

# DISCOURSE MARKERS IN ATHLETE-HOSTED PODCASTS: AN ANALYSIS OF TYPES AND FUNCTIONS IN SPONTANEOUS SPEECH

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## Abstract

Discourse markers play an important role in spoken communication by helping speakers organize talk, express stance, and manage interaction in real-time discourse. This study investigates the types and functions of discourse markers used in athlete-hosted podcasts involving three professional athletes—Carlos Sainz Jr., Harry Kane, and Roger Federer—across three English-language podcast episodes drawn from different YouTube channels. The data consist of naturally occurring, unscripted conversations in which the athletes function as the primary speakers. Using a descriptive qualitative research design, the study analyzed manually verified podcast transcripts through qualitative document analysis based on Schiffrin's (1987) discourse marker framework. A total of 2,014 discourse markers were identified across the three episodes. Six functional categories were found: discourse connectives (39.90%), markers of information and participation (40.58%), cause–result markers (8.44%), response markers (5.81%), temporal/modal adverbs (3.57%), and markers of information management (1.69%). The findings indicate that markers of information and participation—such as you know, I think, I mean, and like—were the most frequently used, highlighting their role in maintaining interactional flow and conveying speakers' viewpoints in podcast discourse. Although the study is limited by the small number of participants and reliance on single-coder analysis, the findings contribute to understanding how discourse markers function in spontaneous athlete-hosted podcast interaction and suggest directions for future research using broader datasets.



**Keyword:** Athlete podcasts; discourse analysis; discourse markers; podcast analysis; spoken discourse

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## INTRODUCTION

Spontaneous conversation is a fundamental form of human communication that enables individuals to share information, express emotions, and build meaning in real-time. Unlike scripted speech, spontaneous dialogue is inherently dynamic, involving features such as pauses, repetitions, and fillers to maintain fluency and

coherence. These features provide a valuable context for examining linguistic elements that support conversational flow. Among these elements, discourse markers play a key role in structuring spoken interaction beyond the sentence level, helping speakers navigate transitions, signal relationships between ideas, and manage listener expectations (Schiffrin, 1987).

Discourse markers such as *and*, *but*, *so*, *well*, and *you know* are frequently used in spontaneous speech and have been analyzed across various communicative contexts, including interviews, presentations, and talk shows. However, limited research has addressed their usage in podcast communication, particularly in athlete-hosted podcasts. Podcasts offer a unique environment where speakers engage in unscripted, informal dialogue, often involving bilingual or multilingual communication. According to Harahap (2020), podcasts are widely accessible digital audio formats covering diverse themes, including education and language, making them a valuable medium for linguistic inquiry.

This study focuses on athlete-hosted podcasts, where speakers—often professional athletes—engage in informal, yet content-rich discussions in English, sometimes blended with elements of their native languages. These conversations provide fertile ground for analyzing how discourse markers function to manage information, express stance, and maintain interactional coherence. Drawing on Schiffrin's (1987) framework, this study aims to identify the types and examine the functions of discourse markers in selected podcast episodes. Schiffrin's model is considered appropriate because it offers a comprehensive and systematic classification of discourse markers based on their interactional and pragmatic roles in spoken communication, including managing information flow, indicating responses, marking causality, signaling time or modality, and maintaining participation in conversation. This framework has also been applied in recent studies within similar spoken discourse contexts, such as scientific debates and talk shows, reinforcing its reliability in analyzing real-time communication where coherence and interpersonal engagement are crucial. Theoretically, the research contributes to discourse analysis by exploring how spoken language is organized in informal settings. Practically, it offers insights for podcasters, linguists, and communication professionals seeking to enhance engagement and clarity in spoken discourse.

Language is a complex and dynamic system for communication, comprising multiple components such as phonology, morphology, syntax semantics, and pragmatics (Finestack et al., 2020). It functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a symbolic and social tool that reflects individual cognition and collective norms Kanaza, (2020). In spoken genres like athlete-hosted podcasts, language use becomes particularly spontaneous, allowing researchers to observe how speakers construct meaning in real time through pragmatic strategies such as discourse markers.

