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Signposting in upper secondary essay writing in different educational contexts and genres: Exploring pupil usage and teacher practices

Abstract

Essay writing is a central part of upper secondary education, where pupils often face the challenge of composing texts in different genres ranging from scientific investigations to political essays. In their essays, pupils are typically expected to present their arguments in a clear and logical manner, which is often realised by explicitly marking textual relations, referred to here as "signposting". A host of previous studies have investigated signposting in professional and tertiary-level contexts, but comparatively few have investigated signposting at pre-tertiary levels. This study contributes to the existing research pool by exploring signposts in a corpus of 115 English essays in five different genres written by pupils attending Swedish, Norwegian and British schools. A concordancer was used to scan the essays using 273 search terms belonging to 11 signposting sub-categories. This analysis is supplemented with data from teacher interviews. The findings demonstrate that transitions and exemplifiers, used to signal sentential relations, are central features of essay writing at this educational level. Signposts used to mark structural order, on the other hand, seem to depend on the target genre and on individual preferences. The interview data revealed that the teachers in Norway and Sweden tended to provide pupils with decontextualised lists of signposts, which raises the question of whether teachers should offer more explicit instruction in the pragmatic signalling of textual relations.

Keywords: signposting; metadiscourse; essay writing; writing instruction

Organisatorisk metadiskurs i videregående skriftlige oppgaver i ulike utdanningsfaglige kontekster og sjangrer: En undersøkelse av elevers bruk og læreres praksiser

Sammendrag

Skriftlige oppgaver spiller en sentral rolle i videregående utdanning, der elever ofte må skrive tekster innenfor ulike sjangrer som spenner fra vitenskapelige studier til politiske oppgaver. I sine innleveringer skal elever presentere sine argumenter på en tydelig og logisk måte som ofte oppnås ved å eksplisitt markere tekstrelasjoner. Dette kalles for organisatorisk metadiskurs (*signposting*). Tidligere forskning har undersøkt organisatorisk metadiskurs i profesjonelle og akademiske sammenhenger, men relativt få studier har undersøkt organisatorisk metadiskurs i tekster skrevet av skoleelever.

Denne studien bidrar til forskningsfeltet ved å analysere organisatorisk metadiskurs i et tekstkorpus bestående av 115 engelske skriftlige oppgaver innenfor fem sjangre skrevet av videregående elever på norske, svenske og britiske skoler. Et dataprogram ble brukt for å skanne korpuset med 273 markører som tilhører 11 organisatoriske kategorier. Tekstanalysen suppleres med data fra lærerintervjuer. Funnene viser at markører som signaliserer relasjoner på setningsnivået er mye brukt i videregående skriftlige innleveringer. Bruken av markører som signaliserer overordnet struktur derimot, avhenger av målsjangeren og individuelle preferanser. Intervjudataene viser at flere av lærerne i Norge og Sverige ga sine elever dekontekstualiserte lister med organisatoriske markører, noe som kan tyde på at engelsklærere burde tilby mer eksplisitt undervisning i bruk av organisatorisk metadiskurs.

Nøkkelord: organisatorisk metadiskurs; metadiskurs; engelsk skriving; skrivekompetanse; skriveopplæring

Introduction

Establishing a well-structured, logical line of reasoning is a central aspect of successful essay writing (Graff & Birkenstein, 2018). At the upper secondary level in the UK, for example, pupils are required to "guide [the] reader through a very coherent and cohesive text" (AQA, 2020, p. 33). In order to investigate how writers guide their readers, scholars have operationalised linguistic features that signal textual relations under the guise of terms such as "discourse markers" (Fraser, 1993; Schiffrin, 2004), "textual metadiscourse" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Vande Kopple, 1985), "interactive metadiscourse" (Hyland, 2019), and "metatext" (Mauranen, 1993). The term "signposting" (Abdi & Ahmadi, 2015), akin to interactive metadiscourse, is chosen here due to its relative approachability and refers to words and phrases used by writers to explicitly signal structural relations in guiding their readers through the unfolding text. Previous studies have identified the signposting features that characterise professional- and tertiary-level writing, and have compared these features across languages (Mauranen, 1993; Dahl, 2004) and genres (Farrokhi & Ashrafi, 2009; Cao & Hu, 2014). However, despite holding important implications for English teachers and writing instructors, there is a dearth of studies (Dobbs, 2014; Jo, 2021; Thomson, 2020) on pre-tertiary writing. Considering that writing is a commonly used mode for assessing pupils in most school subjects and considering the importance of establishing logical structural relations in texts, pupils' signposting usage and teachers' signposting-related practices warrants the attention of researchers and educators. The upper secondary level is of particular interest as it embodies a transitional phase between secondary and tertiary education. While pupils need to work toward final exams, they should also be preparing for the compositional demands of the specialised disciplines that many of them aim to enter in tertiary education (Ballinger, 2003; Horverak, 2016).

To contribute to this understudied area, this study aims primarily to explore pupils' signposting usage. A secondary aim is to explore teachers' signposting-related practices. In order to explore pupils' signposting usage, this study analyses the signposting sub-categories, types and frequencies present in a corpus of 115 upper secondary pupil English essays, collected from schools in Norway, Sweden and the UK. Instead of comparing the data across these educational contexts, the essays are used to map out how signposting is used by pupils in L1 and L2 educational contexts. The findings may therefore offer useful perspectives for writing instructors and help to establish hypotheses for future comparative studies. The textual analysis is supplemented by data from teacher interviews. Of the reviewed studies, this is the first to supplement an investigation of signposting with teacher interviews, which, considering the importance of feedback for writing development (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), offers an important perspective on how teachers address organisational features in the teaching of essay writing.

In order to investigate pre-tertiary writing strategies, this study aims to explore signposting in essays written by upper secondary pupils attending Norwegian, Swedish and British schools, according to the following research questions:

- What are the (sub-)categories and types[1] of signposts used in upper secondary level essays written in the Norwegian, Swedish and British contexts?
- How frequent are signposts in the corpus?
- How are signposts used by pupils in each of the educational contexts and genres?
- What instructional practices related to signposting in essays do English teachers report?

Thus, this study contributes to understanding the kinds of signposting markers on which pupils rely and the ways that teachers approach this aspect of essay writing.

Previous research

Studies of signposting have investigated organisational patterns across a wide range of contexts and genres (Hasselgård, 2016; Mur-Duenãs, 2011; Qin & Uccelli, 2019). This section reviews studies of signposting in professional, tertiary and pre-tertiary writing, respectively. It also reviews relevant studies that have incorporated interview methods.

