STUDENTS' USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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Abstract:

This study is a descriptive qualitative study aims at analyzing the use of discourse markers in student's oral presentations at English graduate program of Semarang state university in academic year 2015/2016. This study used spoken data discourse markers proposed by Blanpain (2009) for data analysis. The data of the study were collected from the students of the second semester in English graduate program of Semarang state university. The method of analyzing the data was coding, classifying, reducing, calculating, interpreting, and drawing inference. The researcher used method and theoretical triangulation to validate the data.The findings of the study showed that the students used discourse markers signpost in their oral presentation such as, getting started, referring to a previous point, starting or announcing a new point, referring to visuals, giving an example or elaboration, expressing reasons and connections, restating, aside markers, inviting questions, and summarizing. The second was the students used gestures, gaze, and intonation to indicate the trasitions. The last the students used the monothone expressions it because they lack of vocabulary.
Keywords: Discourse Markers, Oral Presentation, Spoken Language

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are created as social creatures so they always interact with one another by means of communication. According to Masterson and Beebe (2015) communication is the process of acting on information. For instance, students when they have questions for their lecturers certainly, they ask them the questions, this is how students communicate with their lecturer by using language. The presentation is a part of the usual communication done by the student. It means that in the presentation there is an interaction between presenters and audience. Communication happens in the presentation when the audience's attention is focused on some aspects delivered during the communication.

As we know that the ways to communicate Indonesian people are diverse, it's because Indonesia is unique. (Yuliasri 2017) has stated Indonesia is a highly populated country with approximately 240 million people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, Moslems forming a majority (around 90%). It means, even though Indonesia is unique and diverse the ways they communicated are same by spoken language.

In pragmatics, markers that are often used in presentations to make the presentation run smoothly are called discourse markers. Schiffrin in (Baker & Ellege, 2011) states that discourse

markers are sequentially dependent elements that bracket unit of talks. They help to connect between the presenter and audiences to find a similar understanding. There are some types of discourse markers based on her such as and, but, because, so, now, then, oh, well, you know, and I mean. In doing the oral presentation there are several kinds of discourse markers one of them is cited in the book "Academic Spoken English". (Blanpain, & Laffut, 2009) state it is important to remind the listeners of the structure and to indicate transitions. It is done by the use of discourse markers, also called "signpost". Signpost commonly used in the presentation and lecturer. It is a useful approach to select two or more phrase that the presenter plan to use during their next talk. It means signpost is a sign by using a phrase or expression. In addition, the signpost is needed to indicate there is a transition, the transitions here means whether the presenter uses an expression or sign in different moves to state their part.

Based on my experience when the presentation is in progress all of the presenters use that expression or sign, but the presenter only says a similar sign to indicate there is a transition done by the presenter. In addition, the use of that sign is to make the presentation run smoothly. Discourse markers also indicate that the person who is standing in front of the class, giving the material, is a good presenter. Here, the researcher focuses on discourse markers as cited by Blanpain, as a structure of the oral presentation. Occasionally, the presenter may forget or may not know the structure of presentation and what they are saying when the presenters will move to the next presenter, give the examples, express the reasons, close the presentation, etc. It has an important role in the presentation.

There have been a number of researches concerning with the case of discourse markers. One of the studies was conducted by (Medawattegera, 2004). She investigated the effect of discourse markers on academic listening comprehension. She tried to focus on her research in investigating the effect of discourse markers on the academic listening comprehension of a group of undergraduates studying towards the Bachelors in Management Studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University of Sri Lanka. She conducted the study to explore the relationship between discourse markers and listening comprehension, in a situation where academic lectures were delivered by lecturers who were non-native speakers of English, to students who were also non-native speakers. She argued that Discourse markers are cohesive devices that act as connectives and explicitly signal the structure of a piece of discourse. They are used by the speaker to indicate how what is being said is related to what has already been said. They can be divided into micro markers (e.g., Now, well, OK), and macro markers (e.g. That brings us to, To begin with) etc. She tried to divided discourse markers into two markers, the first is micro markers and the second one is macro markers. macro higher were high order discourse markers signaling major transitions and emphasis in lecturers e.g. what I'm going to talk about today is something you probably know something about already, the problem here was that, another interesting development was... And that's all we'll talk about today, while micro markers are lower order markers of segmentation and inter-sentential connections e.g. markers signaling segmentation (well, ok), Time (at that time, after this) Cause (so, then), Contrast (but, on the other hand).

Another study was conducted by (Alami, 2015). He investigated Pragmatic Functions and Position of Prevalent Persian Discourse Markers Used in Casual Conversations among Tehrani Speakers. He used quantitative analysis Persian Discourse Markers. They were 4 conversations involving 22 male and 28 female Persian speakers. The estimated time of recorded conversations was five hours and eight minutes in total from among which some segments were selected for the analysis. The recordings were transcribed in full following Eggins and Slade's (1997) transcription system.

