PhR 2019
Philological Readings

DISCURSIVE MARKERS OF WEBINARS ON TEACHING/LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

The article gives a brief description of the main discourse markers of webinars on teaching/ learning English. It states that a webinar is a genre of virtual pedagogical discourse, which gives reasons to say that its peculiarities are heterogeneous nature of the learners' audience, different levels of the audience's background knowledge, and heterogeneous quality of the learners' professional knowledge. Moreover, text and communication in a webinar are generated by means of Internet technologies and other technologies that provide interactivity. Unlimited number of participants, and the possibility of creating a unified educational environment are also important features of a webinar. As a web-based seminar combines not only educational and Internet discourses linguistic characteristics, but also features of written and oral types of communication, it is crucial to study how discourse markers organizing the information in a webinar can be presented and interpreted. The analysis has shown that most commonly used discourse markers are the ones that belong to commentary and discourse markers groups.Such discourse words as *also, and, but, though* are one of the most frequently used. *You know, for example, kind of* can be placed in this group. Furthermore, there are markers that can be used to perform different functions like *and, perhaps, so, now*. The presence of such markers as *firstly, secondly, etc.* and *ah, yes, uhm, you know, I mean, etc.* shows that a webinar combines features of written and oral forms of communication as well as those of academic and colloquial speech.

1. Introduction

Globalisation and the usage of English as the language of international communication are the reasons for the growing interest in English language learning. The expansion of the influence of modern technologies allows people to freely improve our language skills, as well as to expand our knowledge and professional skills. Therefore, the scientists' interest in studying the issues of updating the English language environment in the context of constantly developing modern communicational channels is not accidental (Crystal, 2017). Nowadays educationalists make use of different forms of educational portals, pedagogical blogs, forums, and professionally oriented training videos or webinars. Despite the fact that all of these types of educational activities have the same goal – to educate, and despite the fact that the Internet is the communication channel for all of them, they use different kinds of media technologies and opportunities.

This can give us a reason to say that recently arisen so-called 'virtual pedagogical discourse' is, first of all, a combination of educational, mass-media and virtual discourses. Secondly, according to the conditions of its existence in the Internet, its main features are the following:

- heterogeneous nature of the studying audience;
- different levels of the learners' background knowledge and quality of their professional knowledge;.
- text generation by means of Internet technologies and other technologies that provide interactivity;
- unlimited number of participants;
- possibility to create a unified educational environment (Galichkina, 2001; Goroshko, 2009; Ahrenova, 2009).

These require development of the schemes which can adequately reflect an algorithm of verbal and non-verbal interaction between the moderator or the speaker and the audience within the above-mentioned type of discourse space(Kharkovskaya, Ponomarenko, & Rudyuk, 2017).

Nowadays traditional educational methods are amplified with new methods based on the usage of the Internet and telecommunication means (Kazantseva, 2017). One of these means is the webinar.

Speaking about different types of modern educational Internet genres, we can say that the webinar at the present moment is one of the most popular genres with the users. This, of course, corresponds with its main features which will be described later.

1.1. Webinar and its main features

A webinar or a web-based seminar is an online seminar, lecture, course, etc. which is organised and performed on the basis of different web-based platforms, e.g. Adobe Connect, Youtube, etc. We can classify a webinar as a scientific educational and special informative genre of online-communication. (Ivanov, 2000). Moreover, it can be identified as a genre that borrows from other spheres of communication, more specifically from educational discourse, and as a genre that is generated by the use of language in the web (Tlenkopacheva, 2016).

Furthermore, a webinar can be defined as a complex communicative phenomenon, in which along with the text various extra linguistic factors (addressee's purposes, his/ her background knowledge, opinions) play an important role and which, first of all, is aimed at bringing knowledge.

