

Discourse Markers Used in Argumentative Texts of English Department Student in Bali

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Abstract - Discourse markers improve writing quality and text comprehension. This paper aims to shed lighter on how to assess students' knowledge of Discourse Markers. The purpose of this study was to determine the ability of students to compose or opinions using discourse markers as a support in conveying their opinions and arguments. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate the significance of using discourse markers in determining the quality of written work. The qualitative method with observation technique was used in this study, and the data collected were 10 argumentative essays written by sixth semester students on the topic of bird conservation. Following the collection of data, the researcher began to observe all of the data by reading all of the essays, identifying discourse markers, and finally classifying discourse markers based on the existing types based on Fraser (1999) and Martinez (2004) theories. Conclusive markers, contrastive markers, elaborative markers, exemplifier markers, inferential markers, and reason markers are all found in the essays. The most common types are elaborative markers, which have a total of 221 occurrences and discovered some misused in the use of appropriate discourse markers While participants demonstrated an awareness of using discourse markers to construct coherent compositions, the study concludes that there are areas where they can enhance their ability to use discourse markers effectively and appropriately to improve and logically connect their writing.

Keywords: Discourse Markers, Argumentative Test, English Department Student

1. INTRODUCTION

Text is one of the most common tools used in academic settings to connect people. The term text in linguistics refers to any passage. Texts can be either spoken or written. We can express ourselves through speech or writing. Text linguistic usage is defined by (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) when referring to a passage, whether written or spoken. This implies that a text can be explored in a diverse range of ways, as a spoken text like a conversation, speech, or film, or as a written text like a newspaper, magazine, journal, article, or essay. Furthermore, in order to produce a connected and well-structured statement that is easy to understand, text must have certain characteristics, particularly a consistent texture (Jalilifar, 2008; Lestari, 2020).

For undergraduate students in Indonesia, writing with the goal of presenting argument and evidence on a specific topic is a daunting task (Rahayu & Cahyono, 2015; Raputri et al., 2022). Students can express themselves through writing activities. In addition to presenting ideas, students continue to practice organizing words into sentences and paragraphs until they are able to create a discourse. The writers' stance and engagement with argumentative text can be revealed, which is useful in comprehending the interactive writing process. One of the primary goals of argumentative writing is for writers to convey their opinions or intentions to their intended audience by establishing what (Thompson, 2001) refers to unity and integration, and it has emerged as one of the most essential current academic research areas.

Since an argumentative essay includes both advantages and disadvantages or comparisons and contrasts of numerous subjects, the sentences must adequately explain the ideas. Argumentation is required to gain knowledge and improve critical thinking skills about a specific topic (Yang & Chen, 2015). Bird conservation is a topic covered in this study that is provided as material for students to argue for the importance of conservation in Demulih Village's customary forest. As a result, not only from the ideas expressed by the student, but also in order to be coherent, discourse markers (henceforth DMs) are required to convey the idea's transitions.

In this study, students from sixth semester of faculty of foreign language from two classes participated in the writing of an argumentative essay, with each student writing an argumentative

essay on the theme of bird conservation. Students express their ideas and thoughts through writing, which is supported by relevant studies that support their opinions. Not only are opinions assessed in the writings, but including the use of appropriate and accurate DMs to convey their opinions and ideas cohesively. The researcher filtered the data collected from 60 argumentative essays, into 10 argumentative essays.

Researchers filtered based on the quality of the writing, from opinions that are weighty and reasonable and supported by relevant studies, writing that is not monotonous and boring so that readers are interested in reading from the first sentence, and, of course, the use of appropriate DMs to express opinions and ideas that make writing judged to be comprised of quality.

Over the last two decades or so, a significant amount of study has been deeply committed to the investigation and analysis of discourse markers. For example, (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) influential work, *Cohesion in English* has significantly assisted the emergence of empirical and theoretical research on discourse cohesion and coherence, which has intuitively led to the study of DMs as a new and intriguing area of investigation. Similarly, the research initiated by (Fraser, 1988, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987) a diverse range of studies providing narrative and similar significance accounts of such linguistic elements, encourages other researchers to carry out qualitative and quantitative research on this vital area of second language writing. Fraser (1999, p.301) correctly stated that DMs have become linguistics is a "growth industry in linguistics..."