The last study was conducted by Shahbaz, Sheikh, and Ali (2013) who analyzed the use of discourse markers in the corpus-based study of academic lecturers to examine the use of discourse markers by non-native professors and compared their use with their counterparts' native professors of English. Lectures of native professors (NS) and NNS have been compared and discussed to find out similarities and differences with respect to the use of discourse markers in the classroom. In this study, six discourse markers: 'so, and, but, ok, well and right' were specifically analyzed as these discourse markers appear most frequently among the talk of native and non-native professors. This study conducted in a qualitative approach. Fifteen lectures of five native and non-native professors were recorded and transcribed to build a small corpus of linguistic lectures. The results showed that there was a good deal of discrepancy in the functional use of discourse markers by the Chinese professors although, non-natives have acquired the use of some discourse markers like 'so', and 'and', their use of these discourse markers were limited and lacked of pragmatic functions. Mostly, other discourse markers like 'ok, well and right' were inappropriately used in the talks of Chinese professors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to explain the use of discourse markers in student's oral presentations at English graduate program of Semarang state university in academic year 2015/2016. The design of this study was descriptive qualitative. It was used because the findings of the study involved the interpretation and description of the data. In this study, the researcher observed the students who use discourse markers in the oral presentation.

The data in this study were spoken data as the main data source, the data were derived from the student's oral presentation and interview. The focus of the study was the used some expressions which used by the students to indicate the transitions, also the reason that the students used those expressions in the oral presentations.

The setting of this study is English graduate program of Semarang State University. There were several reasons why the researcher conducted the study in this university. The first, it because English graduate program of Semarang State University was familiar at Semarang. The second, it because English graduate program of Semarang State University was near from the boarding house of the researcher.

Several procedures were done including determining the subject, observation, recording, and transcribing. In order to avoid bias, I used triangulation as a tool to test the validity of the study. There are six types of triangulations, such as time, space, combine level of triangulation, theoretical, investigator, and methodological triangulations (Denzin 1970b in Cohen 2007). Triangulation is used for validating findings. Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection (Cresswell, 2012), as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Flick, 2002).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Research Results

Summary of Discourse Markers in Students' Presentations

Table 1: Discourse Markers Used

Discourse Markers	Get Started	Referring to Previous point	Announcing a new point	Referring to Visuals	Giving an Example	Expressing connections	Restating
Oral Presentations							
1st Presentations	10	7	80	7	201	62	51
2nd Presentations	13	6	56	8	127	17	14
3rd Presentations	7	3	11	1	20	7	4
	30	16	147	16	348	86	69

A. Discussion

Discourse Markers Used by Students in their Oral Presentations.

The data analysis of discourse markers used in the oral presentations of English Graduate Program of UNNES was grouped based on Blainpain and Laffut's theory (2009) of discourse markers that consist of ten structures. They are getting started, referring to a previous study, starting or announcing a new point, referring to visuals, giving an example or elaborating, expressing reasons and connections, restating, aside markers, and the last summarizing. Those structures of discourse markers were used by the students in the oral presentations.

There were 30 times using of getting started (3.76%). Referring to a previous point 16 times (2.00%). Then, followed by starting or announcing a new point 147 times (18.42%). Also, 16 times using of by referring to visual (2.00%). Giving an example or elaborating was 348 times (43.60). Then, there were 86 times used to express reasons and connections. And then, restating 69 times (8.65%). Followed by aside markers 1 time (0.1%). Inviting questions 43 times (5.39%). And summarizing 32 times (4.01%).

For example :

(1) M: *Assalamualaikum, wr.wb. Good afternoon, ladies and gentleman.*

The example above was the first presentations. The italicized utterances above belong to the getting started expression. The researcher analysed those utterances based on (Blainpain, 2009) theory. Those utterances were commonly used not only by the moderator but also by the presenter who would get started their part of presentation. Those were also called by the opener.

Thus, not only the moderator but also the presenter and even the audience who wanted to ask questions invariably using the opener.

(2)   M: *Today we would like to discuss about* politeness.

The second example was continued by the moderator's utterances in the first presentations. The moderator tried to open the presentation and tried to explain in general what would their group talk about. The moderator had a big role in leading the audience into their presentations. In the presentations, generally, both presenters or moderator would use those utterances because it was to make the audience get easier to know the topic or material

(3) P_2 :   *At the previous meeting we have learned* about the cooperative principle means there are four maxims that we have learned and, here Leech try to provide you another pragmatics principle what's matter pragmatics principles here likely introduce the statement like this minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize (all things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs.