Webinar, as a genre of virtual pedagogical discourse, combines features of two main types of discourse: the Internet discourse and educational discourse. These peculiarities are reflected in its structure and in its language. If we speak about its relation to the virtual and Internet communication, we can say that one of the main features will be its dialogical nature. All genres of the Internet communication are potentially dialogical (Kolokoltseva, 2016).

Any information placed in the Web can cause (and as a rule causes) dialogical reaction of the Internet users. In case of a webinar, a dialogical nature can be realizedwith the help of Q&A session at the end of the webinar or with the help of comments that can be left under the video. That means that even if the webinar seems more of a monologue, for there is only one person speaking, it always implies dialogue. Moreover, if we consider the webinar to be a type of educational discourse, we can say that it mainly has the features of a classical lecture. Firstly, the webinar has a modelled typological structure and strict continuity of a seminar. It includes the introduction (when the speaker greets the audience, introduces him/herself, states the steps of the class), the body and the conclusion. Q&A session is also a part of the structure of a webinar if the platform on which the webinar is based can allow that. If there is no such possibility, an e-mail or a link is given to the audience for further communication.

Due to such feature of virtual pedagogical discourse and due to its forms and types, heterogeneous nature of the studying audience, different levels of the audience's background knowledge and quality of the learners' professional knowledge, the speaker uses clichés to organize the ideas and the steps of the speech, simple vocabulary and syntax. That means that while preparing and presenting the speech, the speaker should always have in mind that his/ her words should be comprehensible to learners possessing different levels of knowledge. We can refer all media technologies that are used by the speaker, e.g. presentation, additional audio/ video material, the intonation, or sometimes gestures and mimics to non-verbal means of communication.

It is also possible to distinguish such features of English webinars in educational space as:

- a way of realisation of communicative interaction - any texts are generated by means of the Internet technologies or other means which include interactivity;
- orientation on communication - the text used in a webinar can presuppose feedback, as well as it can be a unidirectional process;
- a specific chronotope (spacetime) – communication between the participants can be both online and offline.

1.2. Approaches to discourse markers definition and classification

Nowadays the interest of scientists to discourse analysis is very high. There is although no certain definition of a discourse in modern linguistics. However, most scientists agree that discourse is the text in the moment of speech. It means that the analysis of discourse includes not only linguistic peculiarities, but also extralinguistic factors in which the text is realised. Discourse analysis in modern science is an interdisciplinary field of studying the language of communication within which the attention is paid to the

dynamics of discourse and to the processes of constructing a message by the speaker/ writer and of interpreting this message by the listener/ reader.

More and more interest is shown to the ways of cohesion and coherence of the text, produced in the moment speech is realised. Scientists have begun to pay attention to the category of units that provide and ensure cohesion and coherence in the text. On the one hand, such units provide coherence in the text. On the other hand, they can also show the process of interaction between the speaker and the listener, the speaker's attitude, opinion and interpretation of the information he/ she presents. In linguistics such words that provide coherence and cohesion of the text and utterances within the text are called discourse particles, discourse connectors or just connectors, discursive words, pragmatic markers, discourse markers, etc. They can be expressed by prepositions, conjunctions, some pronouns and phrases. The phenomenon of discourse markers has no distinct definition. Different authors give different definitions according to the function or aspect they want to focus their attention on. Fraser (1990) says that discourse markers (or pragmatic markers, as he calls them) are a functional class of units of lexical expressions that exist in any language (Fraser, 1990). Such expressions appear in the discourse segment, and they are not a part of the propositional statement. They do not add meaning to the propositional statement, however, they signal and mark aspects of the message the speaker wants to convey. Schiffrin (2001) states that discourse markers are units dependent on the sequence of meaning that divide the speech into different parts. Kibrik and Podlesskaya (2009) claim that discourse markers are unmarkable words or phrases that regulate discourse process between the speaker and the addressee. They also state that discourse markers do not carry any propositional information to the utterance and their functions are in the sphere of organisation and controlling the discourse flow (Kibrik & Podlesskaya, 2009).

