



A Study Of Discourse Markers In EFL Students' On Argumentative Text

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Abstract. *This research was to find out: (1) the types of discourse markers used by the EFL students in argumentative text and (2) the functions of discourse markers used by the EFL students in argumentative text. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The respondents of this research were the second grade of EFL students; the total students were 30 students. The research data were collected by using an instrument namely writing activity. The writing consisted by argumentative text. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The first important finding from this research was about the types of DMs used by the students' in three kinds of different text, there are 30 types of DMs used by the students in the comparison and compare text and the second important finding was there are four category of functions used by the students in writing activity, they were contrastive markers, inferential markers, elaborative markers, and additional subclasses markers. Despite the fact that DMs can create a smooth talk or make the conversation more natural, the students should be able to use DMs wisely in term of fluency and coherence measured in the students' writing.*

Key words: *Discourse Markers (DMs); Students' English Writing; Argumentative text.*

Abstrak. *Penelitian ini dimaksudkan untuk menemukan: (1) jenis pemarkah wacana yang digunakan oleh siswa dalam penulisan teks argumentatif dan (2) fungsi dari pemarkah wacana yang ada dalam penulisan teks argumentatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskripsi kualitatif. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas dua dengan jumlah siswa ada 30 siswa. Data dalam penelitian ini diambil dengan menggunakan sebuah instrumen yang bernama kegiatan menulis. Dalam kegiatan menulis ini menggunakan teks argumentatif, Data yang terkumpul dari kegiatan menulis ini kemudian akan di analisa secara kualitatif. Hal penting pertama yang telah ditemukan dalam penelitian ini adalah jenis pemarkah wacana yang digunakan oleh siswa dalam tiga jenis teks yang berbeda, bahwa ada 30 jenis pemarkah wacana dalam teks argumentatif, Hal penting kedua yang telah ditemukan dalam penelitian ini adalah ada empat fungsi pemarkah wacana yang digunakan oleh siswa dalam kegiatan menulis, yaitu pemarkah perbedaan, pemarkah kesimpulan, pemarkah uraian, dan yang terakhir adalah pemarkah tambahan. Meskipun kenyataannya bahwa pemarkah wacana dapat membuat percakapan itu menjadi halus atau membuat percakapannya menjadi lebih lazim seperti kebiasaan, siswa seharusnya juga dapat menggunakan pemarkah wacana dengan bijak dalam kelancaran dan memperhatikan hubungan satu kata dengan kata lain dalam tulisan mereka.*

Kata Kunci: *Pemarkah Wacana; Penulisan Bahasa Inggris Siswa; teks argumentatif.*

INTRODUCTION

Discourse Markers (henceforth DMs) have been studied from various research perspective in the field of linguistics (Jucker and Ziv, 1998; Fraser, 1999; Müller, 2004) and contributed in developing of DMs in teaching and learning process. The novelty of this research investigate the DMs emerging in students' writing. In Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory (1995), the DMs can be seen as a signpost which constrains the interpretation process and the concomitant background selection. Discourse markers as the binding elements of a text in creating a meaningful discourse have been viewed from different dimensions in language studies. Brown and Yule (1983) defined discourse as "the analysis of language in use" believed that such an outlook could not restrict the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions they serve in human affairs. Hatch (1992:1) defined discourse analysis as the study of language communication, spoken and written. To understand discourse and its scope, it is necessary to identify different elements which contribute to the creation of discourse. One of the elements referred to in different literatures is text markers or discourse markers.

DMs play an important role in a text's cohesion and coherence. The writer of this paper can assume that discourse markers have some relationship with a discourse's cohesion, texture and coherence (Aidinlou and Mehr, 2012). Then the researcher can put forward a hypothesis: in order to make their English writing more cohesive and more coherent, besides reference, substitution and ellipsis, students are also very likely to use discourse markers in their essays. If this is true, teacher should be clear about how their students use discourse markers and how they use discourse markers correctly and appropriately. Knowing that, teachers can take positive and effective steps when they teach English writing. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between teaching discourse markers and enhancement.

Research Question

The researcher formulates the following research questions:

1. What are the types of discourse markers used in the students' writing?
2. What are the functions of discourse markers used in the students' writing?

Objective Of The Research

According to the problem statements above the objectives of the research are to find out:

1. The types of discourse markers used by the students in writing.
2. The functions of discourse markers used by the students in writing.

Literature Review

Several studies as previous findings are listed briefly as follows:

Rum (2014) in his research "Analyzing the discourse markers by students' in IELTS speaking practice in ELC education Makassar" employed four types of discourse markers appearing with several different function were *like, well, you know, okay and actually*. He revealed new DMs in his research, *how to say* is considered as clarification marker when speaker feels hesitant towards the given words that is uttered before *how to say* is placed. At the end of his research, he concluded that DMs are words or phrase in which speaker employ to coordinate what they want to say, when, to whom and how during conversation. Comparing to my research, if his research focused on the speaking practice, I focused on differently skill, they are the types of DMs, the application of DMs and the functions of DMs in students' writing. When we link DMs and writing skill is not just talking about the grammatical but also we have to consider about the coherence and the cohesive of the writing.