In a study comparing signposting across languages, Dahl (2004) reported that linguistics and economics articles written in English and Norwegian contained

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[1] "Type" refers to "each graphical word form" (McEnery & Wilson 2003, p. 32). For example, "cause" and "caused" are considered as two different types.

higher frequencies of signposts than those written in French. Similarly, studies have found that professional English and Scandinavian authors conform to similar signposting practices, both when writing in their respective mother tongues and when writing in English as an additional language (Blagojevic, 2004; Hasselgård, 2016). This suggests that English and Norwegian are writer-responsible languages, meaning writers tend to guide their readers more explicitly (Mauranen, 1993; Peterlin, 2005; Hinds, 2011). However, making broad claims about national languages may overlook more local factors affecting signposting practices (Hempel & Degand, 2006; Pérez-Llantada, 2010).

Regarding signposting across disciplines and genres, studies have identified how signposting varies across writing communities (Hyland, 2019). For example, signposting tends to feature more heavily in academic writing than in journalese (Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Gonzáles, 2005; Hempel & Degand, 2008), as writers of the former are required to guide readers through complex theories, procedures and results (Farrokhi & Ashrafi, 2009). Additionally, within academic writing, studies have demonstrated that signposting demands depend on the academic context (Cao and Hu, 2014). At the tertiary level, studies have found Scandinavian learners of English use signposts more frequently than native speakers (Ädel, 2006; Hasselgård, 2016). Ädel (2006) offered several explanations for these findings, including that: the learners of English were more metalinguistically aware; the learners arbitrarily used signposts to increase their word counts; and/or the learners and native speakers were writing in different genres. However, in contrast, Kapronov (2018; 2021) found that Scandinavian learners use signposts in a stylistically appropriate manner. One of the debates within studies of signposting in tertiary level writing relates to whether signposting should be explicitly taught. While some scholars argue that explicitly teaching signposting may lead to overuse (e.g., Hasselgård, 2016), Cheng and Steffensen (1996) reported that instruction helped tertiary-level students to signpost more successfully.

A handful of studies have investigated signposting in pre-tertiary writing. Qin and Uccelli (2019) found that high school learners of English used similar frequencies of signposts in colloquial and academic texts. The exception was code glosses, which were more prominent in academic texts as learners drew on examples to construct a convincing argument. Investigating textual quality, Dobbs (2014) and Jo (2021) found that signposting frequencies did not predict which grade a text received. However, Dobbs (2014) found that textual quality was inhibited when signposts were used to construct unconventionally long sentences or used in ways that did not match their meaning. Furthermore, Jo (2021) found that higher quality essays contained a wider range of signposting types. Small-scale studies (Al-Khazraji, 2019; Yunus & Haris, 2019) have also investigated the misuse and overuse of discourse markers, finding that misuse and overuse can inhibit ease of reading, or even be misleading.

Studies of signposting rarely incorporate interview methods (Hyland, 2004) and teachers seem to rarely, if ever, have been interviewed in connection with such studies. Nevertheless, some researchers have interviewed teachers in connection with broader investigations of essay organisation (e.g., Wingate, 2012). These have found that teachers value structure (Beck et al., 2018; Mahalski, 1992) and address this by, for example, advising students to use acronyms for organising paragraphs (e.g., PIE, or point, information, explanation; Monte-Sano, 2015). However, Lea and Street (1998, p. 162) reported that, although essay structure was highly valued, teachers "could not describe how a particular piece of writing 'lacked' structure".

By supplementing an analysis of signposting in upper secondary pupil essays with data from teacher interviews, this study offers a unique perspective on signposting at this important transitional phase between secondary and tertiary level education.

Methods

This section presents the procedures for collecting the corpus, compiling the signposting taxonomy, and holding the teacher interviews.

Corpus
Data were collected from schools contacted via the networks of the affiliated university. The dataset is therefore considered to be a convenience sample (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Although over 90 schools were contacted, the final sample was collected at 14 schools: six in Norway, three in Sweden and five in the UK. To build the corpus, teachers were asked to collect non-fiction essays that were written for school evaluations. In total, 282 essays were collected from pupils (aged 17-19 years) completing their final year of upper secondary school. The corpus was delimited according to several criteria. Firstly, some pupils submitted several essays, but only one essay per pupil was required. Secondly, essays were grouped into five main genres based on writing prompts and essay content: political essays, literary essays, opinion pieces, linguistic investigations, and commentaries. Essays belonging to other genres were removed. Finally, to create balanced samples, 20 essays belonging to each genre from each educational context were randomly selected, except linguistic investigations, of which only 15 were provided. The resulting corpus comprises 115 essays ranging from 384 to 3,899 words in length, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Total number and word counts of essays across educational contexts and genres.

	Norway	Sweden	UK	Word count (word count range)
Political essay	20	20	-	31,843 (480-1,794)
Literary analysis	-	20	-	27,588 (867-1,633)
Opinion piece	-	-	20	15,148 (394-1,240)
Linguistic investigation	-	-	15	29,530 (734-3,899)
Commentary	-	-	20	42,847 (1,329-3,491)
Word count (word count range)	18,431 (480-1,794)	41,000 (519-1,633)	87,525 (384-3,899)	146,956 (384-3,899)

In Norway[2], pupils were taking a course called Social Studies English and, in Sweden, pupils were taking a course called English 7. For both courses, pupils learned about political affairs, particularly in the UK and the US (Skolverket, 2020; Udir., 2006), and wrote political essays. These aimed to discuss perspectives on contemporary (e.g., the 2016 US election) and historical (e.g., British colonialism) political events. In Sweden, pupils were also required to learn about English literature (Skolverket, 2020), which involved writing literary essays about works such as "1984" or "Game of Thrones".

In the UK, pupils were taking courses in either English Language or Creative Writing. For English Language (AQA, 2020), pupils wrote opinion pieces, which aimed to persuade readers of a certain viewpoint, and linguistic investigations, which reported results from studies they had conducted. On the Creative Writing course (AQA, 2013), pupils wrote commentaries, in which they reflected on their compositional processes while writing a portfolio of creative pieces. While essays were written under timed conditions in Norway and Sweden, the essays written in the UK were written under process-oriented conditions[3].

Since this study sets out to explore signposting usage, achieving corpus comparability (McEnery, T., & Xiao, 2007) was not prioritised, particularly because administering a single task at all 14 schools was practically unfeasible. Instead, the essays were written for tasks based on exam board criteria. Furthermore, since this study did not primarily aim to compare L1 and L2 writing, essays were collected from pupils with different L1 backgrounds[4]. Thus, the data

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[2] Of the essays from Norway, 10 were split into two parts (one short answer and one long answer), which is a common way to structure written exams. Since the answers were written during one exam and were about similar topics (e.g., US politics), these papers were treated as one essay for the purposes of this investigation.

[3] "Process-oriented" refers to when pupils write over several days or weeks with opportunities to receive feedback and make revisions (Susser, 1994).

[4] Some pupils did not consent to sharing their L1. Of those that did, most pupils reported that their L1 was either Norwegian, Swedish or English, respectively.

represent the kinds of writing tasks that pupils would usually engage with in their respective educational contexts.