Thus, discourse markers are the words that provide cohesion and coherence of the text that express the speaker's opinion, attitude, interpretation and intentions regarding the information presented. Moreover, they are not a part of the propositional utterance, and they do not add any meaning to the propositional content of the utterance itself. That means that if we exclude them from the sentence, the meaning of it will remain the same.

There are different approaches to the study of discursive markers or discursive words. They differ according to the function that the author wants to emphasise. These functions can be discourse and text forming (discourse markers), relationship expression (discourse connectors/ connectives), and communication itself (pragmatic operators).

In this research we concentrate on discourse markers and on the function that they perform in the text and discourse. For that reason we have chosen four main approaches.

- Halliday and Hasan (1976) are the first ones to describe discourse markers (Halliday & Hasan 1976). They say that cohesion is internal linear organisation of a text through language binders. The researchers claim that coherence is the feature of the whole text, while cohesion is a characteristic of textelements. Halliday and Hasan were the first to study such words as *and, but, by the way, I mean* and were the first to mark their functions. They distinguish four meanings of such units, namely: additional, adversary, cause and effect, and temporary. Moreover, scientists claim that not only the meaning can be expressed by different connecting units, but also these units can play different functions.

- Schiffrin (2001), as we have already said, states that discourse markers are units dependent on the sequence of meanings that divide the speech into different parts (Schiffrin, 2001). Like Halliday and Hasan (1976), she stated that discourse markers identify the coherence within utterances that follow each other, and that interpretation depends on the information gathered from the previous utterance. In her study she divides discourse markers into four groups: 1 – connecting markers (*and, but, or, so, because);* 2 – exclamatory markers (*Oh, well)*; 3 – adverbial (*now, then);* 4 – lexical phrases (*y'know, I mean).*Shiffrin says that discourse markers do not influence the prepositional statement, but its absence in the speech flow influences the development and interpretation of a statement. She also pays attention to the special prosodic contour as a characteristic of discourse markers due to her study of oral discourse. She claims that discourse markers fix the result of discourse participants' interaction on the organisation and information levels.

- Fraser (1990) pays a lot of attention to the question of how the concrete type of discourse markers connects the meaning of one utterance to another, to discourse on the whole, and to the participants of communication. In his study he agrees that discourse markers are not a separate class of units; they connect one utterance with another, and their interpretation does not depend on the context of their usage. He also does not exclude the possibility of using one marker in different functions. Fraser (1990) states that discourse or, as he calls them, pragmatic markers have a core meaning, although they do not influence the propositional meaning of the statement. He classifies discourse markers into four big groups. The first one is basic markers (structural basic markers, lexical basic markers - performative expressions, pragmatic idioms, hybrid basic markers - declarative-based hybrids, interrogative-based hybrids, imperative-based hybrids). The second group is commentary markers (assessment markers, manner-of-speaking markers, evidential markers, hearsay markers, mitigation markers, emphasis markers). The third is parallel markers (vocative markers, solidarity markers, focusing markers). The fourth is discourse markers (contrastive markers, topic change markers, elaborative markers, inferential markers). We think that this classification seems to be the most complete one. Markers that Fraser (1990) suggests in his classification are more to regulate the organisation of the information in the speech.

- Blackmore states that discourse markers play an important role in the process of interpretation of the statement, helping the listener/ reader in searching of optimal reference. He studies such discourse markers as *therefore, so, after, all, but.*

To summarise, all the above-mentioned approaches state that discourse markers have some meaning, though they do not influence the meaning of the propositional statement. Moreover, they express the speaker's intentions and attitudes towards the presented information. Discourse markers also play an important role in the interpretation of the statement by the listener or speaker, and in the process of organisation of the speech.

