

# Discourse Markers in National and European Parliamentary Debates

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## Abstract

Parliamentary discourse follows both cooperative and conflict-driven communication strategies. This paper explores whether and how such intents are pursued by discourse markers (DMs) in parliamentary speeches. To this aim, four types of DMs in national and European parliamentary debates are focused on: “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” (vague category markers); “as I was saying” and “in other words” (reformulation devices); “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean” (sharedness markers), and “after all” and “at the end of the day” (summarising tokens). The ParlaMint and Europarl spoken corpora available in the Sketch Engine platform are consulted. This paper not only investigates DMs’ usages in context, frequencies and pragmatics, but it also examines possible Italian equivalents and English synonyms, thus highlighting differences and/or similarities. The findings indicate discrepancies between national and European DMs. Particularly, there is variability in the types, usages, and occurrence rates of DMs across the corpora and in the two languages. At times, the European corpora produce greater frequencies of some DMs, whereas national parliamentary debates show notable percentage values in others, although to a lesser degree. Moreover, literature-sourced Italian equivalents of English DMs are not always found in the corpora, which generate other or fewer multi-words. The study also finds that the Europarl dataset yields varied English synonymous DMs.

## 1. Introduction

Communication occurs through speech interactions, where conversation participants express intents and deploy communicative tactics. Interactants’ opinions can be accompanied and conveyed by discourse markers (DMs), which organise the structure of the conversation and monitor its progress. DMs not only forge communication events structurally, but they also contribute to expressing speakers’ intentions overtly, moderately or subtly. For this reason, they are pragmatically rich and are worthy of investigation, especially in political contexts. Differently from personal interactions, institutional and political discourse can be shaped by media-related purposes. In such contexts, language conventions and linguistic formulae should

be adhered to. Parliamentary debates are a sub-genre of political discourse and are focused on in this paper. In speeches carried out in parliaments at national or supra-national level (i.e., within the boundaries of a country or outside of them), deputies speak in turn, and the fellow politicians may criticise or support the deputy's statements once the speaker has concluded the intended address. Therefore, analysing discourse strategies of the "small words" (Schriffin 2006, 202) used in political settings can be considered as epistemologically relevant. Scrutinising the differences (if any) in the employment of DMs at national and supra-national level is compelling because it may bring nuanced meanings and/or different pragmatic and rhetorical strategies to the fore.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *Political discourse*

Freed (2015, 809) defines institutional discourse as spoken interactions occurring when at least one interactant represents an institution, institutional purposes are pursued, and the topic addressed is work-related.

Institutional discourse relies on a hierarchical organisation of powers and responsibilities. Immergut (2009) posits that institutions and policies are strictly intertwined, as the former have the power to shape the latter. At the same time, however, the latter can alter the way(s) people perceive institutions.

In high-stake institutional settings, discourse follows rituals as they can be hallmarked by specific linguistic formulae and rhetorical functions (Tiersma 1999; Van Dijk 1997). Political debates, for example, are stylistically conventional and highly formal, as they serve both field-related and media-oriented purposes. Therefore, political discourse is strictly connected to and influenced by the media, according to which information and opinions are forged (Fetzer 2016). Van Dijk (1997, 25), in fact, argues that "the structures of political discourse are seldom exclusive, but typical and effective discourse in political contexts may well have preferred structures and strategies that are functional in the adequate accomplishment of political actions in political contexts."

Political communication strategies can be employed either to foster cooperation or to provoke conflict (Kondratenko, Kiselova and Zavalaska 2020). Within this broader domain, parliamentary discourse represents a specific sub-genre of political communication (Baranov and Kazakevich 1991). It encompasses various forms of spoken interaction, including committee hearings, plenary sessions, and party meetings (Shevchenko, Alexandrova and Gutorov 2021). Crucially, parliamentary debates are characterised by a sequential structure: politicians take the floor in turn, delivering speeches that are subsequently either endorsed or challenged by

their colleagues (Kondratenko, Kiselova and Zavalska 2020). Therefore, supporting or criticising techniques are constantly deployed in parliamentary debates (Kondratenko, Kiselova and Zavalska 2020). According to Ilie (2015), in fact, parliamentarians develop rhetorical skills to express their opinions and, at the same time, carry out institutional tasks, such as enacting and examining the government's work. The purposes of their speeches range from negotiating to persuading, opinion building, stance-taking and, at the same time, aligning with their party policies (Ilie 2015). Randour et al. (2020), conversely, posit that political discourse is based on monological speeches that are carried out by political elites, who are mostly aimed at asserting authority and displaying power.

Given the relevance of rhetorical devices, strands of research have carried out corpus-driven studies with a view to unveiling the rhetorical strategies followed by politicians. For example, Cova (2025) presents and discusses the ItaParlCorpus dataset, a collection of Italian parliamentary plenary speeches. By adopting a diachronic approach, Cova showcases how political debates have changed over time, thus gradually shifting focus to more socially relevant issues.

Among the various linguistic devices that speakers can use to express dissent or agreement, discourse markers can be employed to convey opinions and intentions, either abruptly or composedly (O'Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007). Indeed, DMs are imbued with specific pragmatic meanings that render them adequate and useful in political and parliamentary speeches (Shevchenko, Alexandrova and Gutorov 2021; Ismail 2012).

## **2.2 Discourse Markers**

DMs are lexical items or phrases that function to manage turn-taking by signalling the speaker's intention to claim the floor and orienting the attention of other participants in the interaction (Giampieri 2025b; McCarthy and Carter 2019; McCarthy and McCarten 2019; Clark 2017; O'Keeffe, McCarthy and O'Keeffe 2014; McCarthy and Carter 2007). They are deployed to organise discourse and monitor its progression. Therefore, they appear not only in statements' initial position (as turn takers), but also as topic, textual and pragmatic monitors (De Cristofaro, et al. 2022, 125-126; Walker 2012; O'Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 39).

Waltereit (2006), in fact, argues that DMs do not serve a grammatical function but a discourse purpose. In the same way, Schiffrin (1987) posits that they bring together syntax, pragmatics and prosody. This implies that discourse markers can be harnessed to serve particular rhetorical functions, e.g., reinforcing or mitigating the speaker's utterances, deploying stance-taking, and counter-arguing the assertions of other conversation participants. Therefore, DMs apply important persuasive and/or cohesive techniques that are worthy of investigation.

