for Future Research

Taking into consideration the size and scope of the present research, it would be fruitful to enlarge the samples of both the British and Hong Kong data to test and verify the 7 criteria that have been proposed, with a view to refining the existing criteria, coding new criteria, and merging new criteria. Further research might further develop and strengthen the existing criteria since the present ones are provisional.

With reference to the suggestion to involve a larger sample of students from different schools and even other second language classroom situations as mentioned in Section 8.2, it will be useful to make use of a representative corpus like the International Corpus of English which has a carefully designed selection of genres for different national and regional for a more comprehensive descriptions and comparative studies of different aspects of world Englishes. As mentioned, learner language could still be identified from the recordings, and therefore, it poses difficulty to distinguish patterns of usage and style that are ‘performance errors’ and features that are recurrent, ‘legitimate’ features representative of the Hong Kong variety. With the availability of this kind of corpus, a similar study like the present study can be replicated on different populations, text types and age groups so that findings of the present study can be validated. In addition, comparison can be made with other national varieties other than the British English.

With the exception of a study by Leung (1996) who conducted a comparative study of *you know*, *well* and *so on* in Hong Kong English and British English, the present work is the first investigation of DMs from both a functional and an attitudinal dimension in Hong Kong. Owing to its exploratory nature, the latter part focussed only on the attitudes

of teachers from the high-banding EMI schools, it is not clear if this would be manifested to the same degree by teachers from other lower-banding schools, or a wider cross-section of teaching professionals. To gain more conclusive evidence of the entire population, there is scope for much broader-based data collection and further longitudinal, ethnographical and observational studies are needed.

The data presented in Part I are from a synchronic study, looking at the group at a single moment and not over time. It is beneficial to study the acquisition of DMs from a developmental approach or study for the significant changes in the learning process before and after the instruction stage through classroom observation. Possible future attention can be directed to *how* they can be effectively taught. For instance, based on empirical data, a comparative study of different strategies can form an interesting area of research. It is productive to compare the effectiveness of the suggested Illustration-Interaction-Inductive approach in contrast to the traditional Presentation-Practice-Production approach (Carter and McCarthy 1995) since the use of DMs lies on a rather subtle and unconscious level, any extensive mechanical drilling may lead to overuse and a process of raising conscious awareness through observation and class discussion may help develop a capacity for noticing salient features and properties of DMs (cf. learners learn what they notice, e.g. Schmidt 1990, Willis and Willis 1996). Furthermore, it is useful to conduct research to investigate whether materials and instruction which exercise learners' recognition of DMs can bring about a higher level of comprehension (cf. Chaudron and Richards 1986) or perhaps production of DMs among different groups of students.

Future stages can concern themselves with identification of Chinese DMs which have different counterparts in English and influence of the mother tongue has on DM acquisition in order to enhance awareness over this aspect of spoken grammar. Awareness of how they differ will lead to a greater sensitivity to what is involved in cross-cultural communication, which in turn, can minimise miscommunication.

There is also implication for materials development based on corpus data. One useful activity that had been developed for teachers to understand what DMs are is cited in Appendix 16B where a dialogue with all the DMs deleted was arranged side by side with the original version so that learners can compare, analyse and discover the different effects they have on a spoken discourse when the markers are omitted. There is scope for developing more awareness-raising materials, trying them out on different groups of students and exploring teachers' views on their pedagogic practice. But in developing teaching materials based on corpora, care must be taken because authentic language (normally based on L1 norm) is contextually and culturally influenced and full of local idiomatic expressions. Therefore, I believe that relatively 'culturally neutral' contexts should be chosen to suit different classroom situations so as to help learners grasp both 'real' and 'realisable' language.

Gender differences in producing DMs is also an interesting area to pursue. It will be interesting to further explore male and female differences in perceiving the usefulness of DMs and their representation in the classroom accordingly. The quantitative study in Part II also indicates gender differences concerning the acceptance of the local variety which can yet be another area of fruitful investigation.

The study of DMs is still in its infancy. Ongoing and future studies will enrich our understanding of and optimise their role in communication and their potentials in pedagogic practice. It is hoped that the findings of the study can trigger more research on the study of DMs and other aspects of spoken grammar. Until then this research will remain a thoughtful area for researchers and teaching professionals alike who are interested in spoken discourse.

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