The pupils and teachers consented to participating, and the study is registered with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD, 2020). In order to ensure privacy, data were stored on a password-protected hard disk, and all quotes in this article are anonymised.

Signposting taxonomy
Since signposting in upper secondary essay writing has rarely been investigated, this study utilised an adapted taxonomy based on previous studies and on the content of the present corpus. It recognises four main signposting categories, further divided into 11 sub-categories, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Signposting taxonomy (Cao & Hu, 2014; Hasselgård, 2016; Hyland, 2007; 2019; Ädel, 2006; 2010).

Category	Subcategories	Description and *examples*
Transitions	Addition	Signal relations of addition: *as well, moreover*
	Comparison	Signal relations of comparison or contrast: *or, in comparison*
	Inference	Signal relations of cause and effect: *in order to, therefore*
Code glosses	Exemplification	Signal that an example is being given: *illustrate, highlight*
	Reformulation	Signal that a discourse unit is being reworded: *in other words*
Phoric markers	Enumerate	Signal how points are ordered: *first, finally*
	Pre-/review	Refer to later/earlier parts of the current text: I *will, mentioned*
Topic markers	Introduction	Introduce the content of the text: *this paper aims to*
	Reference to text	Reflexively refer to the current text: *this essay, this project*
	Topic shift	Signal a shift in topic: *in terms of, moving on*
	Conclusion	Signal that a conclusion is being drawn: *overall*

These (sub-)categories were combined from previous studies based on a close reading of 50 essays, using at least one essay from each genre written at each school. During this close reading, potential signposting types were identified and added to a list of search terms (see appendix). Using the KWIC (key word in context) function in #Lancsbox (Brezina et al., 2020), the corpus was electronically scanned using 273 search terms. The resulting concordance lines were copied to Microsoft Excel and read manually. Instances were discounted if they had a non-organisational function or if they were in quotes from other sources. For example, while "so" was found to function as a transition of addition or a transition of inference, it also functioned as a degree adverb, in which case it was discounted. Following this, the frequencies of each sub-category per 1000

words in each essay were calculated and used to identify signposting trends in the corpus.

In order to test the taxonomy's reliability, two external raters[5] and the researcher analysed ten randomly selected essays. Using Cohen's kappa statistic, a high level of agreement was obtained ($K = .88$; Hallgren, 2012). The lowest level of agreement was found for conclusion markers ($K = .76$), resulting from categorisations of *final** and *last**, which were sometimes mistaken as conclusion markers when functioning as enumerators. In order to address this issue, the placement of these words in the overall essay was considered, revealing that these types were almost exclusively used as enumerators: only one instance of *last* was used to mark the end of the essay ("on that *last* slice of juicy information…", opinion piece, UK).

Some types were polysemic and belonged to two or more categories. The type *as* belonged to six of the sub-categories. In order to avoid crossover, each instance of *as* was categorised separately. The following extracts illustrate how *as* was used to signal relations of addition (1), comparison (2) and inference (3) (search terms are written in italics):

1) The poverty is high and the economic inequality is high *as* well. (Political essay, Norway)[6]
2) It's *as* if your best friend is telling you – 'go on you know you should pamper yourself...' (Opinion piece, UK)
3) I'm assuming that he went through some conventional phase prior, *as* nothing else is suggested. (Literary essay, Sweden)

Taking a separate approach was necessary for *as*, which was highly frequent, but not for other polysemic terms such as *essay* (introduction marker/reference to text) or *so* (transition of addition/inference), which were more readily categorised by reading their respective concordance lines.

Teacher interviews

The 19 teachers involved in the data collection participated in semi-structured interviews (Mackey & Gass, 2016): 8 from Norway (6 female and 2 male), 4 from Sweden (3 female and 1 male) and 7 from the UK (6 female and 1 male). All teachers had tertiary-level qualifications in English and had at least 4 years of professional teaching experience. The interviews were held in English, took place face to face, lasted roughly 30-60 minutes and were audio recorded. The interview guide contained 22 questions about practices regarding teaching essay writing (see appendix 3), particularly related to signposting and stance features (stance features are addressed in a separate study), which represent the two main strands

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[5] One rater analysed all sub-categories except the topic shift category, which was added at a later stage and, due to practical limitations, analysed by a different rater ($K = .96$).
[6] Search terms in the text extracts are written in italics.

of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2019). A subset of five questions related to signposting are of relevance to the present study:

- Do you teach your pupils about text organisation? If yes, what?
- Do you teach pupils about how to organise a paragraph/overall text structure? If yes, what?
- Can you comment on how your pupils organise their texts in general? What are they good at and what problems do they face?
- Do you teach pupils about linking words? If so, how?
- Do you teach pupils about words and phrases to introduce or conclude their essays? If so, how?

These questions aimed to investigate the teachers' practices regarding the teaching of signposting, related to both macro and micro-structural relations. The interviews were not transcribed in full due to practical limitations. Instead, each teacher's answers were summarised, and relevant quotes were transcribed.

Results

Firstly, the most frequent types belonging to each of the signposting sub-categories are presented. Secondly, extracts are used to illustrate the main signposting trends that were observed in the corpus. Thirdly, data from the interviews in order to supplement the textual analysis are reported.

Signposting types
The full list of signposting types that were identified in the corpus is included in appendix B. Table 3 shows the most frequent types belonging to each signposting sub-category.

Table 3. The five most frequent types, and raw frequencies, of each signposting sub-category in the full corpus.

	Addition		**Comparison**		**Inference**	
Transitions	*also*	409	*but*	462	*because*	364
	another	90	*or*	371	*as*	344
	as	91	*however*	205	*if*	213
	further*	74	*like**	195	*so*	186
	addition*	22	*as*	156	*therefor**	150
	Exemplify		**Reformulate**			
Code glosses	*example**	300	*)*	37		
	such	160	*mean**	15		
	like	76	*known*	12		
	instance	33	*other words*	11		
	includ*	17	*called*	7		
	Enumerate		**Pre-/review**			
Phoric markers	*first**	37	*again*	45		
	second*	23	*will*	12		
	last*	20	*mentioned*	10		
	final*	19	*earlier*	5		
	follow*	16	*previously*	5		

	Introduction		**Ref. to text**		**Topic shift**		**Conclusion**	
Topic markers	*essay*	15	*investigation*	20	*in terms of*	36	*conclu**	38
	text	4	*study*	9	*regard**	12	*overall*	4
	introduction	4	*essay*	5	*when it c*me**	17	*sum*	2
	investigat*	4	*project*	1	*as to*	16	*end*	2
	going to	3			*particular*	13	*all in all*	1
							final	1
							last	1

* is used to indicate when the given type represents several forms

The most frequent types belong to the transitions sub-categories, with the exception of "example" and "such", which were frequently used as code glosses. The types belonging to the reformulator sub-categories, the phoric marker sub-categories and the topic marker sub-categories were comparatively infrequent, which reflects that these were used more sporadically in the corpus. Brackets were sometimes used as reformulators, so the closing bracket symbol was used to search for such instances. An example of this is shown in extract 32. Extracts containing some of these types are used in the next section to illustrate some of the trends that were observed in the corpus.