The literature ranges discourse markers from non-words (such as “uh-uh”) to non-minimal response tokens (namely, chunks, or multi-word units such as “is that right?”) (McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 5; McCarthy and O’Keeffe 2014; O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 143-145). Hence, DMs can be used to organise utterances logically and pragmatically. They can be classified on the basis of their position within a sentence. In this case, they take the form of turn takers (such as “well,” or “so”), which are found in the left periphery of an utterance as they are aimed at starting a turn (Vella and Grech 2022, 296; Brinton 2010). DMs can be response tokens (such as “is that so?”) and act as stand-alone words or chunks functioning as listenership markers (O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 140). They can also be tags (such as “uh?”) and appear in the right periphery of an utterance as requests for confirmation (Weisser 2018) (see also Giampieri 2025b).

DMs are also ranged according to the function they serve. For example, they may act as reformulation tools (e.g., “I mean”) and refine what the speaker has just said (McCarten 2010; O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 39; 160). They express sharedness and serve as positive politeness markers (e.g., “you know”) (McCarthy and Carter 2019, 43-44). They are mitigators and face-saving devices, so they are employed as negative politeness elements (e.g., “I guess”) (Erman 2001, 1341). DMs are also subsumed under the category of approximators (e.g., “and things like that”), aimed at softening the impact of statements (Carter and McCarthy 2015, 12). Additionally, they serve as discourse monitors or refiners to catch the listener’s attention (e.g., “as I was saying”) (O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 172). These functions underscore the socially relevant space that DMs occupy in discourse and society, thus framing them as salient speech devices that help convey messages and intentions while interacting in a polite and courteous manner.

Finally, the same DM may pertain to different categories. For example, “you know” is a sharedness marker and a topic launcher (McCarthy and Carter 2019, 43-44). According to Erman (2001, 1341), it is also a hedging device with face-saving functions. Furthermore, Vella and Grech (2022, 292) argue that “you know” connects discourse segments with one another, thereby serving pragmalinguistics functions.

In light of the above, it can be argued that exploring DMs is useful not only to understand how discourse is organised, but also to grasp speakers’ intentions and pragmatic (or implicit) meanings (Vella and Grech 2022; Clark 2017, 50).

### ***2.3 Discourse Markers in political speeches***

Given their importance in spoken interactions, scholars have examined the use and functions of discourse markers in political debates. The literature underscores the compelling role they play as both cohesive tokens and tools that convey persuasive messages (Fu, et al. 2024; Rashid

2020; Dylgjeri 2014; Ismail 2012). Through DMs, speakers pursue political aims and show their attitudes toward both interactants and audiences (Dylgjeri 2014), thereby taking stances and deploying authoritative rhetoric.

Ismail (2012), for example, analyses the discourse markers used by former US President Obama. Amongst others, the author reveals inclusive devices (e.g., “we”), logical and textual markers (“and,” “also,” “in addition”), as well as linguistic tools aimed at conveying certainty (“in fact,” “clearly”), and leveraging peer solidarity (“you know”). Likewise, Rashid (2020) investigates the strategies developed by US President Trump to obtain public support and construct power. More precisely, logical markers are deployed to perform cohesive functions and organise the President’s speech, thereby supporting pledges and promising future achievements.

Fu et al. (2024) focus on the functions of “you know” and “I mean” in political interviews. The authors carry out corpus-assisted analyses of Chinese and British political talks. The findings indicate that “you know” prevails over “I mean” in both languages, thereby underscoring the importance of clarifying concepts and ensuring understanding in political contexts. British interviewers, however, tend to use “I mean” more extensively, thus showing the significance of reformulations or exemplifications for reasons of precision. Therefore, such multi-words function as hedging devices and monitors of interpersonal interactions. For instance, the chunk “you know” tends to appear in the middle of statements, whereas “I mean” is often found at the beginning.

These studies underscore the pivotal role played by DMs in asserting power while maintaining institutional courtesy, thus balancing the display of authoritativeness with institutional consensus. For these reasons, focusing on the DMs employed at both national and supra-national level can be considered as insightful in order to unveil possible different pragmatic and rhetorical strategies. Indeed, scientific research has not explored the differences between the usages of DMs in national and inter-national or supra-national institutional contexts. Therefore, there is scope for further investigations in this regard.

### **3. Aim of the paper and research questions**

This paper contributes to current scientific research by exploring the DMs that characterise both national (i.e., country-oriented) and European parliamentary debates. More precisely, it wishes to investigate and compare the extent to which a host of DMs is employed in such institutional and political settings. To this aim, it focuses on the following discourse markers: “and so on and so forth,” “and things like that,” “as I was saying,” “in other words,” “(do) you know what?,” “you know what I mean,” “after all,” and “at the end of the day.”

This paper scrutinises the above DMs in corpora of spoken parliamentary debates and is aimed at deriving pragmatically and linguistically relevant data. It compares results at both national and European level, thereby foregrounding differences (if any) in the functions, uses, and purposes of the various DMs employed.

Additionally, this study scrutinises possible Italian equivalents of the above DMs, thus offering insights into the pragmlinguistic strategies adopted at parliamentary level in two different languages. The English language was chosen because it is adopted in several international settings. The Italian language was selected because it is the native language of the author of this paper. Therefore, different nuanced employments and pragmatics can be foregrounded.

Finally, this paper aims at finding possible synonyms of the above-mentioned English DMs by further investigating the English section of the Europarl corpus. By doing so, it explores whether and how an array of DMs is leveraged in spoken European institutional discourse.

For the purposes of this study, the English and Italian ParlaMint comparable corpora (Erjavec 2021) and the English and Italian versions of the Europarl parallel corpora (Koehn 2015) are consulted.

The research questions that this paper wishes to answer are the following ones: 1) Do national parliamentary speeches differ from European parliamentary debates in terms of frequencies, usages and communicative strategies of DMs?; 2) Are European parliamentary debates characterised by forms of DMs that are less standardised or conventional than national parliamentary debates?, and 3) To what extent are the functions of the Italian DMs analysed similar to the English ones?.