2. Problem Statement

Webinar, being a new genre of virtual educational discourse, combines features of different kinds of communication peculiarities. We can say that it is partly written and mostly oral communication, as the speaker prepares the text and the presentation for the webinar. Therefore, one of the main problems of this research is what discourse markers the speaker uses to organise the prepared speech. Moreover, we find it important to define to what extent and what discourse markers organise information and help to interpret it more accurately. Furthermore, another problem is to define what functions the markers play in the context of webinars on teaching/ learning English.

3. Research Questions

We suppose that in this study the main questions are:

- the most frequent discourse markers that are used in the webinars on teaching/ learning English;
- functions of these discourse markers;
- reasons for the choice of particular discourse markers;
- presence of multifunctional discourse markers.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is:

- to distinguish and describe the most frequent discourse markers of webinars on teaching/ learning English;
- to analyse what markers help to organise the speaker's speech and how they realise that;
- to analyse what markers express the speaker's opinion, attitude, emotion and manner of speech;
- to analyse how oral nature of the webinar is presented with the help of discourse markers.

5. Research Methods

In our research we use the following methods:

- descriptive method for gathering the examples of use of discourse markers in webinars on teaching/ learning English;
- component analysis method for more concrete determination of their function in webinars on teaching/ learning English;
- context analysis method for describing peculiarities of functioning of discourse markers in webinars on teaching/ learning English.
- statistical analysis method.

6. Findings

In this research, we analysed webinars on teaching/ learning English made and organised by www.britishcouncil.org, Cambridge University Press ELT, American TESOL Institute, BBC Learning English, www.engvid.com and such Youtube channel as Speak English with Tiffani.

Webinars on teaching English, which were used for the analysis, are recorded. They are moderated on the Adobe Connect platform, which allows participants to communicate with the lecturer by using a chat box and which allows the lecturer to use presentation and show additional material to the audience. Moreover, there is usually a moderator who introduces the speaker and begins a Q&A session at the end of the web seminar.

Webinars on learning English are usually videos or special recordings which can be made with or without presentation or the presence of the speaker. Furthermore, they are much shorter than those on teaching English.

However, all of the webinars have the same structure. As it was mentioned earlier, this structure is introduction (greetings, introducing the speaker, the topic and the plan of the webinar), main body and conclusion. Q&A session is basically present in teaching English webinars, as the Adobe Connect platform allows that. On the other hand, in learning English webinars, as well as in teaching English web seminars, communication between the speaker and the audience can be carried out with the help of comments under the video or by giving a lecturer's e-mail where the participants or viewers can send their questions and get some answers.

Our analysis is based on the Fraser's classification of discourse markers. In our research we will present the most common discourse markers used and markers included in the above classification.

6.1. Classification of discourse markers according to their function

As the main function of discourse markers is to organize the information in the text, we think it is better to begin with the description of those that make the audience follow the speaker. According to Fraser's (1999) classification, such markers are called discourse markers which "signal a message specifying how the basic message is related to the foregoing discourse" (p. 186). Discourse markers are the markers that signal how the previous utterance corresponds with the following discourse. They organize the discourse, creating and giving structure to it. Moreover, they can give additional information on how the utterance should be interpreted.

We can place such words, words combinations and phrases as *so, and, but, and so, next, first, the first/ the third thing is, now, another thing, then, in the last, the last thing, the other thing/ method, also, let's keep going, number one/ two, etc., other ways, or, though, although, for example, in fact, that is, in this/ that case, by the way, etc.* in this group.