Signposting usage

This section presents extracts from the corpus in order to illustrate the main trends that were observed. The frequencies of each of signposting sub-category (research question 2) were used to guide the identification of the trends reported here. The frequencies are reported in Table 4 (see appendix B). This section follows the same order as Table 4, reporting results related to transitions, code glosses, phoric markers and topic markers, respectively.

In total, signposts were frequently used in each of the genres across the three contexts. Of the categories, transitions were the most frequent, representing 81%

of the total number of signposts in the corpus. All three sub-categories were highly frequent. Transitions of addition were the least frequent of the three transition sub-categories, but this was probably due to the omission of the word *and* from the analysis. Transitions of addition were often used to accumulate evidence in support of a particular line of argumentation.

4) Trump is *also* tremendously critical of NATO. (Political essay, Norway)
5) And sadly this breaking of Sibyl's heart *also* led to her committing suicide the very same night. (Literary essay, Sweden)
6) *Another* shocking, global example of the flaws in the prison system is that prisoners in Russia are being treated like animals in a zoo. (Opinion piece, UK)
7) Giving detail like this entices the reader and adds more complexity to the text. *Furthermore*, the child uses of the coordinating conjunction, 'and' in order to increase complexity. (Linguistic investigation, UK)

Transitions of addition were also used in the commentaries to accumulate the inspirations behind their creative choices (8), and to explain their compositional processes (9):

8) I read international folklore *as well* as the penguin book of oral poetry. (Commentary, UK)
9) I added *another* 'character', the SatNav. This added *another* level of humour. (Commentary, UK)

Comparison transitions were often used to contrast different ideas:

10) On the *one hand* it keeps the party from being politically threatened, *but* on the *other hand* the party will not develop without dissidents or opponents questioning its leadership. (Political essay, Sweden)
11) This can be *compared* to Coulmas' theory, who says that women are known for talking about fantasy worlds. (Linguistic investigation, UK)
12) *Even if* parents enjoy the momentary peace that comes from giving a child a gadget to play with, such gizmos do not provide the interaction a child needs to properly learn language skills. (Opinion piece, UK)

Comparison transitions were also used to offer analogies:

13) *Similarly*, if you've been lying on a sofa or bed for a long time, it can feel *as* if though gravity is acting extra strong and subsequently making your movements slow and "heavy" looking. (Literary essay, Sweden)
14) The use of vocal fry has such negative effects on speech that it can be *likened* to the idea of having no speech at all. (Opinion piece, UK)

15) I didn't want the narrator to sound *like* a psychopath. (Commentary, UK)

In the literary essays, comparison transitions were also used when describing events from the literary works:

16) The third example is when Theon kills two innocent farmboys *instead* of Bran and Rickon Stark who escaped from Winterfell. (Literary essay, Sweden)

Regarding inferential transitions, although the type *as* functioned in several ways, it was most frequently used as an inferential transition. Inferential transitions seemed mostly to be used in two ways. First, they were used when describing stipulatory cause-effect relations:

17) The internet is vastly different from what it used to be *as* today's web content is substantially more extensive. (Political essay, Sweden)
18) Sibyl then starts to act bad *because* she can not think of anything else than the handsome Dorian Gray (Literary essay, Sweden)
19) This contrasts the usual representation of gender in society, Beyonce challenges this idea *because* of her passion for equality and the empowerment of women. (Linguistic investigation, UK)

Second, they were used to propose novel cause-effect relations:

20) *If* this happens, the financially struggling countries will only struggle even more. (Political essay, Norway)
21) That's 150 lives that could have been lost *because* faulty legal systems put them in that horrific position. (Opinion piece, UK)
22) Tablets can be a very beneficial device for language-learning *if* the correct apps are downloaded. (Linguistic investigation, UK)

In the commentaries, rather than describing events and making claims, inferential transitions were often used when explaining compositional decisions:

23) I thought it would add another element *if* the poem portrays physically falling just by looking at the page. (Commentary, UK)
24) I take that visual, of the beard and the hair *in order to* give my character the same intelligence and aged exterior/interior. (Commentary, UK)

Moving onto code glosses, this was the second most frequent signposting category overall, which was mostly represented by high frequencies of exemplifiers, which were used to explicitly mark examples that supported observations and ideas:

25) Craig at the same time, uses a rather forceful vocabulary, for *instance* 'pride', 'stake', 'undermine', to appeal to the listeners emotions. (Political essay, Norway)
26) An *example* of Dorian regressing to stage one is when he kills his friend Basil. (Literary essay, Sweden)
27) When men are referred to as animals it is often a positive thing. For *example*, we hear the term 'silver fox' for an older good-looking man. (Opinion piece, UK)
28) The repetition of the definite article 'the' followed with a noun, *e.g.* 'nose' is evident throughout. (Linguistic investigation, UK)
29) I tried to add in short one word exclamations *like* 'STOP!' […] or 'Woah!'. (Commentary, UK)

However, although exemplifiers were frequent in all genres, the literary essays contained instances where pupils provided examples without explicitly marking them, as in the following:

30) Another way the book […] chooses to paint its various scenes is through emotions. […] *[exemplifier omitted]* On P.20 Daisy remarks that '...it's romantic outside...'." (Literary essay, Sweden)
31) During the sixth and seventh season, Tormund fully develops morally into level three stage five. *[exemplifier omitted]* After surviving hardhome, he and Jon marched 2000 wildlings past the wall. (Literary essay, Sweden)

Compared with exemplifiers, reformulation code glosses were infrequently used and occurred in only 49 of the essays. When they were used, they usually functioned to introduce acronyms (36), or supplement specialist terminology (37):

32) Obamacare, also *called* Affordable Care Act *(*ACA*).* (Political essay, Norway)
33) Theorists […] call this 'member's resources', which basically *means* everything that makes up the world of this 'ideal consumer' (Opinion piece, UK)

Regarding phoric markers, both sub-categories were used sporadically by individual pupils. For example, ten linguistic investigations contained preview and review markers, while five did not. Raw frequencies ranged from one to six markers per linguistic investigation. The following extract shows how six preview and review markers were used in one of the linguistic investigations:

34) I *will* be able to analyse the use of rhetoric [and] *will* be able to directly compare the texts […] I have formulated two sub sections which *will* focus on specific aspects of language. […] JFK states that "the torch has been

passed" […] *again* using a metaphor to creatively outline his message […] Based on the *discussed* aspects, it is evident that the context of the speech significantly influences the context. […] Inaugural addresses act *again* as a prime illustration. (Linguistic investigation, UK)