As mentioned, for the purpose of this investigation, “national” signifies “country-based,” i.e., within the boundaries of a state or country. Also, “standardised or conventional forms” refer to the DM patterns analysed and described in the literature. For example, when scholars claim that “(do) you know what?” is a typical discourse marker implying shared values (O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 34), expressions such as “you may know that” or “you know very well that” can be considered as non-typical.

## 4. Methodology

As indicated, this paper deals with the following DMs pairs: “and so on and so forth,” “and things like that,” “as I was saying,” “in other words,” “(do) you know what?,” “you know what I mean,” “after all,” and “at the end of the day.” As can be grasped, some of such DMs are synonymous; in particular, “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that;” “as I was saying” and “in other words;” “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean,” and “after all” and “at the end of

the day.”

The above markers are focused on in view of the fact that they are frequent in spoken interactions (McCarthy and Carter 2019; McCarthy and McCarten 2019; McCarthy and O’Keeffe 2014; O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007). They have also gathered relevant scholarly attention, leading to thorough analyses of political discourse (Fu, et al. 2024; Rashid 2020; Ismail 2012).

Their functions can be varied; for this reason, they may be used to deploy different pragmatic and communicative strategies. For example, “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” are vague category markers or approximators, as well as a face-savers (McCarthy and McCarten 2019, 7; Erman 2001, 1341; O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 177-180). Moreover, “as I was saying” and “in other words” are reformulation devices; hence, they function as refiners of speakers’ utterances and are used to draw attention (O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 172). The utterances “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean” impinge on shared knowledge and shared values (McCarthy and Carter 2019, 44); furthermore, they reduce the speaking processing time (McCarthy 2010, 5). The expressions “after all” and “at the end of the day” have summarising functions (O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter 2007, 73), namely, they introduce facts for assumptions which have already been made (Blakemore 1992, 140). In this way, they can function as supporting and supportive pragmatic devices. Given the variety of DMs and the varied rhetorical strategies they can pursue, it is interesting to verify the extent to which they are deployed by national and European parliamentarians.

#### ***4.1 Investigating DMs in parallel and comparable corpora***

The DMs mentioned above are sourced from the Europarl parallel spoken corpora (Koehn 2015) and from the ParlaMint comparable corpora (Erjavec 2021). The former corpora comprise the transcriptions of European parliamentary speeches in the official EU languages, whereas the latter contain the transcriptions of national parliamentary debates. The Europarl corpora are parallel since each transcription is the translation (or version) of a source text or transcription. The ParlaMint corpora are comparable as each corpus is “original” and addresses parliamentary discourse within a national context.

As indicated, the English and Italian languages are under scrutiny. Therefore, the above-mentioned English DMs are searched for in the English version of the Europarl corpora (EEC) and in the British ParlaMint corpus (BPC). Italian equivalents are obtained (if applicable) from the Italian version of the Europarl corpora (IEC) and from the Italian ParlaMint corpus (IPC). Relative frequencies (RF) are also accounted for and are calculated per million tokens, EEC and IEC are composed of approximately 60 million tokens each, whereas BPC comprises 110 million

tokens, and IPC over 30 million.

This paper also investigates the DM pragmatics and usages in context. To better grasp meanings and employments of DMs, sample phrases are reported and analysed.

As mentioned, Italian translations of the English DMs are queried in the Europarl parallel corpora by considering EEC as the source language corpus and IEC as the target language corpus. The translations found in IEC are searched for in IPC in order to verify occurrences and usages. In this way, the language options retrieved from IEC are either corroborated or challenged.

Additionally, given that European parallel corpora often give rise to varied alternatives and synonyms of the same multi-word (Giampieri 2025a), other possible English DMs are explored. Such synonyms are obtained by retrieving the back-translations (or back-versions) into English of the Italian renderings. Such back-translations are sourced from the Europarl parallel corpora, where IEC is consulted as the source language corpus and EEC is the target one. The relative frequencies of such back-translations into English are calculated. By doing so, it is possible to scrutinise whether such English alternatives are more or less common. By way of example, “and things like that” is rendered as *e cose simili* in IEC. By exploring the back-renderings into English of *e cose simili* in the Europarl corpora (where IEC is the source corpus and EEC the target one), the DM “and so on” is retrieved, amongst others. The relative frequencies of “and so on” are calculated in EEC and BPC to verify whether “and so on” is actually frequent in both spoken corpora (sample phrases are not displayed in this case).

Therefore, relative frequencies, usages in context, sample phrases, pragmatics, possible translations (or equivalents), and synonyms are examined and discussed. In such manner, this paper develops a fourfold approach: firstly, English DMs are sourced from the Europarl and ParlaMint corpora (EEC and BPC, respectively) (first investigation); secondly, Italian equivalents are sourced from the IEC and are corroborated (or confuted) by querying IPC (second investigation); thirdly, sample phrases are retrieved from the English and Italian Europarl and ParlaMint corpora (third investigation); fourthly and lastly, possible synonyms of the English DMs are sourced from IEC-EEC and their relative frequencies are generated from EEC and BPM (fourth and last investigation). In addition to frequency-driven and context-related analyses, the functions and pragmatics of the DMs are also under scrutiny.

As could be understood, whereas the ParlaMint corpora contain transcriptions of national debates carried out by native speakers, the spoken interactions composing the Europarl corpora are not necessarily undertaken by native speakers of English or Italian. Additionally, Europarl features translations rather than transcriptions. Nonetheless, the discourse strategies that ensue from the different sets of corpora are worthy of analysis because (dis)similarities between national and heterogenous language can be brought to the fore. Therefore, it may be interesting

to verify whether there are discrepancies in the DMs uttered by native and non-native speakers of English or Italian.

## 5. Analysis

This section carries out a corpus-assisted analysis of the DMs mentioned above. To do so, data are reported in four different sets of tables. The first set shows the relative frequencies (i.e., frequencies per million tokens) of each English DM sourced from EEC and BPC. The second set exhibits the translations into Italian of the English DM retrieved from IEC (back-translations are provided). Additionally, the second set of tables displays the relative frequencies of the Italian versions obtained from IEC and IPC. The third set showcases corpus-driven sample phrases sourced from the English-Italian Europarl and ParlaMint corpora (i.e., EEC, BPC, IEC and IPC, respectively). The fourth and last set of tables lists possible synonyms of the English DM as they appear in EEC, together with the related frequencies obtained from EEC and BPC. As mentioned, such synonyms are sourced from the Italian-English versions of the Europarl parallel corpora and are back-translations into English of the Italian equivalents.