The topic change markers will be the following words and words combinations: *by the way, anyway, whatever.* For example:

(1) ***By the way***, *this isn't just for English you can use this for any language you're trying to learn, okay? (1)*

(2) ***Whatever***, *you know the wedding song.* ***Anyway***, *if you "engage" by asking questions, it brings in your curiosity… (2)*

Contrastive markers which help the lecturer to show the different aspects of one thing or phenomena can be expressed by *though, even though, although, but, instead of*as in the following examples:

(3) *...you can learn from other learners not just from what they say to you* **but** *in terms of the feedback that they give you (1)*

(4) *I think,* **though***, there is another reason (2)*

(5) *So,* **instead of** *the building, I put my university but everything else is the same. (3)*

(6) *I'm going to talk about all these four skills,* **although,** *as my students know, I also think of vocabulary and grammar as part of the skills. (4)*

Elaborative markers are the markers that specify or detail the information the author gives. Such markers will be *also, and, for example, in addition, in fact, in other words, or, that is, I mean.* For instance:

(7) **In fact***, if you really love arrows, you might prefer a mind map* **or** *a flow chart to show how things connect.*

(8) *And so,* **in addition** *to thinking about, you know, listening, speaking, reading, writing…*

(9) *This is* **also** *an activity that you can do at a very low level.*

(10) *Let's say,* **for example***, that you are watching something on TV so you can select words from TV shows* **or** *movies that you watch.*

(11) **In other words***, you don't have to sync and translate in your head before you say anything.*

(12) **I mean***, level one has activities that use charts….*

The words *I mean, in other words* do not just detail the information. They are used rather to reword the preceding information so that the meaning of the utterance is clearer for the audience.

As a webinar has a certain structure that includes conclusion, the presence of inferential markers is not doubted. However, these markers not only summarize the main idea of the whole speech, but also can show the end of a thought or an abstract as we can see in the following examples:

(13) *That is* **then,** *if you like, by way of introduction. (1)*

(14) **So***, as a general rule of thumb, we should always consider offering the students the opportunity to have three or four minutes silent planning time…(2)*

(15) *And* **because of that** *I think that there is a tendency for us, as teachers, to be quite happy when the students are speaking.*

This group of markers is represented by a small number of words that is used. They are *so, then, because of this/ that* which we can see in the examples above.

Another big group of discourse markers that are most frequently represented in webinars on teaching/ learning English are commentary markers – "message is typically very general, with a single word often signaling both the message force and content" (Fraser, 1996, p. 168). Markers that belong to this group give more concrete or specific details about the speaker's attitude towards the information he/ she presents. These markers also represent how the utterance should be interpreted.

The most frequently represented types of commentary markers are the ones that belong to manner-of-speaking, evidential, emphasis and focusing types.

The first group is commentary markers. It is represented by the group of evidential markers. They signal the degree of the speaker's confidence in the information he/ she provides the audience with. Analysis has shown that this group can be expressed by such words, word combinations and phrases as

certainly, clearly, possibly, I suppose, definitely, completely, obviously, probably, perhaps, for example.
The following examples can illustrate the usage of evidential markers:

(16) PITA makes the point that it **completely** depends on the aim of the course.

(17) **Clearly**, note-taking is not supposed to be writing and then reading aloud.

(18) Let's say, **for example**, that you are watching something on TV so you can select words from TV shows

(19) And so **obviously** if they're talking, they're also listening.

(20) Now this would work **probably** for a high advanced, high intermediate, to advanced level.

(21) So those people were **definitely** using informal language.

(22) **I suppose**, as a general rule of thumb, I believe that if a piece of material is worth doing

(23) At least the students that I've taught over the years **certainly** do.

(24) The first time, **perhaps** in some ways the least used, is to give students silent thinking time.

Another group of commentary markers that is expressed with a great number of markers and that is used more frequently during the speech is manner-of-speaking markers. As is clear from the name of such markers, by using them the speaker can present his/ her own attitude to the topic or to the statement that he/ she prepared for the webinar. Moreover, they show the speaker's habits of expressing his/her thoughts or ideas to the audience. This group includes *simply, personally, actually, you know* as we can see in the following examples.

(25) Doing different types of (P) using frames in the sense of, **you know**, giving students almost, **you know**, chunks prefabricated chunks of language that can work really well with lower level students

(26) **Personally,** I disagree with that.

(27) The engagement factor is regularly measured in people engagement factor **simply** means how they are engaged in that jobs.