As with pre-/review markers, some pupils relied more on enumerators than others. For example, of the political essays written in Norway, 16 pupils used enumerators and four did not. Raw frequencies ranged from one to nine. The following extracts are taken from political essays that only contained one enumerator:

35) *Firstly*, he uses a lot of personal pronounce like "I", "you" and "We". (Political essay, Norway)

36) For the *next* point I will assume there will be a hard Brexit. (Political essay, Norway)

Topic markers were the least frequent signposting category overall. Of the topic marker sub-categories, topic shifts were the most frequent, but these occurred in just 54 of the essays:

37) *As for* the case of Sibyl Vane (Literary analysis, Norway)

38) *In terms of* grammar, text A employs the first person pronoun, which makes his experiences more personal. (Linguistic investigation, UK)

39) *When it came* to writing about my crush, […] I wanted to play with the clichés (Commentary, UK)

Regarding conclusion markers, those that were present in the Norwegian and Swedish essays were used in a conventional manner:

40) In *conclusion*, government control is a threat to democracy (Political essay, Sweden)

In contrast, only four commentaries and one opinion piece from the UK used conclusion markers. Two of these essays used conclusion makers in a more informal manner:

41) To *sum* things up, manipulating information to eliminate opposition… (Commentary, UK)

42) On that *last* slice of juicy information […], you now know the linguist tricks used to lure you in. (Opinion piece, UK)

Overall, the linguistic investigations contained the highest frequencies of topic markers. These essays tended to conform to the structure of academic research

papers. Some papers were split into sub-sections, where sub-headings were used to mark the introduction and conclusion, and some papers contained the types *paper* and *investigation* to refer to the text itself.

43) *Introduction* Beyonce is an example of a celebrity using her music to challenge and create discussion. (Linguistic investigation, UK)
44) *Conclusion* This *investigation* has provided a fascinating insight into the creation and delivery of political speeches. (Linguistic investigation, UK)
45) The limitation of my *study* was its small-scale nature. (Linguistic investigation, UK)

Teachers' reported signposting practices
The first interview question asked what teachers taught their pupils about general essay organisation. In Norway and Sweden, most teachers reported that they advised pupils to use an introduction-body-conclusion, or five-paragraph essay structure. In contrast, none of the UK teachers reported these practices. While some UK teachers mentioned organisational templates related to "problem-solution" or "cause-effect" structures, the remaining teachers expected A-level students to have learned about text organisation at earlier stages:

a) I feel very much reticent about [providing frameworks] at A-level […] if you are taking English language as an A-level, you know, we should be beyond that. (UK4)

When asked about paragraph structure, terms like "point" and "topic sentence" were mentioned by 12 teachers across the three educational contexts, relating to the notion of "one idea, one paragraph" (N4). Five teachers discussed systematic approaches to splitting a paragraph into three or four parts, usually using acronyms such as PQE (point, quote, explanation; S2 and S3) and PETAL (point, exemplify, technical term, analyse, link; UK2).

When asked about pupils' strengths and weaknesses regarding text organisation, most teachers discussed overall text and paragraph structure. Eight teachers across the three contexts identified signposting-related aspects as problematic, which either related to linking words (lacking necessary vocabulary, or overuse/underuse of such features), or to introductions:

b) Some students […] lack the words, you know the linking words, transitions, phrases. (N8)
c) The whole paper is loaded with linking words and grammatical structures, even though it sometimes doesn't fit. (S3)
d) It's actually something I think they really struggle with […] they're looking at the specific little bit that they're writing […] they're not then stepping back and looking at it as a whole (UK3)

e) One problem is creating an inviting and engaging introduction because you have […] the waffle introduction, where they just waffle about the topic and […] the boring rewriting the essay question introduction. (N7)

When asked specifically about whether they addressed signposting, the most popular approach, used by 12 teachers, was to hand out lists of linking words. Notably, 11 of these teachers were based at Norwegian or Swedish schools and only one was based at a British school.

f) I give them a list of linking words and phrases […] sometimes they do it correctly and sometimes they find words that don't actually work very well where they put them. (N4)

Of the remaining UK-based teachers, three argued that upper secondary pupils should be familiar with linking words from earlier educational levels:

g) We expect to do less work on connectives at A-level. (UK5)

However, when asked whether their pupils are skilled in using connectives, the same teacher replied:

h) I don't think they do have a very proficient understanding of how connectives link ideas and show relationships between ideas. (UK5)

Beyond handing out lists, a few teachers reported other approaches to teaching signposting. For example, one teacher asked pupils to identify linking words in model texts in order to raise their genre awareness (UK6), and two teachers gave their pupils gap-fill tasks (N6 and S3).

i) Structural devices are useful in two ways. […] When you're unpicking how a writer has guided you through […] their text [and] when they're writing non-fiction pieces of their own whether those are academic essays or pieces where they're trying to more overtly guide someone's opinion. (UK6)

j) I have a hand-out where you have to put […] the linking words into gaps […]. The purpose of this task is to show them that they have a variety […] of words […] they can use. (S3)

Whether or not pupils should explicitly introduce and conclude their essays was a point of contention among the teachers. On the one hand, 11 teachers discouraged the use of introduction markers. The explicit marking of introductions was described as, among other things, "clunky", "stupid", and "not sophisticated". One teacher in Sweden commented:

k) I hate it, because I've read it a lot in my life […] it's not a mistake and if it helps them to start writing a good essay, of course […] but I try to make them be original. (S3)

Of these teachers, some reported features that they would prefer in an introduction, which included: "definition" (N2), "something from the media" (N3), "rhetorical question" (S1), "establish an argument" (UK1).

Four teachers reported that they encouraged introduction markers. One of these recommended it mainly for low-achieving pupils:

l) Sometimes the weaker student, it's quite a safe way to start […] some do it […] and get top grades. (N6)

Two teachers argued that explicit introduction markers should be used depending on the essay length and genre:

m) A longer paper, academic paper, requires that distinction, but […] one and a half pages […] it's too short to bother saying it so clear in the introduction. (N3)

In contrast, explicitly marking conclusions was discouraged by only three teachers, who argued either that marking conclusions is not conducive to gaining marks:

n) In terms of conclusion, [it] needs to be functional […] we focus on making that fairly small […] introductions and conclusions are not worth marks any more than the fact that it looks like an essay. (UK3)

Or that they may not be appropriate in certain contexts:

o) "In conclusion"? […] Not if they're writing in a kind of journalistic style. (UK6)

Other teachers reported either positive or indifferent views towards conclusion markers, commenting for example "it's probably more acceptable" (N2), "this is totally okay" (S3), and "I don't feel as strongly about that" (UK4).