Many studies have been conducted by researchers who have discovered several problems, such as overused and misused DMs in student essays (Al-khazraji, 2019; Patriana et al., 2016; Rahayu & Cahyono, 2015). This study has the same goal, which is to recruit students to write by using DMs, which is one of the assessments in writing quality. The researchers in this study focus on a specific topic, namely bird conservation. Argumentative essays are written by students to express their viewpoints. As a result, while learning about DMs is the primary focus of this study, students can also learn how to construct concrete, relevant, and reasonable arguments supported by relevant studies.

Kaveifard & Allami (2011) are an important learning tool that helps students better understand ideas and concepts. Text coherence and cohesiveness will be displayed because these are the factors that determine whether a paragraph is excellent or not. Students must provide indications in the following section to describe what they intended in order to make their ideas clear in the paragraphs. This implies that students must use lexical expression to obtain a clear framework. Students' lexical expression is DMs, which they use to help direct their thoughts in writing. To be coherent, the use of DMs will connect the transition with appropriate terms. In addition to conjunctions, DMs include adverbs and prepositional phrases.

Richards & Schmidt (2013) said coherence is defined as the connections between the interpretations of utterances in a discourse or sentences in a text. Coherence in written texts, in other words, refers to how a text makes sense to the reader. Cohesive devices, according to (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) personal pronouns, definite articles, demonstrative pronouns, and synonyms are examples of linking words. Because they connect the elements of sentences or paragraphs, linking words constitute the most essential part of a text.

The term DMs refers to the linking words in this study. The primary function of DMs is to clearly and unambiguously describe the connection between textual elements. In this way, DMs sustain the unity of a text's ideas. As a result, in the absence of sufficient DMs, a complete unit of idea somehow doesn't appear to be developed fully, coherent, or connected. According to (Prommas, 2011), the use of DMs is required because they are transitional words in essays, which are the most powerful and visible tools for demonstrating the relationship of ideas.

In linguistics, DMs are a growing market (Modhish, 2012). Since the late 1980s, DMs have been researched in a wide range of languages and examined in a broad range of genres and immersive scenarios. DMs are items that are dependent on each other and surround a unit of speech. It is said primarily to draw the listener's attention to a particular type of future utterance within the context of the current discourse. DMs can define the structure of the discourse explicitly, provide context to the listener, and convey specific speech acts (Eriza, 2019).

DMs differ from other types of coherent connections, such as reference, substitution, and ellipsis. DMs do not have specific meaning like other cohesive relations because they are not the primary methods for achieving into the previous or following text, but they express specific meaning that demonstrates the presentation of other components in the discourse. Furthermore, DMs can be defined as cohesive by focusing on a single feature of them that is linked to other, structural ways, rather than on semantic connections in general, as realized throughout the language's grammar (Kelly et al., 2007). Conjunction is used to create grammatical cohesion in texts that show the relationship between phrases. Conjunction refers to other parts of the text in order to emphasize the relationship between sentences. Nonetheless, some researchers used different terms, despite the fact that the majority of researchers agreed on identifying as DMs. Nowadays, most researchers use Halliday theories to help students understand discourse markers more easily. As a result of the preceding statements, we can conclude that DMs are a type of cohesive device used to connect separating messages on the text or to introduce segments to other segments.

The findings of the study should broaden knowledge and provide new insights, particularly in the ability to comprehend discourse markers. The study will most likely provide information on DMs. This material can be used to help readers improve their ability to use DMs by serving as a review. This research is also beneficial and may be evaluated, whether it is essays, articles, or others, to learn more about the use of DMs. The study will most likely provide information on DMs. This material can be used to help readers improve their ability to use DMs by serving as a review. This research is also beneficial and may be evaluated, whether it is essays, articles, or others, in order to learn more about the use of DMs.

