



Evaluating the Use of Discourse Markers in Selected English Education Journal Articles

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Abstract

Considering the important roles of discourse markers in writing academic purposes, the researchers evaluate the use of discourse markers in English Education Journal articles. This research aims to find out the types of discourse markers precisely contrastive, elaborative and inferential discourse markers, and the errors in using those expressions. This research uses a qualitative research design with the data from written language especially the journal articles published by English Education Journal (EEJ). Thus, specifically this research employs content analysis. There were twenty journal articles analyzed. They represented their volume especially there are four volumes in 2020. The findings of this research demonstrated that all of the research data applied those types of discourse markers. The type of elaborative discourse markers were the first type used by the writers. It is the frequently used by the writers in the journal articles. In this case, it used in 890 times. The expression frequently used is and. Meanwhile, the errors in using discourse markers in the journal articles occurred in 17 times. Here, the wrong relation category as the commonly applied in 7 times. These findings inform us to improve our awareness in applying those expressions. Thus, it can be concluded that the discourse markers is required in creating journal articles. Therefore, the writers have to concern regarding to the categories of errors in using discourse markers for avoiding inappropriateness.

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INTRODUCTION

Journal article is known as a kind of academic writing. At Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) Indonesia, writing a journal article is an obligation for graduate students to complete their scientific project before graduating from their Master Program. The research article is a kind of written text which consists of limited words, as a report of research result arranged by its authors (Mirahayuni, 2002). In this case, to achieve a good writing, the writers need concern on the components included. The requirements of writing also included vocabulary, grammar, mechanism, and so on. It needs logically received (Thornbory, 2005). Hence, writing is a part of discourse studies called written discourse. Fitriati and Lisa (2019) stated written discourse refers to a study of naturally occurring written discourse focusing on particular on its analysis as the sentence level. The analysis of written discourse may focus on several elements such as the textualization of lexico-grammar, organization of discourse, and the regularities of organization of language use. Therefore, they addresses the written discourse in several conceptual frameworks, one of them is pragmatics. It branches into several parts. One of them is discourse markers (DMs).

Discourse markers can be defined as elements which have functions to assist the written or spoken language to be more effective and understandable by the reader or hearer. Schriffin (1987) stated that the discourse markers deal with the sequentially be based on the features which have bracket unit of talk. Besides, Lutzky (2012) adds discourse markers have functions in the turn-taking systems, in the elements of discourse, the connection of utterances and also as the expression of the speaker or writer attitudes or emotions. Furthermore, Fraser (1999) stated discourse markers are as a group of lexical expressions drawn primarily from some groups. In 2009, he concluded that the discourse markers divided into three types namely contrastive, elaborative and inferential discourse markers. There are

many expressions included in discourse markers for examples *but, meanwhile, and, or, also, moreover, therefore*, and so on. They have their own roles depend on the context of the statements in the sentences.

Regarding the important issues of discourse markers in communication, many researchers have been conducted their research related to. For example, Yulita et al. (2021) the result of their investigation showed that discourse markers were worthwhile for English speeches either native or non-native speakers. Trihartanti (2017) explored the use of discourse markers in spontaneous and non-spontaneous utterances. Her research data was thirty one utterances which sixteen are spontaneous and fifteen are non-spontaneous utterances. The result demonstrated that the discourse markers of *hmm* is as the commonly expression used by both of spontaneous and non-spontaneous utterances. Meanwhile, the discourse markers of *yeah, oh, hmm, and ah* were as the expression which frequently used wrongly.

In the teaching and learning process, discourse marker is one of the kinds that need to be investigated. Relating to this case, the researchers carried out their study in investigating discourse markers role in the teaching and learning process (Ganem-Gutierrez & Roehr-Karen, 2011; Sun, 2013; Vickov & Jakupcevic, 2017; Tavakoli & Karimnia, 2017; Rongrong & Lixun, 2015). The findings showed that discourse markers do occupy a position in English learning and teaching. Furthermore, it is raising awareness of the diversified functions of DMs, which could facilitate the learning process and to bring out the most efficient and effective result in language learning.

Meanwhile, in written discourse, Sharndama and Yakubu (2013), in their study found that DMs are essential tools that enhance the students writing ability, for example they will produce coherent reports. Susanto et al. (2019) explored the use and functions of English discourse markers in EFL students writing in a university in Indonesia. Their results revealed

that the writers used those types with the most used is elaborative discourse markers. Besides, Manan and Raslee (2017) conducted a research which aimed to find out the use of discourse markers in students' paragraph writing of ESL. As a result, they found the students aware of using discourse markers in evoking their writing performance. Indeed, in written discourse, DMs are used to create a logical or rhetorical relationship between sentences (Bangerter, Clark, & Katz, 2004). Thus, it can be inferred that discourse markers are useful in the writing for academic purposes.