Discourse Analysis (DA) provides a framework to examine how language is organized across turns and contexts in spoken interaction (Fraser, 2021). Spoken discourse is inherently dialogic and context-dependent, requiring attention to coherence, stance, and interactional strategies. Podcasts, as unscripted and interactive communication, illustrate how discourse markers structure speech, signal transitions, and manage interpersonal engagement. Despite increased research on spoken discourse, the use of discourse markers in informal, naturally occurring speech remains underexplored, highlighting a gap addressed in this study. Within this framework, discourse markers (DMs) function as crucial devices that support the organization and interpretation of spoken messages. Hafiz et al. (2024) demonstrate that spoken discourse in professional public-speaking contexts is shaped by pragmatic features that support coherence, emphasis, and audience engagement. Insyra and Supri (2024) further show that spoken discourse operates through pragmatic interaction in which speaker intention and listener response jointly shapes

meaning. In addition, Pratama and Azizah (2023) conceptualize spoken discourse as a social medium through which attitudes and representations are constructed and negotiated in spoken interaction. Although these studies adopt different analytical approaches and keywords, they converge on a shared focus on the nature of spoken discourse. This convergence provides a theoretical foundation for examining spoken discourse in the present study.

Additionally, Crible (2020) explains that DMs vary in their clarity and informational strength, requiring speakers to rely on other linguistic cues to ensure coherence across modalities. In a related context, Schneebeli (2020) shows that DMs such as *lol* do not contribute semantic content but instead guide affective interpretation and interpersonal alignment. Therefore, analyzing DMs in podcasts enables a deeper understanding of how speakers construct meaning and manage interactional demands in contemporary spoken genres.

Spoken discourse differs significantly from written discourse, as it is often improvised, multimodal, and interactive. Stark et al. (2021) highlight that spoken language includes microstructural (e.g., syntax), macrostructural (e.g., cohesion), and interactional (e.g., turn-taking) features. These are evident in podcasts, where speakers use markers like *you know* and *I mean* to signal stance and clarify meaning, while also using paralinguistic cues to engage listeners. Such language use reflects not only the communicative purpose but also the speaker's social and emotional orientation (Fatmah et al., 2024).

Schiffrin's (1987) framework classifies discourse markers into six functional categories: (1) Markers of Information Management (e.g., *okay*, *well*) help signal shifts or manage attention; (2) Response Markers (e.g., *yeah*, *woah*) indicate agreement or emotional reaction; (3) Discourse Connectives (e.g., *and*, *but*, *then*) ensure coherence between ideas; (4) Cause-Result Markers (e.g., *so*, *because*) explain reasoning or outcomes; (5) Temporal/Modal Adverbs (e.g., *now*, *tomorrow*, *maybe*) show time reference or uncertainty; and (6) Markers of Information and Participation (e.g., *you know*, *I think*, *actually*) involve the listener and express stance. For instance, in the utterance "I was like... you know... just trying to stay focused," *like* and *you know* operate as fillers that allow cognitive space while also softening tone and building rapport.

A wide range of studies have investigated discourse markers (DMs) across various genres, modes, and speaker profiles. Gabarró-López (2020) examined two DMs in sign languages and observed their polyfunctional and language-specific usage, though the study was limited in scope and participant diversity. In scripted media, Ussolichah et al. (2021) analyzed DMs in *Avengers: Endgame*, identifying frequent use of markers like *oh*, *so*, and *well*, while Hazem et al. (2021) emphasized the coherence-building function of DMs in literary texts—both studies constrained by pre-written dialogue. In more structured settings, Sari (2023) explored DMs in scientific debates, and Farahani and Ghane (2022) used a corpus-based approach to investigate markers such as *you know* and *I mean* in academic speech. These studies affirm the organizational and interpersonal roles of DMs, yet are often based on edited or formal speech with limited spontaneity.

Research in academic and learner discourse also reveals important insights. Ramadhani and Syarif (2021) focused on student thesis presentations, noting overuse and first-language interference. Similarly, Sarira et al. (2023) and Arya (2022) explored filler use and DM functions among EFL learners, highlighting pragmatic constraints and limited interactional depth. In more semi-formal domains, Annisa et al. (2023) examined non-native speakers in talk shows and identified a diverse range of markers used for managing information and participation. Crible and Pascual (2020) studied DMs in conversational repair across languages, but mostly within formal or cross-linguistic contexts. Collectively, these studies enhance

our understanding of DMs but tend to focus on scripted, academic, or learner-based interactions.