### 5.1 *And so on and so forth, and things like that*

Table 1 below illustrates the relative frequencies (RF) of “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” in the English version of the Europarl corpora (EEC) and in the British ParlaMint corpus (BPC).

Formula	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
And so on and so forth	1.33	0.46
And things like that	0.03	0.62

**Tab. 1:** Relative frequencies of “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” in EEC and BPC

It is observable that there are several occurrences of “and so on and so forth” in EEC. Conversely, “and things like that” is more frequent in BPC. Table 2 reports the translation and frequencies per million tokens of the Italian equivalents of “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” in the IEC and IPC. The equivalents appear in alphabetical order; back-translations are provided.

Formula	Translation in IEC	RF in IEC	RF in IPC
And so on and so forth	<i>E così via</i> [Back-translation: “and so on”]	22.76	14.16
	<i>E simili</i> [Back-translation: “and similar”]	2.08	0.36
	<i>E via di seguito</i> [Back-translation: “and so follows”]	0.35	0.39
	<i>E via dicendo</i> [Back-translation: “and so saying”]	5.88	4.07
	<i>Eccetera</i> [Back-translation: “etcetera”]	37.87	11.1
And things like that	<i>E cose simili</i> [Back-translation: “and similar things”]	0.12	0.03

**Tab. 2:** Translations of “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that,” and their relative frequencies in IEC and IPC

It can be noticed that the most frequent Italian translations of “and so on and so forth” are *eccetera* (back-translation: “etcetera”) in IEC, and *e così via* in IPM. With the exception of *e via di seguito* (back-translation: “and so follows”), the Italian equivalents are particularly notable in IEC, thus revealing a high attested recurrence of such Italian lexical phrases in European settings. As regards “and things like that,” the only Italian equivalent is *e cose simili*, with slightly higher rates in IEC.

Italian scholars mention the following DMs as equivalents of “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that”: *eccetera*, *e cose del genere*, *(e) cose così*, *e robe del genere*, *e via dicendo*, *e via discorrendo*, and *e così via* (Morei 2023, 4; Ghezzi 2022, 52; 78; 182; Cresti 2021, 35) (back-translations: “etcetera,” “and things of the kind,” “(and) things like so,” “and stuff of the kind,” “and so saying,” “and so conversing,” “and stuff of the kind,” and “and so on”). As observable, only a few DMs suggested by the literature are exhibited in Table 2 (namely, *eccetera*, *e via dicendo* and *e così via*). Corpus-sourced sample phrases are reported in Table 3. The DMs in question are underlined.

Sample phrase in EEC	Sample phrase in IEC	Sample phrase in BPM	Sample phrase in IPM
We are constantly wasting time in fruitless discussion and, in particular, with all these votes, resolutions, motions, urgent debates <u>and so on and so forth</u> .	Noi perdiamo continuamente tempo in tante discussioni e, soprattutto, in tante votazioni, risoluzioni, mozioni, urgenze, <u>eccetera</u> .	So then I explain about articles 112 and 113, <u>and so on and so forth</u> , and about the brakes that could be put on immigration.	<u>Chiederemmo di passare all'esame dell'articolo 13, affrontando poi gli articoli 14 e 16, e via di seguito fino all'articolo 28.</u>
My professional life has been in broadcasting and that in turn gave way to what in English is called “narrow-casting” subscription cable <u>and things like that</u> .	La mia vita professionale si è svolta nel settore radiofonico e poi è venuto quanto in inglese si chiama “cavo ad abbonamento limitato” e <u>cose simili</u> .	Regarding emissions from power stations, <u>and things like that</u> .	<u>Questo tipo di giovani che magari hanno idee innovative, come start up e cose simili.</u>

**Tab. 3:** Corpus-driven sample phrases

Table 3 underscores the pragmatics and nature of the English and Italian lexical words, reflecting the speaker's intent to convey vagueness and deploy inclusive markers.

Tables 4 and 5 explore synonyms of “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” in the Europarl parallel corpora. Back-translations of the Italian equivalents are investigated in the Italian version of the Europarl parallel corpora, so that IEC is considered as the source language corpus and EEC as the target one. Synonyms are listed in alphabetical order.

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
And many, many more	0.02	0.1
And more along similar lines	0.02	0
And other such aspects	0.02	0
And others	30.57	33.16
And so forth	4.77	6.28
And so on	37.17	46.15
And such like	1.23	0.17
And the like	2.95	4.49
And the list goes on	0.3	0.21
And whatever else	0.16	0.25
Etc.	5.89	7.15
Or whatever	1.93	5.42

**Tab. 4:** Synonyms of “and so on and so forth” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
And all that kind of thing	0.03	0.04
And so forth	4.77	6.28
And so on	37.17	46.15
And the like	2.95	4.49
Or something of that kind	0.03	0.1
Those sorts of things	0.05	0.41

**Tab. 5:** Synonyms of “and things like that” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

The most frequent alternative to “and so on and so forth” and “and things like that” in both corpora is “and so on,” followed by “and so forth.” Conversely, the full expression “and so on and so forth” showcases only 1.33 RF in EEC and 0.46 in PMC (see Table 1). Therefore, it can be gathered that truncations of “and so on and so forth” are more recurrent than the extended DM in both national and European parliamentary speeches. Probably, this is due to an economy of effort typical of spoken interactions (Perkell, et al. 2002).

Another noteworthy element is the fact that almost all synonyms appearing in Tables 4 and 5 are more frequent in BPC than EEC. Hence, it can be speculated that national language is

rich in synonymous multi-words, thus challenging Giampieri's (2025a) findings. Conversely, the Europarl corpora foreground non-standard synonyms of the DMs analysed. For example, "and more along similar lines" and "and other such aspects" are similar to "and so on and so forth" and only appear in EEC (see Table 4). This confirms Giampieri's (2025a) claims that corpora of European institutional speeches feature less conventional language patterning.

### 5.2 As I was saying, in other words

Table 6 showcases the RF of "as I was saying" and "in other words" in EEC and BPC.