Considering those phenomena, it can be assumed that an investigation of discourse markers in journal articles written by graduate students is needed to be done, especially in English Education Journal (EEJ) articles. Moreover, in EEJ the discourse markers expression does not investigate yet. Optimistically, the result of this research will be the benchmark in writing the research articles. Therefore, this research explores the use and the errors of discourse markers in EEJ articles which written by graduate students of Universitas Negeri Semarang by employing a theory of discourse markers developed by Fraser (2009) and for categorizing the errors, this research employes the theory constructed by Kao and Chen (2011).

METHOD

This research is a kind of a written discourse with a qualitative approach. It focused on investigating the use and the errors in using discourse markers in English Education Journal articles. The data of this research is twenty journal articles published by English Education Journal (EEJ) of Universitas Negeri Semarang. They are twenty best journal articles in using discourse markers with less inappropriateness. They were selected from the whole of journal published in 2020 the total number of them is sixty journal articles. They were retrieved from the website journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/eej, such as written by Nurpermadi et al. (2020), Hudi et al.

(2020), Fujiati et al. (2020), Wachidah et al. (2020), Tyas et al. (2020), and others.

Regarding the research questions of this research, the objectives of this research such as (1) to explain the use of contrastive discourse markers in English Education Journal articles, (2) to explain the use of elaborative discourse markers in English Education Journal articles, (3) to explain the use of inferential discourse markers in English Education Journal articles, and (4) to explain the errors in using discourse markers in English Education Journal articles.

This research employed Fraser's (2009) theory for referencing the expressions of the 3 discourse markers types (contrastive, elaborative and inferential discourse markers), and a theory of errors categorization in using DMs proposed by Kao and Chen (2011). Next, in analyzing the data, this research started from several steps such as (1) identifying: selecting the expressions included in discourse markers; (2) categorizing: grouping the expressions in those DMs' types; (3) evaluating: assessing the expressions errors of discourse markers; (4) calculating: counting the total number of expressions and errors used in the journal articles; and (5) interpreting: revealing the findings and discussion. In order to avoid bias, this research also checked by expert judgment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section delivers several results of this research. It answers the research questions that stated in the previous section. This section reveals the investigation of those three types of discourse markers suggested by Fraser (2009) such as contrastive, elaborative, and inferential discourse markers. Then, it following the answer of the rest objectives especially findings the errors in using discourse markers which for categorizing those errors this research occupied a theory developed by Kao and Chen (2011). Overall, these findings answered all of the research questions. The new thing from this research was there is no previous investigation which focused on the exploration the discourse markers and the errors of using them in journal

articles published by English Education Journal (EEJ). Hopefully, this research will be a benchmark in constructing writing product for instance in writing an academic writing.

In analyzing the use of discourse markers, the result of this research demonstrated in the following table 1;

Table 1. Types of Discourse Markers Used in the Research Data as Fraser (2009)

Types of	DM	Freq.
		265
CDMs		890
EDMs		508
IDMs		
Total		1663

Table 1 above showed the result of the analysis in finding the use of discourse markers in twenty journal articles. As seen there are 1663 expressions of discourse markers used in the whole of research data. Elaborative discourse markers were the first types commonly used, while contrastive discourse markers were the last types rarely used in those journal articles.

Contrastive Discourse Markers (CDMs) Used in English Education Journal Articles

Contrastive discourse markers can be defined as a group of expression which aim to signal the sentences of those data that either a denial or a contrast of the proposition. The findings showed that all of the data were applied the expressions involved in contrastive discourse markers. There are many expressions used by them for instance *but*, *however*, *even though*, *although*, *in contrast*, *rather than*, *instead of* and so on. The total frequency of contrastive discourse markers used by twenty journal articles was 265 times. In the research data, all of the expressions aimed to link the previous and the next statement. The representative of them can be seen as follows:

What teacher and Dani said including verbal text, when the teacher asked to Dani, his eye contact

concerned to Dani but here when Dani gave his answer, there was no eyeline Dani to the teacher.

Regarding the sentence above, the word of “*but*” refers to one of the words included in contrastive markers. It signed the contrast event between the previous and the present event. In the first event, the teacher asked to Dani by his eye contact concerned to Dani. On the contrary, when Dani answered the teacher’s question, he did not concern to his teacher by eye contact or others. Thus, it can be stated that the first and second clause are in contrast.