Although discourse markers (DMs) have been widely examined in spoken genres such as classrooms, interviews, and media discourse, their use in unscripted and informal public interactions remains underexplored. This gap limits understanding of how DMs function in spontaneous spoken communication. Previous research characterizes discourse markers as pragmatic devices that organize discourse, signal stance, and support interactional coherence (Schiffrin, 1987; Crible, 2020; Schneebeil, 2020). Athlete-hosted podcasts, which blend casual conversation with public performance, offer a suitable context for examining these functions. Accordingly, this study investigates the types and functions of discourse markers in athlete-hosted podcasts as a hybrid spoken genre combining conversational spontaneity and performative elements.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine the types and functions of discourse markers in spontaneous spoken discourse. Descriptive qualitative research is appropriate because it enables systematic interpretation of linguistic features as they naturally occur in authentic communication contexts without statistical manipulation (Furidha, 2023). This design allows close attention to pragmatic meaning, interactional context, and naturally occurring language use.

The participants of this study were three professional athletes who appeared as primary speakers in selected podcast episodes: Carlos Sainz Jr. (Formula One driver), Harry Kane (professional footballer), and Roger Federer (former professional tennis player). The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) international professional recognition, (2) frequent participation in English-language media discourse, and (3) demonstrated ability to engage in extended, spontaneous spoken interaction. Each participant appeared in one podcast episode from a different podcast channel, resulting in three episodes from three distinct sources. The Carlos Sainz data were obtained from *Carlos Sainz: Pain, Pride + Potential | F1 Beyond The Grid Podcast Presented By Explora Journeys* from the **Formula One** YouTube channel. The Harry Kane data were sourced from *Harry Kane talks playing with Tiger Woods, his love for golf & football!* from **The Rick Shiels Golf Show** YouTube channel. The Roger Federer data were taken from *Doctor Roger Federer Will See You Now* from the **What Now? with Trevor Noah** YouTube channel. This selection was intended to capture variation across podcast formats while maintaining a shared spoken discourse context.

The podcast episodes were obtained from publicly accessible online platforms and selected according to three criteria: (1) unscripted and spontaneous conversational structure, (2) clear and stable audio quality to ensure transcription accuracy, and (3) sufficient duration and extended speaker turns to allow meaningful analysis of discourse marker use. Episodes ranging from 45 to 60 minutes were selected to ensure adequate discourse density for reliable functional analysis.

The transcription process followed a simplified spoken discourse transcription standard adapted from conversation-analytic conventions. Initial transcripts were generated using YouTube's auto-generated captions and subsequently refined through repeated listening to the recordings. Manual correction focused on ensuring accurate representation of discourse markers, fillers, pauses, and overlapping speech, which are essential features in spoken discourse analysis.

The unit of analysis in this study was individual discourse markers as they occurred within speaker turns in the podcast interactions. Data analysis was conducted using Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA), as the podcast transcripts function as textual documents that allow systematic examination of recurring linguistic

patterns while retaining sensitivity to spoken interactional context. The analysis proceeded in three stages: (1) identification of discourse markers in the transcripts, (2) classification of each marker based on Schiffrin's (1987) functional categories, and (3) contextual interpretation of their pragmatic functions within the surrounding interaction.

To enhance analytical reliability and trustworthiness, iterative coding and systematic cross-checking were conducted between the transcripts and the original audio recordings. Coding decisions were reviewed multiple times using constant comparison to ensure consistency and contextual accuracy. Although the analysis involved a single coder, methodological rigor was maintained through repeated coding cycles, reflexive checking, and careful documentation of analytical decisions to minimize subjective bias. All data were drawn from publicly accessible sources, and no private or sensitive information was involved in the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here is the result of types of discourse markers among these three athlete sports in table 1 below:

Table 1. Result Types of Discourse Markers

No	Types of Discourse Markers	Categories	Frequency				Total Combination
			Carlos Sainz	Harry Kane	Roger Federer	Total	
	Marker of Information Management	<b>Topic Change Markers</b> (Oh, okay, well)	0	0	3	3	n=34 1,69%
		<b>Topic Shift</b> (Well, So)	0	4	5	9	
		<b>Repetition/Confirmation</b> (Right, Okay)	2	8	12	22	
	Marker of Response	<b>Agreement Marker</b> (Yeah, Woah)	30	52	35	117	n=117 5,81%
		<b>Acknowledgment Marker</b> ("Uh-huh," "Right")	0	0	0	0	
	Discourse Connective	<b>Additive Connectives</b> (And, Also)	243	166	224	633	n=804 39,90%
		<b>Contrastive Connectives</b> (But, However)	48	52	49	149	
		<b>Sequential Connectives</b> (Then, Next)	7	2	13	22	
	Markers of Cause and Result	<b>Causal Markers</b> (Because, Since)	38	24	41	103	n=170 8,44%
		<b>Resultative Markers</b> (So, Therefore)	4	20	43	67	
	Markers of Temporal Adverbs	<b>Uncertainty/Estimation Markers</b> (Maybe, Probably)	9	12	21	42	n=72 3,57%
		<b>Time-Sequence Markers</b> (Now, Then, sometimes, later)	6	10	14	30	
	Markers of Information and Participation	<b>Elaborative Markers</b> (Like, Actually)	22	180	82	284	n=817 40,58%
		<b>Participation Markers</b> (You know, I think, I	101	203	229	533	