Formula	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
As I was saying	1.07	3.46
In other words	122.83	24.38

**Tab. 6:** Relative frequencies of "as I was saying" and "in other words" in EEC and BPC

It is observable that "as I was saying" is slightly more recurrent in BPC, whereas "in other words" is notable in EEC, thus reflecting its solid presence in European political speech. Table 7 shows the Italian equivalents of "as I was saying" and "in other words" in IEC and IPC with the related relative frequencies. Translations are reported in alphabetical order along with back-translations.

Formula	Translation in IEC	RF in IEC	RF in IPC
As I was saying	, <i>dicevo</i> , [Back-translation: ", I was saying,"]	0.96	1.82
	<i>Appunto</i> [Back-translation: "precisely"]	36.2	115.06
	<i>Come dicevo</i> [Back-translation: "as I was saying"]	4.97	44.17
	<i>Come ho appena detto</i> [Back-translation: "as I have just said"]	1.61	0.46
	<i>Come ho detto</i> [Back-translation: "as I have said"]	24.91	27.21
	<i>Come ho già detto</i> [Back-translation: "as I have already said"]	16.80	13.18
	<i>Come stavo dicendo</i> [Back-translation: "as I was about to say"]	0.15	0.52
	<i>Dicevo che</i> [Back-translation: "I was saying that"]	0.39	6.87
In other words	<i>Cioè</i> [Back-translation: "namely"]	130.02	349.78
	<i>Ciò significa che</i> [Back-translation: "that means that"]	40.49	11.29
	<i>In altre parole</i> [Back-translation: "in other words"]	60.04	9.34

<i>In una parola</i> [Back-translation: “in one word”]	1.15	2.9
<i>Ossia</i> [Back-translation: “namely”]	150.65	92.93
<i>Vale a dire che</i> [Back-translation: “that namely is”]	10.16	2.9
<i>Voglio dire,</i> [Back-translation: “I mean”]	0.95	2.77

**Tab. 7:** Translations of “as I was saying” and “in other words,” and their relative frequencies in IEC and IPC

The most frequent equivalent of “as I was saying” is *appunto* (back-translation: “precisely”) in both corpora. This word, however, serves a different syntactical function in Italian as it is not a verb phrase but an adverb. The most recurrent corresponding verb phrases are *come dicevo* (in IPM) (back-translation: “as I was saying”) and *come ho detto* (in IEC) (back-translation: “as I have said”). The Italian literature mentions *come dicevo (poco fa)* (Frediani and Molinelli 2019, 35) and *come stavo dicendo* (Giampieri 2025b) (back-translation of both: “as I was (previously) saying”) as possible equivalents of “as I was saying.” As can be inferred from Table 7, the latter is not frequent in either corpus (its relative frequencies are 0.15 and 0.52 in IEC and IPC, respectively).

From Table 7, it can also be grasped that the most notable translations of “in other words” are adverbs (i.e., *cioè*, and *ossia*, both meaning “namely”). Additionally, IPC shows the highest number of occurrences in *cioè*, *voglio dire* and *in una parola* (back-translations: “namely,” “I mean” and “in one word”), thereby attesting significant usages in Italian parliamentary speeches. All other expressions are more recurrent in IEC. According to the Italian literature, the following DMs are equivalents of “in other words”: *cioè*, *in altri termini*, *in altre parole*, and *ossia* (Ghezzi 2022, 69; Giampieri 2019, 114) (back-translations: “namely,” “in other terms,” “in other words” and “namely”). In this respect, Table 7 shows that *in altri termini* is the only expression that is not featured. Corpus-sourced sample phrases are listed in Table 8.

Sample phrase in EEC	Sample phrase in IEC	Sample phrase in BPM	Sample phrase in IPM
And all this because, <u>as I was saying</u> , these big companies are guaranteed impunity, with the aim of maximising profits.	<i>E ciò perché, appunto, a queste grandi compagnie si assicura un'impunità, finalizzata alla massimizzazione dei profitti.</i>	<u>As I was saying</u> , that issue needs to be dealt with on a cross-party basis.	<i>Come dicevo, dobbiamo affrontare il problema della riforma.</i>
<u>In other words</u> , will each proposal contain an additional sheet?	<i>Voglio dire, ci sarà in ogni proposta un apposito foglio?</i>	<u>In other words</u> , the Church of England.	<i>E cioè il Parlamento repubblicano.</i>

**Tab. 8:** Corpus-driven sample phrases

Table 8 underscores that “as I was saying” and “in other words” (and the related Italian equivalents) serve reformulation and clarification purposes, thus allowing speakers to rephrase and fine-tune previous statements in an attempt to foster clarity. Tables 9 and 10 explore synonyms of “as I was saying” and “in other words” from the Europarl parallel corpora.

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
As already mentioned	1.84	0.32
As I (have) indicated	1.88	8.89
As I have identified	0.03	0.07
As I have just mentioned	7.84	19.98
As I have just said	0.99	1.70
As I have said	11.97	55.17
As I said before	4.08	1.79
As I say/said	41.65	126.77
I said that	5.00	12.79
So I was saying that	0.02	0

**Tab. 9:** Synonyms of “as I was saying” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

Almost all synonyms of “as I was saying” are more recurrent in BPC (e.g., “as I say/said,” “I said that,” “as I have (just) said,” and “as I (have) identified/indicated” (see Table 9). In this way, they highlight their emphatic purposes in national parliamentary speeches. Conversely, less conventional synonyms appear in EEC. For example, “so I was saying that” serves the same pragmatic purposes of “as I was saying,” although it is only featured in EEC.

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
i.e.	36.63	0.46
Namely,	146.27	12.97
That is to say	37.4	2.33
That is,	53.69	31.28
That means that	14.36	20.83
This means that	42.85	11.8
Which is to say	3.29	0.41
Which means that	22.65	16.48

**Tab. 10:** Synonyms of “in other words” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

Differently from the synonyms of “as I was saying,” those of “in other words” are foregrounded in EEC (e.g., “namely,” “that is to say,” “that is,” etc., see Table 10). This confirms a certain variability in the multi-words deployed at supra-national level.

### 5.3 (Do) you know what?, you know what I mean

Table 11 lists the RF of “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean” in EEC and BPC.