They prefer to become passive rather than active to participate in learning process actively.

The word of “*rather than*” above refers to the contrastive markers expression. From the sentence, it indicates for comparison situation. In that position, they are as participants. In participating the learning process, they prefer to be passive than active. As we know the lexical meaning of passive is opposite of active. Hence, they are in contrast meaning.

Depending on the result of the analysis, the expression of *but* is as the dominant expression used by the writer of those journal articles. Then, it followed by some expressions were also frequently employed such as *however*, *while*, *meanwhile*, *still*, and *on the other hand*. In this case, there are several studies that have similar result from their investigation (Susanto, et. al, 2019; Rahayu & Cahyono, 2015, and Syahdanis, 2020). Their findings revealed that the expression of “*but*” as the dominant contrastive expression occupied in creating their writing product.

Regarding this research, *but* was as the commonly expression that used by the writers. It provided the contrast information in between two or more statements. Likewise, which indicates the signal of contrast in side of semantic relationship, moreover in every statement that use *but* as an expression to connect each sentence or utterance it will be founded a relevant contrast between the segments (Fraser, 2009). The other possibly reason is the word of *but* is a simple and familiar word to be used in the sentence or utterance.

Elaborative Discourse Markers (EDMs) Used in English Education Journal Articles

Elaborative discourse marker is known as expressions for signaling the sentence of those statements or occurrences that elaborate by adding more information. Based on the result of the analysis, this type used by the writer was in 890 times. The whole of them assisted the writer in constructing the meaning among the previous and present sentences of the journal articles. There are many lexical expression found such as *and*, *or*, *also*, *in addition*, *such as*, *moreover*, *furthermore*, *similarly*, *for instance*, and so on. The representative sentence found in those journals as follows;

The researcher interviewed the participants to open up alternative interpretation on the findings and to minimize the subjectivity of the researcher's own interpretation.

The italic word "*and*" above is one of the words of elaborative discourse markers. It has function to indicate the relation of the previous clause with the rest clause. It signals there is an addition statement for the first statement. The sentence above informs the aims of researcher interviewed the participant not only for opening interpretation on the findings but also for minimizing the subjectivity of the researcher's own interpretation. The statement elaborates the meaning clearly.

The jokes in every comic have different characteristics between one another, for example the jokes that contain political issue, family life, philosophy, satire, or purely humor.

The expression of "*for example*" refers to the signal for elaborating the statement of the sentence. In other words, it indicates that the next statement will be continuing by the new information for more specific from the previous statement. In this case, the writer elaborates the statement by adding example of some characteristics of jokes in every comic.

Relating to the expression used by the writers of the research data, the expression of "*and*" is as the dominant expression employed for expressing elaboration statement. It followed by some expression that commonly attached by the writers such as *also*, *such as*, *or*, *furthermore*,

and *in addition*. In line with this case, there also several investigations which showed the similar result to this research. They also investigated the discourse markers in the product of writing for academic purposes (Susanto et al., 2019; Manan & Raslee, 2017; and Rahimi, 2011). Their results showed that the expression of "*and*" as the common elaborative expression employed in creating their writing activity.

Regarding in this research, *and* was as the commonly expression that used by the writers. According to Fraser (2009) *and* provided the relevant information in between two or more statements. Additionally, it indicates the elaboration in side of semantic relationship, also *and* expresses more of the same specifically for continuing the segments of the topic.

Inferential Discourse Markers (IDMs) Used in English Education Journal Articles

Inferential discourse markers can be defined as the discourse markers which have function to delivers a message like conclusion or infers of the sentences. Based on the result of the analysis, it found in the whole of the journal articles. They used it in 508 times. The expression that applied in the journal such as *thus*, *so*, *therefore*, *in conclusion*, *according to*, *overall*, *as a result*, *because (of this/that)*, *accordingly*, *hence*, and *so on*. The representative of the sentence found in those journals as follows;

That is the reason why the teachers are expected to know how to talk to students and adjust the language that they use **because** teachers' talk gives a chance for students to hear the language which they might understand.

The bold word above is as a kind of inferential discourse markers expression. It indicated there is a relationship between the previous statement and the current statement. The writers infer the cause of their argument. They concluded that the teachers' talk provides a space to student for perceiving the familiar language. Hence, they are expected to obtain the best strategy in teaching their students.

If they cannot mention it, consequently the student should pay the punishment.