		<i>mean)</i>					
	Total	510	733	771	2014	2014	2014

An analysis of discourse markers in athlete-hosted video podcasts featuring Carlos Sainz, Harry Kane, and Roger Federer reveals that discourse marker use is closely related to how each athlete positions themselves within the interaction and addresses a public audience. Across the three datasets, a total of 2,014 discourse markers were identified, with Federer producing the highest number (771 markers), followed by Harry Kane (733 markers) and Carlos Sainz (510 markers). Rather than reflecting fluency alone, these differences indicate varying interactional strategies shaped by each athlete’s public communication role and familiarity with long-form conversational settings. Markers of Information and Participation emerged as the dominant category across speakers. In the podcast context, these markers were frequently used to soften claims, frame personal opinions, and invite alignment from listeners. Harry Kane’s frequent use of markers such as you know, I think, and I mean suggests an interactional style oriented toward accessibility and listener inclusion. As a team-sport athlete accustomed to collective decision-making and media engagement, Kane’s discourse reflects an effort to reduce communicative distance and present himself as relatable to a broad audience.

Discourse connectives played a key role in shaping extended responses and narrative explanations. Federer’s frequent reliance on additive markers (and, also) and causal markers (because, so) indicates a more linear and reflective mode of speaking. This pattern aligns with his role as a retired athlete who often adopts an explanatory stance when recounting experiences or offering commentary, allowing him to structure information carefully for listeners unfamiliar with professional tennis contexts. In contrast, Sainz’s lower frequency of connectives reflects a more concise speaking style, consistent with interview settings where responses tend to be shorter and more situational.

Markers of Response and Temporal Adverbs contributed to managing turn-taking and signaling attentiveness during interaction. Kane’s higher use of response markers such as yeah and uh-huh illustrates active engagement with interlocutors and reinforces a collaborative conversational atmosphere. Meanwhile, Sainz relied less on these markers, suggesting a more reserved interactional presence. These patterns indicate that discourse marker usage is not random but reflects how athletes navigate public identity, audience expectations, and interactional roles within podcast discourse.

**1. Marker of Information Management**

Here’s the example the utterance on Marker of Information Management from Carlos Sainz utterance:

• **Excerpt 1 (23:42-23:45)**

Carlos Sainz: you think is the best? okay perfect.  
 The discourse marker “**okay**” is used to acknowledge and accept new information provided by the listener. In this context, it functions as a **confirmation marker**, signaling that the speaker understands and agrees with the prior input, which allows the conversation to move smoothly to the next topic.

• **Excerpt 2 (56:48-57:03)**

Tom Clarkson: right you've laid down a marker now um look next one which racing person Dead or Alive would you want to be stuck in a lift with?

Carlos Sainz: okay Senna, I think just share a good conversation with Senna I would love to.

Similarly, **“okay”** serves to confirm the speaker’s readiness before answering the question. It functions as an information management marker by indicating that the speaker has processed the question and is prepared to respond. Overall, information management markers such as *okay* play an important role in spoken podcast discourse by organizing conversational flow and enabling smooth transitions between turns.

## 2. Marker of Response

Here’s the example the utterance on Marker of Response from Harry Kane utterance:

- **Excerpt 3 (2:02-2:07)**

Rick Shields: cause I know you're incredibly busy in fact you're that busy you were literally on a football pitch yesterday

Harry Kane: yeah

The discourse marker **“yeah”** functions as a response marker expressing agreement with the host’s statement. This brief response helps maintain conversational continuity and signals the speaker’s active engagement in the interaction.