The P_2 tried to tell the audiences in the previous meeting that the materials which explained today were explained by the previous presenter or previous study. It showed the P_2 wanted to explain first, before they started the presentation. That was also the reason why the presenter used that utterance which was to elucidate that in the cooperative principle there were four maxim which we have learned besides that Leech tries to provide another pragmatics principles which introduced the similar statement to minimizethe previous statement that had the sameexpression of impolite beliefs and the expression of polite beliefs. It was clear that those were referred to a previous study.

(4) P_1:   *Next,* Politeness as a real-world goal, it means Genuine desire to be pleasant to others or as the motivation for an individual's linguistic behaviour, so it is being polite because it is the rule it is the confession that you have to do polite here.

It was one of the examples which explained by Blanpain that there were several ways in starting or announcing a new point. One of them was the italicized word. As mentioned in the example above, the P_1 use a word *"Next"* to give a description that the P_1 moved to a new point. The audiences had known what the slide after although without seeing it, because the PowerPoint that was a new point.

The Use of Discourse Markers in Moves to Express Different Moves in their Oral Presentations.

In doing the presentation sometimes the presenters did the best to deliver the material that will be explained by them. There were several ways which is used by the presenters in their oral presentations. There were also some steps in doing the presentation. The first step was general introduction. It means the presenters were given the knowledge about the material during the presentation was running which is explained by them. It referred to general introduction. The second was the statement of intention. It means the presenter had of intention statement to deliver for the audiences. The third was the information in detail. It means the presenters was trying to give and explain the information in detail. for instance, when they got the data. The last was the conclusion. It was the important part in the presentation because succeed or not the presentation depends on their give the information and make the conclusion in ending the presentation. (Jordan 2000) also stated introduces four possible steps to order and sequence ideas for an oral presentation there were a general introduction, statement of intention, information in detail, and conclusion.

A presentation can be said successful if the presenters made a clear explanation in delivering an understanding of their slides. The presenters had ways to make their presentation running well it was called good presenter. In addition, to be successful presenters, they should have confidence in delivering their knowledge for the audiences. It was not enough, they also should have ways of doing the presentation, especially in the oral presentation. It was because oral presentation every utterance which was produced by them was spoken and give the report or new knowledge for the audiences. One of the examples was by using discourse markers. For example:

CL 1/15/P$_1$ " *Next, Politeness as a real-world goal, <u>it means</u> genuine desire to be pleasant to others or as the motivation for an individual's linguistic behaviour, <u>so </u>it is being polite because it is the rule it is the confession that you have to do polite here*".

The presenter used the signs of discourse markers. The first sign was in starting or announcing a new point. Then the second sign was in expressing reasons and connecting and the last was in restating. Every sign here had different ways in expressing that expression. They had to make a sense if the presenter wanted to start a new point by saying *next* with the falling intonation and stop before they continued their utterance to explain politeness as real- world goal. Here, the presenter said a sign which refers to express reasons and connection their intonation turned into more strength as of the presenter want to give the audiences to notice there was a connection based on the previous utterance. It showed when the presenter said that

sign there was a stressing. After the presenter saying that sign the presenter continued to the next utterance. Here, the presenter was not standing forward, facing the audiences but here the presenter sideways with a head that looked up to the top, while reading an explanation on the screen. It was different when the P$_1$ said the sign which referred in restating. The presenter with confident facing the audiences to pronounce and deliver it. They pronounced the expression with the intonation turned into down when the presenter said the utterance "*so*". Actually, "*so*" here was the sign of discourse markers which is belong in restating.

The Reasons of Using Discourse Markers the Way Speakers do in their Oral Presentations.

To answer the research questions were raised here, the researcher tried to answer by the explanation the transcript of the interviewed which was validated by the supervisors. After transcribing the researcher start to explain why the presenters used discourse marker in their oral presentations. There were several answers which answered by the interviewee.

For example:

"*that's all about my presentation*"

From twenty interviewees almost of them answered the expression "*that's all about my presentation*" to summarize their presentation. It was because that expression was easy to say and did not need time in thinking, it was like a habit. Although they knew there were a lot of the other expressions to indicate the summarize.

CONCLUSION

The students used the discourse markers in their oral presentations. Ten kinds of discourse markers were getting started, referring to a previous study, starting or announcing a new point, referring to visuals, giving an example or elaborating, expressing reasons and connections, restating, aside markers, and the last summarizing.

The next conclusion was the students used gestures, gaze, and intonation in moves to express different moves in their oral presentations. Those ways were used by the students to make their presentations going smoothly and also to make the audience easier to get the ideas. The last conclusion was the lack of vocabulary in the students makes them only use the monotone expression.

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