Discussion

This section begins with a discussion of the results related to the first research question. Results regarding the second and third research questions are then discussed together in the following order: signposting overall, transitions, code

glosses, phoric markers and topic markers, respectively. Where relevant, interview results are discussed together with the textual results. Additional results related to the fourth research question are then discussed before outlining the study's limitations.

Regarding the first research question, a wide range of signposting types belonging to 11 sub-categories were identified in the corpus. Most types have been identified in previous studies (e.g., Cao & Hu, 2014; Ho & Li, 2018; Hyland, 2019), but some were only found by closely reading essays from the corpus, such as more informal phrases (e.g., *all in all, down to*; contrary to Kapranov, 2018; 2021) and misused spellings (e.g., *therefor*[7]). No types with spelling errors were identified during the close reading of the subset of 50 essays, perhaps because all essays were written using word processors, which can automatically correct errors. The range of types demonstrates the importance of adapting a taxonomy for the purposes of analysing signposting in pre-tertiary writing, which, in this case, was characterised by a particular set of sub-categories and types. It also indicates that pupils at this level sometimes rely on informal signposting types in order to signal textual relations. This may be because the present genres are of a less formal register than tertiary-level essay writing. Alternatively, this may be related to the pupils' developing awareness of how different genres require different registers (Qin & Uccelli, 2020).

Moving on to the second and third research questions, the results overall offer insight into how pupils use signposts to organise their essays, revealing some of the strategies that they use to guide their readers. The results also indicate trends that relate to the present genres, which supports Ädel (2006), who suggested that signposting usage may be linked to the target genre. Furthermore, it suggests that these pupils were somewhat aware that organisational demands vary across discourse communities (Dahl, 2008; Hyland, 2003; Moreno, 2021). Regarding educational contexts, these results suggest that upper secondary pupils in the Norwegian, Swedish and British educational contexts used signposts at similar frequencies. Although previous studies (Drew, 1998; Nygaard, 2010) have found lower accuracy and syntactic complexity in texts written by Norwegian learners of English, the present findings suggest that such shortcomings do not extend to frequencies of organisational features.

Transitions were the most frequent signposting category in all genres, reflecting that a fundamental part of establishing a logical line of reasoning involves signalling relations of addition, comparison and inference (Farrokhi & Ashrafi, 2009; Ho & Li, 2018; Khedri et al., 2013; Uccelli, Dobbs & Scott, 2013). Transitions of addition were often used to accumulate evidence in support of a particular line of argumentation (Kashiha & Marandi, 2019). In the commentaries, pupils also used transitions of addition to prove their knowledge of relevant

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[7] "Therefor", which means "for or in return for that" (Merriam-Webster, 2022), was used by one pupil in Norway instead of "therefore", perhaps due to its similarity to the Norwegian translation, "derfor".

literature, seemingly in order to impress teachers with their broad literary repertoires.

Comparison transitions were often used to contrast different perspectives or offer analogies. By comparing different viewpoints, pupils not only demonstrated their subject knowledge, but they were also able to align with, or discredit, certain perspectives (Cao & Hu, 2014). Furthermore, pupils seemed to establish *pathos* by using analogies to appeal to their readers' pre-existing knowledge (Aragones et al., 2014). One feature that distinguished the literary analyses was that comparison transitions were also used when retelling events from the target literary works.

Inferential transitions were often used either to describe pre-existing cause-effect relations or to consolidate ideas to propose novel cause-effect relations (Bruce, 2010). The most frequent types were conjunctions ("because", "as", "if"), which usually feature more heavily in spoken discourse compared with academic writing, which is characterised by more frequent use of causal nouns and verbs (Biber, 2006; Parkinson, 2011). While describing and proposing cause-effect relations seemed to feature heavily in most genres, pupils also used inferential transitions in the commentary essays to explain their decision-making processes in writing creative pieces.

Regarding code glosses, exemplifiers were the most frequent of the remaining signposting sub-categories, which illustrates the value placed on supporting argumentation using examples (Alyousef, 2015; Liu & Buckingham, 2018; Qin & Uccelli, 2019). This may also be related to paragraph-structuring acronyms reported by five of the teachers, which implicitly prescribe the use of examples (e.g., point, evidence, explanation, link; Monte-Sano, 2015). However, in the literary analyses, pupils sometimes drew on examples without explicitly marking them. These pupils perhaps assumed that their readers were familiar with the literary material and would tacitly recognise examples. Alternatively, this may resemble academic style within literary fields, where scholars have been found to avoid metatext in order to maintain a more aesthetically pleasing style (Andresen & Zinsmeister, 2018). Unlike exemplifiers, reformulators were used in a minority of the essays. It may be that the pupils rarely used specialist terminology and therefore had little need to offer reformulations. On the other hand, explaining specialist terminology for the benefit of teachers and examiners may have been considered unnecessary.

Phoric and topic markers were relatively infrequent in the corpus, overall. This may reflect that the pupils generally did not recognise a need to explicitly orient their readers regarding macro-structural relations, perhaps because these essays were relatively short (Ho & Li, 2018; Ädel, 2006). The longest essays were the commentaries (roughly 2,100 words on average), but these contained the lowest frequencies of phoric and topic markers. It seems that the purpose of the commentaries was for the pupils to reflect on their compositional processes, which did not require them to adhere to a formal, academic style. In contrast, the

linguistic investigations contained the highest frequencies of topic markers. In these essays, the pupils marked sections using sub-headings and explicitly referred to their "studies", or "investigations", as they guided their readers through their aims, methods and findings (Qin & Uccelli, 2019). This links to comments made by two teachers, who expected introductions to be explicitly marked in academic writing. However, topic markers were not equally prominent in all of the academic-style linguistic investigations, which is perhaps because this kind of explicit structural marking is not required by the AQA exam board (AQA, 2020). Instead, it seems that individual teachers of A-level English language set their own organisational requirements for pupils who conduct linguistic investigations. Alternatively, the use of topic and phoric markers may vary according to pupil preferences (Bruce, 2010; Yoon, 2017).

The low frequencies of introduction and conclusion markers contrasts with Ädel (2008), who found that introduction markers were one of the more frequent signposting features in tertiary level academic essays. The low frequencies in this corpus may partly be explained by the teachers' advice: while a majority were indifferent to or encouraged the use of conclusion markers, most teachers discouraged the use of introduction markers. While some teachers regarded them as indicators of poor quality, others argued that they were simply not conducive to gaining marks (Mahalski, 1992). Additionally, one of the UK teachers (UK6) pointed out that conclusion markers are not appropriate in journalistic writing, and only one of the 20 opinion pieces contained a conclusion marker.