- **Excerpt 4 (11:03-11:26)**

Guy Charnock: I think for us though as well being obviously myself and Rick have played golf like all our lives I was horrendous at football don't think Rick was much better I love s him at five as side he's not too bad but like growing up at golf was my Sport and itt was just so uncool and I remember I'd get picked up from the golf club with Mom and Dad get out the car at home and like the public bus would go past and I'd be petrified of any kids who I knew might be on this bus and I'd hid my golf put till the bus had gone past

Harry Kane: Really? Yeah...

In this context, **“yeah”** conveys both surprise and agreement. It supports the emotional flow of the interaction by affirming shared understanding and reinforcing interpersonal alignment between the speakers.

Taken together, response markers such as *yeah* facilitate interaction by signaling attentiveness, agreement, and emotional involvement in spoken discourse.

## 3. Discourse Connective

Here’s the example the utterance on Discourse Connectives from Roger Federer utterance:

- **Excerpt 5 (02:41-02:52)**

Roger Federer: Thank you. That was. That was fun at Dartmouth. And uh... you get an honorary doctorate. The connective **“and”** links related ideas by continuing the speaker’s narrative and introducing additional information. It contributes to the coherence of the spoken discourse by maintaining the flow of thought.

- **Excerpt 6 (28:42-28:46)**

Roger Federer: I just focus almost on my own game and the rest I'll wing it and I'll figure it out. Here, **“and”** connects sequential actions, showing the logical progression from focusing on one’s own game to adapting strategies during play. In spoken discourse, discourse connectives such as **and** function to maintain coherence and support spontaneous narrative construction.

#### 4. Markers of Cause and Results

Here's the example the utterance on Markers of Cause and Result from Carlos Sainz utterance:

- **Excerpt 7 (00:00-00:13)**

Carlos Sainz: Life is like a roller coaster I remember being very emotional on that Australia Grand Prix Podium because there was my dad there there was obviously my manager my girlfriend everyone who's been next to me---

The marker **“because”** introduces the cause of the speaker's emotional reaction. As a **causal marker**, it provides an explicit explanation that helps listeners understand the reason behind the expressed feeling.

- **Excerpt 8 (6:42-6:48)**

Carlos Sainz: I just didn't trust that I could brace so I hadn't brace for more than ...10 11 days. The marker **“so”** signals the result of the preceding situation, functioning as a **resultative marker** that logically links cause and consequence. **These markers** support clarity in spoken discourse by helping speakers' structure explanations and guide listeners through cause-effect relationships.

#### 5. Markers of Temporal Adverb

Here's the example the utterance on Markers of Temporal Adverbs from Harry Kane utterance:

- **Excerpt 9 (13:02-13:06)**

Harry Kane: ---I'm playing maybe once a month or once every six weeks---. The marker **“maybe”** signals approximation and epistemic uncertainty, indicating that the speaker is providing an estimate rather than an exact frequency.

- **Excerpt 10 (20:28-20:31)**

Harry Kane: ---as we was leaving uh he kind of said I'm playing 18 in tomorrow if you want to play---. The word **“tomorrow”** functions as a temporal adverb specifying the time of a future action, helping to situate the event chronologically within the narrative. **Temporal markers** contribute to spoken discourse by organizing time reference and enhancing narrative clarity.

#### 6. Markers of Information and Participation

Here's the example the utterance on Markers of Information and Participation from Roger Federer utterance:

- **Excerpt 11 (28:59-29:05)**

Roger Federer: Do you say like well obviously I'm waiting here on the backhand side or do you say like well hold on a second. He knows that I know. The marker **“like”** introduces an illustrative example and softens the explanation, allowing the speaker to clarify thoughts in an informal and listener-friendly manner. It helps involve the listener in the reasoning process.

- **Excerpt 12 (43:46-43:56)**

Roger Federer: I thanked all the players for making me better and showing me my flaws, you know, for making me hope for the better Not just a tennis player, but also a better person, you know. The marker **“you know”** invites shared understanding and empathy from the listener. It assumes common ground and reinforces interpersonal connection during personal reflection.