Fraser (1999) and Martínez (2004) define pragmatic lexical expressions are pragmatic in essence and are obtained mainly from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials, and prepositional phrases. Based on this, there are four subcategories which are contrastive markers, inferential markers, elaborative markers, reason markers, and two subcategories, conclusive markers and exemplifier markers (Martínez, 2004). Firstly, contrastive markers are DMs that imply the clear and specific interpretation of one segment in comparison to the interpretation of the previous segment. Secondly, the application of elaborative markers can be explained through the fact that descriptive writing in general necessitates idea elaboration, which really is reliant on the application of elaborative markers to imply the connections between segments. Third, inferential markers show that the current utterance conveys a message that is linked in some way to the prior one. Reason markers, DMs indicates that the sentence after this one is a reason for the sentence before it. Next will be markers from Martínez's which are conclusive markers, to show conclusion to what has been mentioned before. Lastly, DMs indicated a difference between utterance in which it appears and the notion that utterance is meant to reflect this DMs called exemplifier markers.

2. METOD

2.1 Data Source

This study used qualitative method. This research employed the following states to acquire data; Observe, read all the data has been collected, note-taking technique to collect the data and classified the data based on Fraser and Martinez theory. The researcher did teach two classes using a slight material about argumentative essays and bird conservation. The researcher prepares sub-topics as well as references that students can use to build their opinions and arguments. The researcher also discussed the significance of bird conservation for continued existence and ecosystems. DMs are also explained, and how they are very important in writing skills. By using DMs, it is possible to determine whether the writing has cohesion and reliability.

2.2. Data Collection

The students were given one week to complete the argumentative essay, which was then collected using Google Drive. Following data collection, the data was thoroughly read for analysis while assessing whether the text has good cohesion with the appropriate use of DM and determining whether the text has a good and constructive opinion supported by relevant studies. How many DM

notes appeared in the argumentative essay while reading the text, then classified according to the type of (Fraser, 1999) and (Martínez, 2004) theories.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Finding

3.1.1 The Use of Discourse Markers Found in Argumentative Text

Each research problem's findings and discussion are presented in this section. In the finding of this study, it was found that the types that emerged from the 10 argumentative texts were examined. The number of DMs will be displayed in the table shown below. Misused from the use of DMs will also be discussed through the definitions below. Table 1 displays the findings from an analysis of ten argumentative texts written by sixth semester students. The researcher discovered 306 words that are included in six types of discourse markers, there are conclusive markers, contrastive markers, elaborative markers, exemplifier markers, inferential markers and reason markers. According to the findings of this study, elaborative markers are the most frequently used, accompanied by inferential markers and, at last, contrastive markers.

In the type of elaborative markers, the word *and* appears frequently. The use of *and* in the text is very frequent and sometimes inappropriate. Students frequently use *and* whenever they want to add points that support their opinion so that they can replace their use with other words and other types of DMs that better describe the context.

Table 1. The DMs Types in the Student's Writing

Types	Occurrences
Conclusive markers	3
Contrastive markers	20
Elaborative markers	221
Exemplifier markers Inferential markers	16
Reason markers	22
	26

Unfortunately, there is a significant imbalance in the use of elaborative markers when compared to other types. The word *and* appears frequently in the text, and some contexts in the sentence are indeed overused.

This table shows that students are not fully comprehending the importance of using DMs in writing, which can tremendously assist the interpretation, meaning, and quality of their writing. As a result, continuous repetition of words occurs frequently, making readers passive and uninterested in reading the text.

The findings from the table above can also prove the monotonous use of DMs. Students lack reference words that are appropriate for what they want to convey, so they use these words repeatedly in their essays. Some of the essays discovered, students who want to express their opinions by adding reasons, which is include in type of reason markers. Students only use *because* to convey their reasons, the use of reason markers in the essay is very monotonous. The following are some sentences discovered:

- Because of the scarcity of bird species in certain species already happened.*
- Because with this bird conservation, many ecosystems are saved and the environment will be better for the future.*
- This happens because there is a large enough profit for hunters to trade certain*

animals freely.

- d. ***Because the presence of birds is very influential for the sustainability of ecosystems and the environment.***

According to the findings of one essay's sentences, students only use ***because*** to express the reasons for their arguments or explain the causes. There are numerous words that can be used as reason markers, all of which function the same way as, after all, since, and so on. If students are aware of alternative words, their writing will be more varied, and the reader will be more interested in reading further.