Otherwise, despite the potential effects of varying prompts, argumentative purposes, and writing conditions, pupils seemed to use signposts at similar frequencies across the three contexts. These similarities support findings indicating that signposting practices are similar in professional[8] Scandinavian language and English academic writing (Blagojevic, 2004; Dahl, 2004). However, Hasselgård (2016) and Ädel (2006) found that tertiary-level learners of English in Scandinavia used higher frequencies of signposts than L1 speakers. Ädel (2006) hypothesised that the learners of English in her study may have used signposts to raise their word counts. This may not have been a concern for the pre-tertiary pupils in this study, who wrote relatively short essays. Instead, these similarities may be explained by several factors. For example, this might reflect high English proficiency among the pupils in Norway and Sweden, contexts in which English is a highly prioritised school subject (Skolverket, 2021; Udir., 2021). The wide range of signposting types in the present corpus also supports the notion that these pupils were highly proficient (Jo, 2021). It may also be the case that signposting practices can be directly transferred from Norwegian and Swedish to English, as these languages share similar linguistic roots (Haugen & Markey, 1973). Finally, it may be that pupils in Norway and Sweden learn to write in similar genres in their respective L1 subjects, which involve similar signposting practices that can

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[8] Since previous studies have used different taxonomies any comparisons are made tentatively.

be transferred to essay writing in the English subject (Gentil, 2011). While the exploratory nature of this study limits the validity of any comparisons, these results imply that future research, instead of comparing the frequencies of signposts, could compare whether signposts are used accurately and appropriately in pre-tertiary writing. Although previous studies (Al-Khazraji, 2019; Yunus & Haris, 2019) have investigated this in small data sets, an important next step could be to develop methods for analysing the accuracy and appropriacy of a wide range of signposting types in larger datasets.

Regarding the fourth research question, although signposting frequencies seemed to be similar across the three contexts, the teachers reported somewhat different practices. While the five-paragraph essay is a controversial approach to teaching essay structure (Brannon et al., 2008; Smith, 2006), it was a popular tool among teachers in Norway and Sweden. Teachers in these contexts also tended to provide their pupils with lists of linking words. However, Gardner and Han (2018, p. 880) have criticised decontextualized lists because words belonging to each category "are not all interchangeable syntactically or semantically". Decontextualised lists may lead pupils to consider comparison transitions such as "all the same" and "nevertheless" to be equally appropriate, regardless of a text's communicative purpose (Gilquin & Paquot, 2008). Only two teachers recognised how a given context can affect signposting usage. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of such a decontextualized approach when alternative approaches could be used, such as analysing the use of signposts in model texts (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996; Hyland, 2003; Tribble, 2010). Three teachers in the UK expected that pupils at the upper secondary level should already be skilled at organising essays, even though they reported that this often was not the case. The seemingly greater focus on teaching organisational competence in Norway and Sweden may be connected to English being taught as an L2 in these contexts, where teachers may focus more on, for example, lexical and grammatical competence (Ellis, 2008; Scheffler & Cinciała, 2011; Silva, 1993).

Besides the approaches discussed above, teachers each reported idiosyncratic practices for teaching signposting (Blomqvist, 2018). Although textual organisation is a valued part of essay writing in all three educational contexts (e.g., the AQA English language A-level specification requires that pupils "guide the reader", 2020, p. 25), and although some teachers in the three contexts commented that their pupils' signposting competence was lacking, it seems that none of these educational contexts have standardised practices for signposting instruction. Consequently, teachers may offer conflicting advice (as with introduction and conclusion markers), which pupils may find confusing (Lea & Street, 1998).

This study faces several limitations. It draws on a small corpus of essays, which contains a wide range of word counts. Confounding variables, such as essay writing conditions and pupils' mother tongue, prevented the use of inferential statistics. It was beyond the scope of the present study to account for the appropriacy and accuracy of such a wide range of types (Thomson, 2018). This

limitation also prevented checking some of the teachers' claims that their pupils lacked signposting competence. Finally, although this study demonstrates the value of supplementing a textual analysis with interview data, the limited timeframe precluded more specific questions, and the teachers' reported practices could not be corroborated with classroom observations.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the limited pool of research on pre-tertiary writing by exploring signposting in essays written by final year upper secondary pupils, who are at a transitional stage between secondary and tertiary education. The analysis identified a wide range of signposting sub-categories and types used by these pupils. Signposts, particularly transitions, were frequently used to signal sentential relations. Furthermore, it seemed that transitions reflected rhetorical strategies, such as accumulating evidence, aligning with certain perspectives, and identifying cause-effect relations. On the other hand, signposts that signal structural order were relatively infrequent, which is likely because these relatively short essays required less structural guidance than would be needed in longer essays (Ho & Li, 2018). However, some pupils used these markers quite frequently, suggesting that differing teacher practices or even personal preferences might factor into signposting usage. While the findings tentatively revealed relatively similar frequencies of signposts across the educational contexts and genres, some signposting sub-categories were used in a way that reflected the purposes of the target genre, such as the use of inferential transitions to describe compositional processes in the commentary genre. Nevertheless, only two teachers recognised that signposting varies according to the given context. Furthermore, most teachers in the Norwegian and Swedish contexts relied on decontextualized lists of linking words, the value of which is questionable (Gardner & Han, 2018), and the UK teachers argued that pupils learn about organisational features at earlier levels. This raises the question of whether upper secondary teachers should offer more explicit instruction in the pragmatic signalling of textual relations. For example, by writing texts of varying lengths in different genres, pupils may learn to recognise that reader needs depend on the communicative purpose (Kiuhara, Graham & Hawken, 2009; Tavakoli et al., 2012; Tribble, 2010). Such approaches would not only offer pupils opportunities for "learning to write" (Hyland, 2011), allowing them to expand their knowledge of how to construct a text, but also for "writing to learn" (Lund, 2014; Manchon, 2011), allowing them to both acquire language and gain subject knowledge through writing. By taking an exploratory approach to signposting, this study has implications for future studies, which, instead of investigating the frequencies of signposting in pre-tertiary writing, could investigate the appropriateness and

accuracy of signposts and could corroborate teacher interviews with, for example, pupil interviews and classroom observations.