The sentence above consists of an expression of inferential discourse markers namely “consequently”. Considering the interpretation of its meaning, it assists the sentence to convey an argument based on the situation. The situation is the first statement and the second statement is a conclusion from the first statement.

The findings of this research showed there is an expression of inferential discourse markers that dominantly applied for showing the inferential statement, namely the expression of *because*. It followed by some expressions used in those journal articles such as the expressions of *then, so, therefore, according to, thus, and based on*. Relating to the dominant expression appeared, there also exploration which showed the expression of “*because*” as the dominant used by the writer of their research data namely Manan & Raslee, 2017; Syahdanis, 2020; and Adewibowo, et al., 2018. Their findings showed that the common expression of “*because*” as the common inferential expression applied in establishing their writing product.

Concerning to this research, the type of inferential discourse markers especially the expression of *because* was as the first commonly used in inferring statements for create the journal articles. “*Because*” is known as an expression for signaling a conclusion from a causal relationship between two messages of events, conveying the evidence for the conclusion of the main clause, or indicating the certain reason for asking the previous question (Fischer, 2014). Besides, it also known as a subordinate conjunction words which has function to link two sentences/utterances or more. In the inferential discourse markers, it expresses for showing the conclusion reason of a statement or evidence. Moreover, it is a familiar word that used not only in education performance but also for daily communication. All things consider, “*because*” embedded as the first commonly used by the writers of the journal articles.

The Errors of Discourse Markers Used in English Education Journal Articles

This section is answering the fourth research question of this research which asking about the errors in using discourse markers in written those twenty journal articles. In order to categorize the errors, this research employed categorization inappropriate discourse markers taxonomy (Kao & Chen, 2011). There are six categorizations of the errors. They are showed in the following Tables 2.;

Table 2. The Errors of Discourse Markers Used in the Research Data as Kao and Chen (2011)

Category	Freq.
Overuse	4
Wrong Relation	7
Distraction	1
Non-Equivalent Exchange	5
Total	17

Table 2 demonstrated the result of the investigation in finding errors of discourse markers used in twenty journal articles. As seen there are 17 occurrences of inappropriateness in the whole of research data. Referring the result of this study, the errors found in some cases which categorized in four classifications, especially overuse (4 times), wrong relation (7 times), distraction (once), and non-equivalent exchange (5 times). It can be concluded that, the rare mistake is the categorization of distraction especially once. Meanwhile, the common mistake is wrong relation category. It occurred in 7 times, most of them wrong in selecting the type of discourse markers then following the attachment of the expressions. This result is also similar to the findings of Syahdanis (2020) in which the dominant errors encountered is wrong relation category. The representative of those errors can be seen as follows:

In this study, the subjects are the story of The Adventure of Tintin. Then, the object of this study is the characters utterances and the conversation between characters in the story of The Adventure of Tintin.

Basically, there are two basic messages of those sentences, understanding the meaning of them we can be concluded that those sentences require an expression to connect. However, the expression existed above does not make sense. It is because the meaning of each sentence above is different. The first sentence is telling about subject while the second sentence is telling about object of the study. Hence, they need an expression of contrastive discourse markers especially *“meanwhile”*. On the other hand, on the sentence above, *“then”* is an expression of inferential discourse markers. This error categorized in wrong relation.

So, the material taught was very interesting and made students happy and the material was also easier to understand.

The sentence above conveys the statement which consists of some information. Therefore, in order to make sense, it requires an expression for elaborating the statement. Unfortunately, the expression of *“and”* above is inappropriate, even though it is a kind of elaborative discourse markers' expression. Besides, for avoiding the repetition word, it should be replaced by *“moreover”* which also has function to indicate the addition information. As a result, the sentence will be coherence and make sense. The error of this discourse marker called non-equivalent exchange.

CONCLUSIONS

Depending on those findings and discussion, this research has several conclusions. All of the journal articles used those types of discourse markers. Contrastive discourse marker was the last discourse markers that commonly used by the writers. Elaborative discourse markers was first discourse markers that frequently attached to construct their writing product especially journal articles. Inferential discourse markers was the second type that dominantly used by the writers. In short, each

type of discourse markers is applicable in writing for academic purposes, for this case is writing journal articles. All of them assist in constructing the idea of the sentence. They contribute the sentence understandable and coherent. The dominant used is depending on the writing focus, this research concluded the academic writing tends to deals with elaborative discourse markers. Meanwhile, the occurrences errors based on the result of this research and also as the reference of the previous study the errors tend occur in referring relation or called wrong relation. Furthermore, for the next researchers suggested for deeper exploration by employing the different theories. The further researchers also can analyze the other source data.

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