3.1.2 Discourse Markers Misused

Several discrepancies were discovered in the use of DMs by students. This can occur when students lack adequate insight or knowledge about DMs (Silva & Cain, 2015; et al., 2017). Reading will be essential as a student who must write essays, articles, and other scientific works. They can expand their vocabulary and gain a deeper understanding by reading (Davis, 1944; Spörer et al., 2009).

As shown in the excerpts from the students, several of the students used DMs inaccurately in their sentences. The frequent misconceptions between courses and sentences were caused by the frequent misinterpretation.

Excerpt 1:

But the reality is so many people still unconcerned about bird. So many people don't understand how bird can be so influential with the ecosystem.

In Excerpt 1, it is not suitable to use ***but*** as a discourse marker at the start of a sentence. The two clauses are related by the DMs ***but*** (coordinating conjunction). The second clause elaborates on the meaning of the first sentence. Because there is no contrast between the two clauses, the student cannot employ this marker. The word ***but*** refers to one of the contrastive markers. It denoted the contrast event between the previous and current events. So, the writer supposed to compare what the previous event and use ***but*** in the middle of the sentence.

Excerpt 2:

The conclusions obtained are positive impacts such as: Increasing people's welfare and reducing unemployment.

It is less necessary to use ***such as:*** because what was obtained and a conclusion can be stated directly. If there are only two problems, the use of ***such as:*** should be avoided.

Excerpt 3:

At one point the total population of the Bali Starling was lower than 50 birds in the wild, despite previous successful breeding programs.

The use of ***despite*** is inaccurate in this sentence because, ***despite*** the is used for comparisons. After the word ***despite*** is usually followed by V-ing. For example, ***he purchased a new pair of shoes despite owning 97 pairs.*** There is no explanation of previous findings in the sentence above, and the word that is more appropriate to use is ***even though*** or ***although***.

Excerpt 4:

So, the importance of bird conversations to save the endangered birds that must be carried out by all people around the world, especially Indonesia, which has many unique bird species after Brazil.

The sentence in Excerpt 4 appears at the end of the essay, which is the conclusion of the argumentative essay. If you dig a little deeper, ***so*** can be used as a conjunction or DM to summarize something, but this context is more common when speaking. It would be more appropriate to use conclusive DMs to summarize the writings. It would be preferable if the author could use words like ***we can conclude that, in conclusion, at the end,*** etc.

Excerpt 5:

Proponents of this idea claim that bird's conservation can improve the environment, I think it is a true statement. However, birds have an important role in the environment, for example in ecosystems.

One of the words in the contrastive marker is **however**. Contrastive markers, by definition, imply a clear and specific interpretation of one segment in comparison to the interpretation of the previous segment. As a result, contrast markers are used to demonstrate comparisons. There is no comparison of the positive and negative contexts in the preceding sentence. While the two sentences in the preceding sentence have positive points that are in harmony, the writer should use the elaborative marker **In addition** because the author adds the same point or wants to elaborate that the bird can improve the environment in the second sentence.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, students overused elaborative markers followed by inferential markers, and at last, contrastive markers. These findings suggest that students are not as aware or fluent in their application of DMs in writing. This can be concluded because the words DMs that appear from each type are few, where the data studied is 10 argumentative texts, each of which contains 500-700 words. So, by simply skimming the written text, it is possible to see that DMs are overused, misused, or even not used at all.

In light of the findings, it is indicated that, while the students demonstrated a knowledge of using DMs to construct cohesive configurations, there are still aspects in their potential to use DMs appropriately and efficiently that require improvement. To enhance the effectiveness of DM use in English department sixth semester students. As a direct consequence, students must be mindful of the importance of DMs in their writing, in addition to the way ideas are effectively and logically connected, and instead focus entirely on arranging their arguments nicely and explicitly.

Reading will undoubtedly provide students with a broader and deeper understanding experience as they acquire more and more precise vocabulary to describe something. Lecturers can also help students by correcting or guiding them through the process of writing papers, as well as raising student awareness of the importance of using DMs (Patriana et al., 2016).

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