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Appendix A: Search terms

Code Gloss

Exemplifier (20): as, displayed, e.g., example, examples, highlighted, illustrate, illustrates, illustration, include, included, includes, including, instance, like, say, seen, shown, such,)

Reformulator (16): as, called, defined, i.e., known, meaning, means, meant, namely, or, other words, otherwise, referred, stands, that is,)

Phoric Marker

Enumerator (27): 1, 2, 3, begin, conclude, continuing, final, finally, first, firstly, followed, following, last, lastly, moving, next, one, opening, overall, second, secondly, start, starting, third, thirdly, two, whole

Pre- and review (24): above, again, already, as, back, discuss, discussed, discussing, discussion, earlier, established, following, former, going to, last, latter, look, mentioned, previous, previously, said, stated, suggested, will

Topic marker

Introducing (12): aim, analysis, begin, essay, intend, introduce, introduction, investigate, investigation, paper, task, text

Reference to text (7): analysis, blog, essay, investigation, project, study, writing this

Shift/identify topic (21): anyway, as for, as to, considering, in particular, in terms of, look, looking, moving, namely, notably, now, particular, regard, regarding, regards, resume, return, thinking, well, when it came, when it comes

Concluding (12): all in all, conclude, concluded, conclusion, conclusively, end, final, finally, last, overall, sum, summary

Transition

Additive (17): addition, additionally, along, alongside, also, another, as, at the same time, following, further, furthermore, moreover, on top, simultaneously, so, too

Comparative (58): all the same, although, another, anyway, as, aside, at the same time, besides, but, compared, comparison, contrary, contrast, contrasting, contrastingly, conversely, correspondingly, despite, equally, even if, even though, even when, except, however, instead, like, likened, likening, likewise, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, no matter, nonetheless, nor, one hand, one side, oppose, opposed, or, other hand, other side, otherwise, rather, regardless, similar, similarly, still, than, then, though, unlike, vs, versus, whereas, while, whilst, yet

Inferential (58): affect, affected, affecting, affects, as, based, because, by doing, cause, caused, causes, causing, consequence, consequences, consequently, considering, down to, due, effect, effected, effects, following, for this purpose, given, hence, if, in order to, in this way, in turn, lead, leading, leads, mean, meaning, means, meant, otherwise, outcome, reason, result, resulted, resulting, results, seeing, since, so, subsequently, thanks to, then, thereafter, thereby, therefor, therefore, through, thus, unless, when, with this in mind

Total: 273 search terms

Appendix B: Table showing the mean (standard deviation) of each signposting (sub-)category per 1,000 words in each genre collected from each educational context

Table 4. Mean (standard deviation) of each signposting (sub-)category per 1,000 words in each genre collected from each educational context

Subcategories	Political essay, Norway (N=20)	Political essay, Sweden (N=20)	Literary essay, Sweden (N=20)	Opinion piece, UK (N=20)	Linguistic investigation, UK (N=15)	Commentary, UK (N=20)
Addition	5.04 (2.42)	4.94 (3.71)	3.25 (1.82)	4.43 (6.39)	8.45 (4)	5.01 (2.63)
Comparison	16.98 (5.24)	16.82 (6.35)	14.51 (3.79)	18.21 (9.43)	13.46 (3.52)	16.57 (5.52)
Inference	13.56 (5.51)	14.98 (8.16)	13.43 (4.44)	15.81 (14.37)	18.79 (9.68)	13.71 (4.96)
Transitions	**35.58 (6.69)**	**36.74 (12.83)**	**31.19 (6.44)**	**38.44 (25.94)**	**40.70 (11.15)**	**35.29 (9.53)**
Exemplification	3.32 (2.14)	4.01 (3.15)	3.26 (2.99)	3.89 (2.82)	7.44 (4.89)	4.45 (3.1)
Reformulation	1.14 (1.41)	0.73 (1.45)	0.63 (0.97)	1.42 (3.07)	0.80 (0.86)	0.31 (0.48)
Code glosses	**4.46 (1.9)**	**4.74 (3.98)**	**3.89 (3.52)**	**5.31 (4.35)**	**8.24 (5.39)**	**4.76 (3.02)**
Enumerate	1.00 (2.29)	1.26 (2.07)	1.30 (1.89)	0.91 (1.53)	0.61 (0.84)	0.71 (1.34)
Pre-/review	0.42 (0.76)	0.66 (1.21)	0.86 (1.44)	0.45 (1.16)	0.79 (0.73)	0.65 (0.71)
Phoric markers	**1.43 (2.37)**	**1.92 (2.48)**	**2.17 (2.54)**	**1.36 (2.15)**	**1.41 (0.92)**	**1.34 (1.79)**
Introduction	0.21 (0.46)	0 (0)	0.65 (0.65)	0.10 (0.33)	0.24 (0.33)	0 (0)
Ref. to text	0.06 (0.25)	0 (0)	0.14 (0.29)	0 (0)	0.72 (1.39)	0.03 (0.14)
Shift topic	0.62 (0.94)	1.01 (1.54)	0.81 (1.24)	0.97 (1.15)	1.50 (2.01)	0.62 (0.87)
Conclusion	0.40 (0.58)	0.71 (0.82)	0.50 (0.34)	0.05 (0.21)	0.33 (0.38)	0.12 (0.32)
Topic markers	**1.29 (1.34)**	**1.73 (1.51)**	**2.10 (1.56)**	**1.12 (1.30)**	**2.80 (2.62)**	**0.77 (1.06)**
Total signposts	**42.75 (7.16)**	**45.12 (15.3)**	**39.34 (9.39)**	**46.23 (10.89)**	**53.14 (10.69)**	**42.16 (10.89)**

Appendix C: Teacher interview guide

Biography
1. What qualifications do you have in English?
2. Teaching experience:
   a. How long have you been teaching?
   b. Which subjects do you teach? How many hours a week do you teach English?
   c. Have you taught at other levels?

Marking Texts
3. How often do your pupils write (non-fiction) texts?
4. How do you give feedback on written work?
5. When grading texts, do you use externally set guidelines/rubrics?
   a. If yes, how useful do you find these?
   b. If yes, do you consider anything else in particular that is not specified in the guidelines?
6. Do you use any writing guides to aid your practices of teaching writing? If yes, which ones?

Writer-reader relations
7. Do you teach pupils about writer-reader relations? If so, what?
8. Do you explicitly teach your pupils to consider any specific audience? If yes, who?
9. Do you generally find that their texts are aimed at engaging you or another audience?
10. Do you teach about using personal pronouns (e.g., "I", "my")? If so, what?
11. Do you teach pupils anything about directly engaging their audience (e.g., by using questions or 2nd/3rd person pronouns)? If so, what?

Organisation
12. Do you teach your pupils about text organisation? If yes, what?
13. (Do you teach pupils about how to organise a paragraph/overall text structure?)
14. Can you comment on how your pupils organise their texts in general? What are they good at and what problems do they face?
15. Do you teach pupils about linking words (e.g., "however", "nonetheless", "as I already mentioned")? If so, how?
16. Do you teach pupils about words and phrases to introduce or conclude their essays (e.g., "in this essay", "this paper aims to", "in summary")? If so, how

Argumentation
17. Do you teach pupils on how to make arguments? If yes, what?
18. Can you comment on pupils' strengths and weaknesses when making arguments? Do they make arguments too carefully or too assertively?
19. Do you teach pupils about citing sources? If yes, what?
20. Do you teach pupils about words, such as "perhaps", "maybe", "roughly", to make arguments carefully? If so, how?
21. Do you teach pupils about words, such as "definitely", "everybody", "always", to make arguments assertively? If so, how?

Would you like to add anything else?

Thank you for contributing to this research and for taking time to participate in this interview.