Overall, participation markers such as *like* and *you know* enhance interaction by fostering listener involvement and maintaining the natural flow of spoken discourse. To strengthen the functional analysis, each category of discourse markers is supported by contextualized examples drawn directly from the podcast data. For instance, in the utterance “you think is the best? okay perfect” (Excerpt 1), the marker *okay* functions as an information management marker by confirming and accepting prior input before the speaker transitions to the next conversational move. Similarly, response markers such as *yeah* in “yeah” (Excerpt 3) function to acknowledge the previous turn and sustain interaction without interrupting the speaker’s on-going contribution. Discourse connectives are illustrated in Roger Federer’s utterance “I just focus almost on my own game and the rest I’ll wing it and I’ll figure it out” (Excerpt 6), where *and* links sequential actions and supports coherence within spontaneous narrative construction. Cause–result markers such as *because* and *so* also occur frequently, as in “I remember being very emotional ... because there was my dad there” (Excerpt 7), where the marker introduces causal explanation and guides listeners in interpreting the speaker’s emotional account.

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Temporal and modal markers further demonstrate functional flexibility in spontaneous spoken interaction. The use of *maybe* in “I’m playing maybe once a month” (Excerpt 9) signals approximation and limited commitment to precise frequency, while participation markers such as *you know* in Federer’s reflective statement (Excerpt 12) function to invite shared understanding and maintain listener involvement. Overall, these examples indicate that discourse markers in athlete-hosted podcasts function as systematic resources for organizing talk, signaling speaker stance, and managing interaction in public yet conversational spoken settings.

This study examined the use of discourse markers (DMs) in athlete-hosted podcasts and situated the findings within previous research on spoken discourse. The analysis indicates that DM usage is strongly influenced by levels of formality, spontaneity, and speakers’ linguistic backgrounds, supporting Schiffrin’s (1987) view that discourse markers operate simultaneously across structural, cognitive, and interactional dimensions. In contrast to Ramadhani and Syarif’s (2021) study of thesis presentations—where learners tended to overuse markers such as *and* and *so* due to limited communicative proficiency—athletes such as Roger Federer and Harry Kane displayed a more strategic and pragmatic use of markers including *you know*, *I mean*, and *like*. These markers functioned to organize ideas, express stance, signal processing effort, and maintain interpersonal rapport with listeners.

Comparisons with other discourse contexts further reinforce these distinctions. Sari’s (2023) findings from scientific debate settings revealed the dominance of logical and argumentative markers such as *and*, *because*, and *so* in more formal interactions. In athlete-hosted podcasts, however, these markers co-occur with interpersonal and participation-oriented discourse markers that are shaped by storytelling, emotional expression, and audience engagement. The speakers’ multilingual backgrounds may also influence their discourse marker choices, particularly in facilitating fluency and shared understanding when using English as a second or additional language. Taken together, these findings highlight the pedagogical potential of podcasts as resources for English language teaching, especially in modeling authentic pragmatic skills such as turn management and stance-taking. Nevertheless, caution is required when generalizing the results, as the study involved only three speakers from a specific professional domain, and individual speaking styles or media experience may have affected discourse marker patterns.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the data were limited to three athlete-hosted podcast episodes featuring high-profile speakers. While this enabled in-depth qualitative analysis, the narrow and specialized dataset restricts the generalizability of the findings to other podcast genres, professional groups, or less public communication settings. Factors such as individual communication style, media training, and familiarity with interview formats may also shape discourse marker usage, making it difficult to attribute observed patterns solely to discourse functions.

Second, the study relied on manual qualitative coding based on Schiffrin's (1987) framework. Although repeated transcript verification and iterative analysis were conducted to enhance accuracy, the interpretation of discourse marker functions remains partially subjective. The absence of inter-rater reliability measures may affect the consistency of category assignment. Future studies could strengthen analytical reliability by involving multiple coders or integrating qualitative analysis with corpus-based or quantitative approaches.

Finally, the analysis focused on English-language podcasts involving multilingual speakers, raising the possibility of cross-linguistic influence that was not systematically explored. Further research employing larger datasets, more diverse speaker profiles, and comparative discourse contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how discourse markers function across spoken genres and sociocultural settings.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the types and functions of discourse markers (DMs) in athlete-hosted podcasts, showing their essential roles in structuring spontaneous speech, facilitating information flow, sustaining audience engagement, and conveying speaker attitudes. While the scope was limited to a small number of English-speaking athletes—thus restricting the generalizability of findings—the results provide valuable pedagogical implications. In particular, educators can integrate podcast segments into speaking or listening activities to raise learners' awareness of natural DM usage, design role-plays that encourage the strategic use of DMs for fluency, or develop tasks focused on identifying and interpreting DMs in authentic contexts. Future research should broaden participant diversity and explore different cultural and linguistic settings to better understand discourse strategies in global communication.

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