ABSTRACT: Most of the research works dealing with the discourse markers (DM) do not grasp them as full lexical items. They are usually described through their function in the discourse. This paper puts forward a theoretical framework for a unitary description of the discursive markers considered as full words in the language organization. It is shown that these words have a semantic identity as well as distributional properties, through their scope, their position in the sentence and whether they are detached or not detached. A DM is a word which defines the discursive status of the sequence p corresponding to its scope. As forming the scope of the DM, the sequence p stands for a particular way to say a state of affairs Z. State of affairs is meant for about ness (what I am speaking about when I say what I say). A state of affairs therefore stands out of the language on the one hand, but has no accessibility but through the sequence p saying it, on the other hand. A DM is therefore a relator that links a sequence to a state of affairs Z, which leads to the notation p DM Z. What depends on the content of the sequence p in itself (what p says of Z) should be clearly distinguished from what stems from the semantic discursive value of the DM (how p says Z).

The DM are distributed into two semantic fields:

- the semantic field of pertinence: what the utterance says stands as a point of view on Z. But the pertinence taken through this point of view is by definition relative, and therefore multifold. An accumulation of points of view may come up, different and sometimes contradictory, with no possibility for anyone of them in particular to say Z exhaustively. We will then speak of a point of view DM. A point of view DM specifies the sequence p holding for its scope as a point of view on a state of affairs Z. This point of view is related to a first point of view q, as opposed to it more or less strongly, the DM specifying this opposition.

- the semantic field of appropriateness: what the utterance says is presented as appropriate to say / express the state of affairs Z, and, on this account, is meant to fully say Z. We will then speak of warrantor. The warrantor stands as the specific carrier of the appropriateness of the sequence p (the warrantor is not the speaker himself).

This approach will be illustrated through the description of two pairs of French DM: réellement / en réalité and effectivement / en effet, each pair showing a common semantic root through an opposition which, on the other hand, comes under the opposition between the semantic field of appropriateness for the former pair and that of point of view for the later.