Formula	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
(Do) you know what?	0.13	0.98
You know what I mean	0.05	0.05

**Tab. 11:** Relative frequencies of “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean” in EEC and BPC

As can be seen, “(do) you know what?” is slightly more recurrent in BPC, whereas “you know what I mean” is not particularly employed and it equally appears in EEC and BPC. Table 12 displays data concerning the Italian equivalents of “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean” in IEC and IPC. Translations are reported in alphabetical order together with back-translations.

Formula	Translation in IEC	RF in IEC	RF in IPC
(Do) You know what?	<i>Come sapete,</i> [Back-translation: “as you all know,”]	33.75	11.39
	<i>Ma sapete cosa?</i> [Back-translation: “but do you know what?”]	0.02	0
	<i>(Il) Problema è che</i> [Back-translation: “the problem is that”]	11.91	17.95
	<i>Sa che cosa?</i> [Back-translation: “do you know what thing?”]	0.02	0
	<i>Sa una cosa?</i> [Back-translation: “do you know one thing?”]	0.02	0
You know what I mean	<i>Ha capito benissimo cosa voglio dire</i> [Back-translation: “you understood very well what I want to say”]	0.02	0
	<i>Ha sicuramente capito cosa intendo</i> [Back-translation: “you surely understood what I mean”]	0.02	0
	<i>Sapete cosa intendo dire con ciò</i> [Back-translation: “you all know what I want to say by that”]	0.02	0

**Tab. 12:** Translations of “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean,” and their relative frequencies in IEC and IPC

It is evident that “(do) you know what?” is predominantly rendered as *come sapete* (back-translation: “as you all know”) (in IEC) and *il problema è che* (back-translation: “the problem is that”) (in IPC). This further heightens differences in the usages and strategies of the DMs in the two datasets. As a matter of fact, if *come sapete* relies on shared knowledge, *il problema è che* tends to foreground issues, thereby probably heightening differences and/or challenges.

Other expressions such as *ma sapete che*, *sa una cosa* and *sa che cosa* (back-translations: “but do you know what?,” “do you know one thing?,” and “do you know what thing?”) show very low rates in IEC, whereas they do not appear in IPC. With regard to “you know what I mean,”

translations are only found in IEC. This corroborates that European-based corpora displayed varied patterns.

Italian scholars propose the following equivalents of “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean”: *sai cosa intendo*, *sai cosa voglio dire*, and *capisci cosa intendo* (Giampieri 2019, 115) (back-translations: “you know what I mean,” “you know what I want to say” and “you understand what I mean”). Amongst these, only *sa cosa voglio dire* is found in IPC (RF 0.03). These data confirm the low employment of such inclusive tokens in both national and European settings. Corpus-driven sample phrases are reported in Table 13, where DMs are underlined.

Sample phrase in EEC	Sample phrase in IEC	Sample phrase in BPM	Sample phrase in IPM
You know <u>what</u> , I think we have an enormous opportunity in Europe.	<u>Come sapete</u> , ritengo ci siano enormi opportunità per l'Europa.	Actually, <u>do you know what</u> , we can do a better deal.	<u>Il problema è che noi non possiamo dare parere favorevole sull'emendamento.</u>
I am sure <u>you know what I mean</u> , Mr President.	Signor Presidente, lei <u>ha sicuramente capito cosa intendo</u> .	Members, <u>you know what I mean</u> .	Il collega XX, che è stato assessore ai trasporti della Regione Piemonte, <u>sa cosa voglio dire</u> .

**Tab. 13:** Corpus-driven sample phrases

Undoubtedly, “you know what” and “you know what I mean” (and the related Italian equivalents) express shared knowledge and serve inclusive purposes. Tables 14 and 15 illustrate synonyms of “(do) you know what?” and “you know what I mean” in the Europarl parallel corpora.

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
As you know	58.69	2.67
The problem is that	9.78	13.66
You know very well that	0.71	0.01
You may know that	0.25	0.04

**Tab. 14:** Synonyms of “(do) you know what?” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

As observable, almost all synonyms of “(do) you know what?” characterise EEC, except for “the problem is that,” which is notable in BPC. The Italian corresponding expression *il problema è che* is also recurrent in IPC (see Table 12), thus highlighting the tendency to use such a divisive linguistic instrument in national contexts rather than in supra-national settings. There is also a striking difference in the RF of “as you know,” which exhibits a larger number of occurrences in EEC, thereby confirming the reliance on more inclusive language in European environments. Furthermore, unconventional synonyms of “(do) you know what?” are notable in EEC (e.g., “you

know very well that” and “you may know that”) (see also the results by Giampieri 2025a).

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
[Subject] will well understand	0.1	0.04
You understand me	0.08	0

**Tab. 15:** Synonyms of “you know what I mean,” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

Table 15 shows that the Europarl-driven synonyms of “you know what I mean” (e.g., “you will well understand” and “you understand me”) are not significant in either EEC or BPC, although the frequencies in the former are higher. Both synonyms can be considered as unconventional.

#### 5.4 After all, at the end of the day

Table 16 lists the RF of “after all” and “at the end of the day” in EEC and BPC.

Formula	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
After all,	60.75	22.33
At the end of the day	15.24	9.72

**Tab. 16:** Relative frequencies of “after all” and “at the end of the day” in EEC and BPC

It can be observed that “after all” is more frequent than “at the end of the day” in both corpora, with a higher rate in EEC. Table 17 shows the Italian equivalents of “after all” and “at the end of the day” in the IEC and IPC along with their relative frequencies. Translations are listed in alphabetical order and back-translations are provided.