(28) Because you are not **actually** thinking.

The following commentary markers groups are also used in a webinar, but their frequency is lower, and their number is not so big as that of those mentioned above. Such words as *hopefully* and *unfortunately* that belong, according to Fraser's classification, to the assessment markers occur only one or two times during the webinar. In the sentences like:

(29) **Hopefully** you're doing some kind of content-based instruction and you could use a lecture from that topic.

(30) Yes! I do, **unfortunately**.

Discourse markers that show emphasis, however, can be noticed more often than assessment ones. We can say that the word *really* is used practically as frequently as the word *actually*.

(31) It's those months the communicative moments when the learning **really** is at its strongest.

(32) …but even if they're not concentrating very little is **actually** lost.

(33) The other method you can use **actually** is something that you may already have inside.

(34) …and help your students see how grammar does **really** work as a function of language…

(35) That Tic-Tac Toe activity works **really** well.

Another group of commentary markers, which is used not so often, is mitigation markers. According to the analysis, we can place two most frequently used words: *kind of, sort of* in this group. By using them the speaker tries to reduce the degree of responsibility concerning the information he/ she presents. Moreover, to some extent, they can be used to introduce examples. For instance:

(36) …feel burnout symptoms and I'm going to show you later on some **kind of** proof that it is an issue.

(37) We've written it down in a note-taking format and now we're going to take that **sort of** skeleton

(38) Let's just **kinda** do a small sketch

(39) …before I give **a sort of** answer to this again in the chat box.

Last but not least, the markers of a webinar on teaching/ learning English are focusing markers, pragmatic idioms and interjections, and emotive words or phrases. These groups are represented with a small number of words that, however, play a great role in organizing the structure of the webinar.

Focusing markers. A great number and frequent use of these words can be explained by the necessity of the speaker to use such media means as presentation or video, or pictures that he/ she uses during the speech. According to the research, the focusing markers will be *look (here), now, so, well, let (let's).*

(40) **Now**, ten top tips for taking better notes while listening.

(41) Okay, **so let's** look at it a little closer.

(42) **Well**, and I can see that people are putting their votes.

(43) **So** again, this will help you use them in daily life.

The second group is pragmatic idioms (lexical basic markers) like *please* and *perhaps (maybe)* that are used as a way to show politeness.

(44) **Please**, listen carefully and make notes.

(45) It simply doesn't take off, **perhaps**, because students are not ready.

(46) **Perhaps**, they just need a little bit of lubrication.

Interjections and emotive words or phrases, for example, *Oh!, Yes, Yeah, No,* are used more frequently in the Q&A session or in the oral task during the webinar to:

(47) express receipt information – **Oh**, wait. **Oh**, the questions went fast.

(48) express agreement – As we look at this example, though, we see, **yes,** these people are still using language (1). **Yes,** this seminar was recorded and it'll be archived there (2).

express disagreement - So, **oh**, no, I don't know ques… **oh**, sorry I'm just responding to the question without reading it.

6.2. Multifunctional discourse markers

As has been mentioned before, different words, word combinations and phrases are used as discourse markers. Each has its own function that helps the audience to interpret the message of a speaker more accurately. Moreover, they help the speaker to organise his/ her speech/ lecture and make narration more logical and convincing.

Most of the markers are used only for one function. However, we have noticed that some of them can have more than one function. We think that it can be explained by the Internet mediated

communication, oral and spontaneous nature of speech, as well as by features of individual manner of speech. Some of these discourse markers play different roles in the sentence (they can be a conjunction (so, and, but)) or can be used in their general meaning as a part of speech, etc.). The analysis has shown that more often the following markers are used as filler words due to the spontaneous and oral nature of the lecturer's speech.

Further, there are tables (Tables 01, 02, 03 and 04) with the examples that show discourse markers in different functions.