Sharndama and Yakubu (2013) in their research "An analysis of discourse markers in academic report writing: pedagogical implications" analyzed the weaknesses and strengths of the students' usage of discourse markers enables the teacher to prepare accordingly. The teacher may group the students based on their strength and weakness. In this case, team teaching could be very effective. The teaching of academic report writing should therefore be a combined effort of the subject specialist and ELT teacher since the blending of the two would create balance. The

role of discourse markers in creating coherent text therefore is undisputed. Regarding to my research, it is a common information that the role of DMs in creating the coherent text is undisputed, because by considering of its role, the students can improve their ability in constructing a good writing, but in this case there is a different between our research that in my research I would not group the students based on their weaknesses and strengths in using DMs.

The Types of Discourse Markers

Distinguishing DMs from whether they refer to a textual segment between sentences or discourse segment in structure, Fraser (1999: 946) categorized DMs into two major types as follows:

1) Discourse markers which relate messages

There are three main subclasses in the first class. The first class refers to DMs that signal that the explicit interpretation of S2 contrasts with an interpretation of S1. Fraser labels such DMs **Contrastive Markers**. This group includes, distinguished by subtleties of meaning:

- a. but, yet, on the other hand, as a matter of fact,
- b. however, (al)though, even, though, even though,
- c. in contrast (with/to this/that), whereas,
- d. in comparison (with/to this/that),
- e. on the contrary, contrary to this/that, in contrast to,
- f. conversely,
- g. instead (of (doing) this/that), rather (than (doing) this/that), than,
- h. on the other hand,
- i. despite (doing) this/that, in spite of (doing) this/that, nevertheless, nonetheless, still,
- j. alternatively,

A second subclass of DMs relating aspects of S2 and S1 messages signal a quasi-parallel relationship between S2 and S1. This subclass of DMs is referred to as **elaborative markers** and includes:

- a. and, or, like, such like, as well as
- b. above all, also, besides, better yet, for another thing, furthermore, in addition, moreover, more to the point, on top of it all, too, to cap it all off, what is more,

- c. I mean, in particular, namely, parenthetically, that is (to say),
- d. analogously, correspondingly, equally, likewise, similarly,
- e. be that as it may, or, otherwise, that said, well,
- f. by the same taken,
- g. equally, first, second, like, such like, like that,
- h. for example, for instance,
- i. in particular.

A third subclass is made up of DMs which signal that S2 is to be taken as a conclusion based on S1. Within this group which Fraser (1999: 948) labels **inferential markers**, we have:

- a. so, now, well, anyway, surely,
- b. of course, may, must,
- c. accordingly, as a consequence, as a logical conclusion, as a conclusion, as a result, because of this/that, consequently, for this/that reason, it can be concluded that, therefore, thus, hence, accordingly, according to, therefore,
- d. in this/that case, under these/those conditions, then,
- e. all things considered,
- f. after all.

Finally, Fraser (1999) distinguishes some **additional subclasses (temporal DMs)**: a group of DMs which specifies that provides a reason for the content presented in S1. In this group we find:

- a. if, under the circumstances, it follows, consequently, that,
- b. because, for this/that reason, since, then, after, before, that, while,
- c. eventually, finally, first, meantime, meanwhile.

2) Discourse markers which relate topics

e.g. back to my original point, before I forget, by the way etc.

Apparently, conjunction is related to the entire environment of a text. The conjunctive elements (discourse markers) “presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse (Halliday, 1976: 226).” Not only giving cohesion to a text, they also cohere two sentences together.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative method to collect and describe the data. According to Gay, et al. (2006), a descriptive method determines and describes the way things are. This type of design relates to collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive, narrative and visual data in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest. The purposes of qualitative research broad in scope and centre around promoting a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon, such as environment, a process, or even a believe.

Finding

a. Extract 1 (DMs because, also, as well, anyway, so, and if)

*I think learn English is very important for all us as intellectuals. **Because****** English is the national language that will be needed in the future, especially for the students who will continue their education to college.*

*English is **also*** true for the people who have graduated from college who wants to find a job should give priority to the English language, because English is the main priority in the works **as well***. **Anyway******, the English language is also a universal language or language that is not foreign to our hearing. Because we have learned from elementary school to college later.*

So***, we as educated people rushing to many many learn English which has become the national language. For me, it's never too late to start something **if****** we are taking seriously what we want to achieve, so let's learn English because English is the primary determinant of your success in the future.*

(Taken from student's writing no 1, page 125)

Analysis 1:

The DMs *Because* and *If* as Additional Subclasses Marker. These DMs focus attention on what follows in the sentence. This is done by announcing the subject in advance. The DM *Also* as Elaborative Marker. All kinds of these DMs add information to what has been said.