Formula	Translation in IEC	RF in IEC	RF in IPC
After all,	<i>A questo punto</i> [Back-translation: “at this point”]	42.79	73.89
	<i>Al contrario,</i> [Back-translation: “to the contrary”]	34.78	29.69
	<i>Del resto</i> [Back-translation: “besides”]	52.77	37.01
	<i>Dopotutto; dopo tutto</i> [Back-translation: “after all”]	35.39	5.18
	<i>In fin dei conti</i> [Back-translation: “at the end of the counts”]	12.69	1.63
	<i>In fondo</i> [Back-translation: “at the bottom”]	20.38	45.86
	<i>Infatti,</i> [Back-translation: “in fact”]	127.48	352.71
	<i>Un giorno</i> [Back-translation: “one day”]	26.70	24.97

At the end of the day	<i>Alla fin fine</i> [Back-translation: “in the end (of it all)”]	4.63	0.46
	<i>Alla fine</i> [Back-translation: “in the end”]	29.3	36.68
	<i>Dopotutto; dopo tutto</i> [Back-translation: “after all”]	35.39	5.18
	<i>In fin dei conti</i> [Back-translation: “at the end of the counts”]	12.69	1.63
	<i>Or(a)mai</i> [Back-translation: “at this point”]	129.49	230.84

**Tab. 17:** Translations of “after all” and “at the end of the day,” and their relative frequencies in IEC and IPC

It can be seen that the most recurrent equivalent of “after all” is *infatti* (back-translation: “in fact”) in both corpora. However, *infatti* is used in a wider range of pragmatic and rhetorical contexts than “after all” (Giampieri 2025b). For this reason, its occurrences are numerous. Another insightful multi-word is *al contrario* (back-translation: “to the contrary”), whose meaning is different from the one of the source term. Apart from such equivalents, it is possible to observe that *del resto* (back-translation: “besides”) and *dopotutto* or *dopo tutto* (back-translation: “after all”) are more significant in IEC, whereas *a questo punto* (back-translation: “at this point”) and *in fondo* (back-translation: “at the bottom”) are remarkable in IPC. According to Italian scholars, an equivalent of “after all” is *tutto sommato* (Ciminno 2021) (back-translation: “all summed up”), whereas translations of “at the end of the day” are *alla fine (dei conti)*, *in fondo*, *in definitiva*, and *in fin dei conti* (Ghezzi 2022, 176; Giampieri 2019, 114) (back-translations: “in the end;” “at the bottom,” “ultimately/definitely,” and “at the end of the counts”). Table 17 showcases that not all the equivalents suggested in the literature appear in the spoken corpora. Furthermore, other expressions are foregrounded, e.g., *a questo punto*, *alla fin fine*, *del resto*, *dopotutto*, and *oramai* (back-translations: “at this point,” “in the end (of it all),” “besides,” “after all” and “at this point”), thus highlighting their solid presence and variety in the Italian corpus. Corpus-driven sample phrases are reported in Table 18, where DMs are underlined.

Sample phrase in EEC	Sample phrase in IEC	Sample phrase in BPM	Sample phrase in IPM
<u>After all</u> , it makes no sense.	Non ha <u>infatti</u> alcun senso.	<u>After all</u> , we have just had a referendum in Scotland.	<u>Del resto</u> , la pace si stipula tra avversari.
<u>At the end of the day</u> , one of the fundamental tenets of economic theory is that the market is failing in many respects.	Fa <u>ormai</u> parte delle cognizioni economiche di base la consapevolezza che il mercato per molti aspetti non basta.	<u>At the end of the day</u> , democracy is more important even than free trade.	Ciò, <u>alla fine</u> , danneggia l'immagine e la credibilità complessiva di questa istituzione.

**Tab. 18:** Corpus-driven sample phrases

Table 18 illustrates that “after all” and “at the end of the day” serve concluding and/or summarising functions in parliamentary speeches. They are also deployed to support the speaker’s stance, thereby conveying assertiveness. Tables 19 and 20 list synonyms of “after all” and “at the end of the day” and their relative frequencies.

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
, really,	0.77	0.74
At this point	27.79	17.06
At this stage	30.62	30.51
Basically	6.95	3.47
In any case	59.10	7.76
In the final analysis	7.57	0.44
Indeed	293.80	399.73
Surely	50.00	120.26

**Tab. 19:** Synonyms of “after all” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

Amongst all synonyms, “in any case” is particularly recurrent in EEC, whereas “indeed” and “surely” characterise BPC. It should be pointed out, however, that the latter expressions may have wider pragmatic, lexical and syntactical usages than “after all.”

Synonyms	RF in EEC	RF in BPC
All in all	7.36	1.01
Eventually	23.76	26.14
Finally	332.49	135.09
In the end	28.68	17.9
In the final analysis	7.57	0.44
In the long run	6.54	4.97
In the long term	34.51	17.72
Ultimately	58.18	53.37

**Tab. 20:** Synonyms of “at the end of the day” and related relative frequencies in EEC and BPC

With the exception of “eventually,” all synonyms are more notable in EEC, the most frequent ones being “finally” and “ultimately” in both corpora. Additionally, as already noticed in the previous sections, EEC features fewer standardised forms of DMs, such as “in the final analysis” corresponding to “after all” and “at the end of the day.”

## 6. Discussion

This paper was aimed at exploring English and Italian discourse markers featured in

parliamentary speeches at both national and European level. At the same time, possible synonyms of the English multi-words were also investigated. The findings indicate discrepancies in the use of DMs across national and supra-national parliamentary debates. Some multi-words, in fact, strongly characterise national discourse, whereas others mainly hallmark European parliamentary speeches. For instance, “in other words” is noticeable in European discourse (see Table 6), whereas *cioè*, one of its Italian equivalents, is by far more recurrent in national parliamentary speeches (see Table 7). In this regard, however, it should be pointed out that *cioè* serves various pragmatic and rhetorical purposes. Amongst others, it is an equivalent of “I mean,” “well” and “you know” (Giampieri 2025b; Letizia 2012, 108).

Additionally, this paper foregrounded politeness as a discourse strategy that can be expressed in various ways and forms in both national and supra-national political contexts (Shevchenko, Alexandrova and Gutorov 2021; Ismail 2012;). Amongst others, it showcased the propensity for European deputies to lean towards inclusive language tokens (e.g., “as you know”), whereas national politicians could rely on divisive rhetoric (e.g., by leveraging expressions such as “the problem is that”).

From a linguistic perspective, the European corpora displayed more varied language patterning. Examples in this regard are the expressions “and other such aspects” (a synonym of “and so on and so forth,” Table 4); “so I was saying that” (a synonym of “as I was saying,” Table 9), as well as the Italian *ma sapete cosa* (an equivalent of “(do) you know what?,” Table 12) and *sapete cosa intendo dire con ciò* (an equivalent of “you know what I mean,” Table 12). This confirms that in supra-national settings language is less conventional and somehow “looser” (Giampieri 2025b, 260).