Table 01. The usage of discourse marker *so*

Function	Examples
As a filler word	And **so** this is the big question… (1) **So** we're not teaching grammar in reading or grammar and writing, or soliciting and speaking… (2) I showed you the slide of the people in the coffee shop. **So** those people were definitely using… (3) ….day cycle again. **So** now we're on the next… (4)
As an inferential marker	**So** I think this is a very easy activity that definitely integrates skills. (5) So when somebody says that to you, think about it. (6)
As a focusing marker	**So** again, you start off strong…(7) **So** here's the problem. (8) **So** as we look at this picture, we see people using language (9)
As an adverb	**So** in this webinar I give a look at the background of burnout (10) **So** the question is (P) are they myths or truth. (11)

Table 02. The usage of discourse marker *and*

Function	Examples
As a filler word	I think in some ways are quite versatile. **And** the first one is the most versatile. (1) **And** so in addition to thinking about, you know, listening (2)
As a conjunction	So that's a little bit (P)of who I am (P)**and** I'd like us to think about. (3)
As an elaborative marker	Don't note everything down. **And** to save space, use abbreviations. (4) …than just hanging out and chatting with your friends. **And** that's something that grammar plays an intimate role in. (5)

Table 03. The usage of discourse marker *now*

Function	Examples
As an adverb	**Now** you might look at this and think: 'well, they're just…' (1) So **now** we're on the next column, the visualize column. (2) We've written it down in a note-taking format and **now** we're going to take those sort of that skeleton. (3)
As an focusing marker	**Now** I'm quite surprised, I must say and by these the numbers that you're putting in here. (4) **Now** what's the second thing? (5) **Now** the first aspect of this solution (6)

Table 04. The usage of discourse marker *perhaps*

Function	Examples
As an evidential marker	The first time, **perhaps** in some ways the least used, is to give students silent thinking time. (1) And providing a few minutes for note-taking initially, **perhaps** individually, and then working with a partner (2)
As a pragmatic idiom	It simply doesn't take off, **perhaps**, because students are not ready. (3) **Perhaps**, they just need a little bit of lubrication, if you like (4)

7. Conclusion

The research has shown that in the context of webinars on teaching/ learning English the most commonly used discourse markers are represented by the words belonging, according to Fraser's classification, to two big groups of commentary and discourse markers. Among these groups the most frequently used discursive markers are those belonging to the group of discourse and commentary markers, especially to those contrastive (though, even though, although, but, instead of), elaborative (also, and, for example, in addition, in fact, in other words, or, that is, I mean), evidential (certainly, clearly, possibly, I suppose, definitely, completely, obviously, probably, perhaps, for example). This frequency can be explained by the fact of oral spontaneous nature of the speech of the webinar.

In the context of webinar all types of discourse markers are used, as they help the speaker to organise the information and the speech as well. These markers help to organise the information logically and help the audience to understand the lecturer more accurately. After the analysis we can emphasise discourse markers which are used more frequently than others. Such words as also, and, but, kind of, though, for example, you know belong to this group. These markers are the contrastive, elaborative and inferential markers. This can be explained by the fact of oral communication that has partly spontaneous character, for a webinar is a combination of different types of communication.

The commentary group of discourse markers is used by the speaker to express his/ her own opinion or attitude towards the topic of conversation. These markers make the speech more colourful, more interesting to listen to and easier to understand. We can say that there are, of course, discourse markers that are used more often. For example, evidential (certainly, clearly, possibly, I suppose, definitely, completely, obviously, probably, perhaps, for example).

The analysis has also shown that there are markers that can be used to perform different functions, e.g. and, perhaps, so, and, now, which proves Fraser's, and Halliday and Hassan theory.

Last but not least, the presence of such markers as first of all, firstly, secondly, etc. and such markers as ah, yes, uhm, you know, I mean, etc. can be the proof of our statement that a webinar combines features of written and oral forms of communication as well as academic and colloquial speech.

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