The usage of these words is much more elegant than just making a list or using the conjunction 'and'. In the student's writing, DM *As well*, is used wrongly to express her meaning. Indeed, *as well* should be replaced with "as well as" as it shows similarity. The DMs *Anyway* and *So* are Inferential Markers. These DMs show that the second statement follows logically from the first statement.

b. Extract 2 (DMs like, and, although, therefore, even, and but)

*I **like*** learning English, because of it I think it's important to learning English. As well as English language is the international language **and*** that can facilitate us in communicating with citizens of other countries. I'm also sure a lot more people who want to speak English than doesn't want to.*

Although*, it is difficult to speak English. We must remember the more time developing certain languages are increasingly in need primarily English.*

*The English language is very important in order to support the future. English will assist us in establishing a business relationship or relationship to other jobs with foreigners. **Therefore******, we must learn English, **even**** the language of other countries were also good to*

learn on, but** we should not forget the language of our country.

(Taken from student's writing no 2, page 126)

Analysis 2:

The DMs Like and And as Elaborative Markers. All kinds of these DMs add information to what has been said. The usage of these words is much more elegant than just making a list or using the conjunction 'and'.

The DMs Although, even and but as Contrastive Markers. All these words are used to present two contrasting ideas. The DM Therefore as Inferential Markers. This DM show that the second statement follows logically from the first statement.

c. Extract 3 (DMs however and or)

*If we talking about learning English, people have their own opinion. Some people think it's easy to learn the English language. However**, difficult or*** not really depends on each individual.*

(Taken from student's writing no 4, page 128)

Analysis 3:

The DM However as Contrastive Markers. The use of however at the beginning of her sentence in inappropriate way. This is because however is not suitable to be placed at a

beginning of a sentence as however is used to present two contrasting ideas. The DM Or as Elaborative Markers. The kinds of this DM add information to what has been said. The usage of these words is much more elegant than just making a list or using the conjunction 'and'.

d. Extract 4 (DM first)

Learning English is just speak and speak, don't worry for making mistake, remember like when you were baby, first you call your mama by ma and so on. Nowadays for those who can't speak English they will lost their brighter and better life in the future, so let's study English for your better of life ahead.*

(Taken from student's writing no 5, page 129)

Analysis 4:

The DM First as Elaborative Markers. This DM add information to what has been said.

The usage of these words is much more elegant than just making a list or using the conjunction 'and'.

e. Extract 5 (DM in addition to)

But, not all material in English in easy to understand, because there are also material that is difficult to understand and it sometimes makes a headache if the enforce to understand. More of that learning English is also very important especially if you want to foreign country. In addition to that English is the international language.*

(Taken from student's writing no 9, page 133)

Analysis 5:

The DM In addition to as Elaborative Markers. This DM add information to what has been said.

The usage of these words is much more elegant than just making a list or using the conjunction 'and'.

DISCUSSION

As the research findings showed that a good writing is not only grammatical, but also cohesive and coherent. Discourse markers have main role in cohesion of text, and should hold a central place in writing teaching. Nobody cannot say discourse markers are decisive for English writing, but anybody cannot deny they have great effect on the cohesion and coherence of writing. In the Extract 1 to extract 14 in the comparison and compare text have showed the production of DMs in students' English writing. The production of coherent discourse is DMs signals a relationship between discourse units, i.e. utterances, longer spans of text, even between the text and the extra-linguistic context. The option of DMs refers to the fact that they are almost always syntactically optional, i.e. they can removed without altering the grammaticality of the host sentence (Degand, 2010). This does not mean that DMs have no function whatever in the utterances they occur in. A slight improvement has been detected in writing ability. On the basis of the findings of this paper it is concluded that instruction of discourse markers can be one of basic process in developing of writing ability, and learners profit from it and use it in an efficient way. An interactive process that requires speakers to draw upon several different types of communicative knowledge-cognitive, expressive, social, textual that complement more code-based grammatical knowledge of sound, form, and meaning (Schiffrin, 1992). Discourse markers mention not only about linguistic properties (e.g. semantic and pragmatic meaning), but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them ,because the functions of markers are so broad, and all analyses of markers can teach about their roles in discourse Basing decisions about marker status on data analysis has an important consequences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings discussed in the prior chapter, some conclusions could be drawn to get the insight to which could be name DMs. The researcher revealed that the students of MAN 3 Makassar employed some types of DMs appearing with several different functions. The analysis told us that due to lack of discourse markers or misuse of discourse markers the

students' spoken become less cohesive and less coherent. Discourse markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of markers are so broad, any and all analyses of markers even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion of their uses can teach us something about their role in discourse (Schiffrin, 1987: 67). Total DMs used by the students in three kinds text was 40 DMs which is have different functions that is calculated into 30 DMs in the comparison and compare text from extract 1 to extract 14, as shown in table data display.

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