Additionally, literature-sourced equivalents were not always retrieved from corpus data. Indeed, in some cases, scholarly suggested renderings were not found in the corpora investigated. For example, as regards possible translations of “and so on and so forth” and “as I was saying,” the literature mentions *eccetera, e cose del genere, (e) cose così, e robe del genere, e via dicendo, e via discorrendo, and e così via* (back-translations: “etcetera,” “and things of the kind,” “(and) things like so,” “and stuff of the kind,” “and so saying,” “and so conversing,” “and stuff of the kind,” and “and so on”). In the corpora consulted, however, only the following words or expressions were retrieved: *eccetera, e via dicendo* and *e così via*. Conversely, equivalents that have not been explored in the literature often came to the fore, such as *a questo punto, alla fin fine, del resto, dopotutto, and oramai* (back-translations: “at this point,” “in the end (of it all),” “besides,” “after all” and “at this point”). Such words are equivalents of “after all” and “at the end of the day.” This highlights the fact that political discourse pertains to a peculiar spoken genre whose features may be different from natural or spontaneous spoken interactions. Indeed, politicians pursue rhetorical strategies that prioritise consensus, facework, and ideological

alignment, while, at the same time, serving institutional purposes. For these reasons, their statements may display assertiveness, cohesion and circumspection at the same time.

Other cases in point are synonymous (multi-)words with different frequencies in the two sets of corpora. By way of example, “namely” (synonym of “in other words,” Table 10) and “as you know” (synonym of “(do) you know what?,” Table 14) are particularly frequent in European parliamentary discourse. Conversely, “as I say/said,” “as I have said,” “as I (have) indicated,” and “as I have just mentioned” (synonyms of “as I was saying,” Table 9) characterise British parliamentary debates.

In addition, in most of the cases, unconventional (or less standardised) DMs appear in the Europarl corpora. Examples in this regard are the expressions “and more along similar lines” and “and other such aspects” as synonyms of “and so on and so forth” (Table 4); “so I was saying that” corresponding to “as I was saying” (Table 9); “you know very well that” and “you may know that” as synonymous of “(do) you know what?” (Table 14); “you understand me” corresponding to “you know what I mean” (Table 15), and “in the final analysis” as tantamount to both “after all” and “at the end of the day” (Table 19 and Table 20). Such varied language solutions prove that European parliamentary discourse relies on a number of alternative discourse markers (Giampieri 2025a), at least as concerns the sets of multi-words analysed.

As a whole, it should be pointed out that the English discourse markers, their Italian equivalents and English synonyms must be analysed in context, given that certain DMs displayed broad pragmatic, lexical and semantic scopes. Examples are “indeed,” “surely” and *infatti, al contrario* as synonyms and equivalents of “after all,” respectively (Table 19). Therefore, similar DMs employed in different contexts could serve diverse rhetorical functions.

## 7. Conclusions

This paper showed that there is variation in the use and frequencies of some DMs across the different corpora. At times, European parliamentary speeches produced higher frequencies, whereas other times, national parliamentary debates showcased more recurrent usages of certain DMs, albeit to a lesser extent. Hence, different pragmatic strategies were followed at national and supra-national level, thereby highlighting that similar DMs may pursue varied communication intents. It must be noticed, in fact, that some particularly frequent (multi-)words have wider or different rhetorical purposes. Therefore, their usages and functions depend on the context where they are deployed.

Additionally, this paper clearly framed political discourse as peculiar and different from everyday interactions. Indeed, there were certain DMs that heavily characterised parliamentarians’ statements (e.g., “as you know” and *come sapete*, in lieu of the more common

“you know what” and *come sai* characterising spontaneous and/or informal conversations). This confirms the highly institutional nature of DMs uttered in parliamentary speeches, where they are aimed at performing institutional facework while deploying courteous stance-taking strategies. This also underscores the trade-off between achieving precise discursive strategies while preserving institutionally conventional forms.

This paper also brought to the fore the fact that the Europarl corpora gave rise to a host of less standardised DMs, as well as more inclusive conversation strategies. For the same reasons, it can be tentatively argued that European parliamentary discourse is less traditional or crystallised in the use of DMs. This, however, could be due to the fact that such types of speeches are translations of source-language discourse and, hence, they do not necessarily mirror spontaneous communication in native-language contexts.

The research questions posed at the beginning of the paper were as follows: 1) “Do national parliamentary speeches differ from European parliamentary debates in terms of frequencies, usages and communicative strategies of DMs?;” 2) “Are European parliamentary debates characterised by forms of DMs that are less standardised or conventional than national parliamentary debates?,” and 3) “To what extent are the functions of the Italian DMs analysed similar to the English ones?.” In answering the first question, this paper highlighted differences in the frequencies of DMs and in the communication strategies developed by parliamentarians at national or supra-national level. In some cases, as indicated, national politicians foreground differences and issues, whereas in European contexts, it was apparent that shared values are more prominent. The answer to the second question lies in the fact that DMs can be less conventional in European settings, thereby assuming forms that are non-typical and non-standard. As concerns the third question, this paper framed English and Italian DMs as performing similar functions when used in parliamentary contexts, although with different rates of occurrence.

The implications of the results obtained are far-reaching. This paper has shown that institutional and political language can vary at national and supra-national level. Parliament members leverage multi-words to stress their point of view, convey ideas, align with their political party, and take a stance. They do so in a highly formal and institutionalised context, where words are weighed and harnessed by their rhetoric power. This paper offered some insights into political spoken language and provided instances of preferences over certain forms of politeness, mitigation, reformulation, and directness. It also showcased how spoken corpora can be consulted to bring language nuances and pragmatic subtleties to the fore. Indeed, parliamentary speeches convey messages that are addressed to laypeople, members of the other parties, and the media, thus encapsulating the difficult interplay between party-alignment, national welfare, and complex international relations. Similar studies can be carried out in the

future to explore other institutionally oriented speeches.

The limit of this paper lies in the reduced number of DMs investigated. For reasons of space, only four pairs of multi-words could be scrutinised. Further and more comprehensive studies could explore other chunks in both the oral and written form. Additionally, other language pairs could be taken into account. Another limitation is the fact that the data analysed from EEC and IEC may reflect translation-related phenomena rather than genuine institutional or pragmatic variation.

## Bionote

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