

DISCOURSE MARKERS IN ESSAY WRITING OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

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The objectives of the study were to find out the discourse markers naturally that used by students in the essay writing, the most frequent inappropriateness in terms of the use of discourse markers, and to describe the reasons why they used the discourse markers in the way they do. The study was conducted by applying a descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of the research were the students of senior high school at SMA Budisatrya Medan. The data were the students' writing that were analyzed by using Fraser Taxonomy (1999). It was found that the students used 7 out of 8 types of discourse markers. Furthermore, the data were also analyzed by using Kao & Chen Taxonomy (2011). It was also found that the students used 3 out of 6 types of misuse patterns of discourse markers. There were seven reasons the students used discourse markers: Limitation of knowledge, lack of ability in writing, lack of interest against English, lack of interest against writing, reading resources, teachers' explanation and internet resources.

Keywords: *Discourse Markers, Misuse Patterns, Students' essay writing.*

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

In Indonesia, English is the foreign language that has been taught to elementary school until senior high school. Learning English is as same with

learning other languages. It has skills that must be mastery by students which basically refers to the receptive and productive skills (Mundhe, 2015). SIL International (1999) as quoted by Chowdhury (2014) classify that listening and reading are part of *receptive skills*; while speaking and writing are known as the *productive skills*.

Position of speaking and writing is the same because of productive status, but the most permanent product from all of language skill is writing. Carrol (1990) as quoted by Huy (2015) says that the definition of writing skill is one of the most relatively permanent record of information, opinion, beliefs, argument, theory, etc. Therefore, writing becomes one of language skills that required to mastery by students in learning english.

According to syllabus of the eleventh grade of senior high school based on the 2013 Curriculum in writing skill, there are many texts that be learnt by the students, such as procedure text, report text, analytical text, etc. It entrusts some indicators of successful teaching writing. Kellog (2001) states why writing is difficult and challenging: "Writing well is a major cognitive challenge, because it is at once a test of memory, language, and thinking ability. It demands rapid retrieval of domain-specific knowledge about the topic from long-term memory. Furthermore, it is often found that students' writing skill is still low in terms of the discourse markers they use. Based on the preliminary data which the writer got from the observation conducted to the eleventh grade of Budisatrya Senior High School above, the student uses discourse markers to signal the reader about the relationship between the preceding and following sentence.

It was supported by Algamdhi (2014) who gives an example about the use of discourse markers in the personal narrative papers, non native speakers and native speakers used, most of all, elaborative markers, followed by contrastive, and reason markers respectively. Based on this preliminary study, the example of qualitative description about his research is: Billiards, actually, I am not good at it. **But** I don't know why I can win, just follow the feeling. **And now**, i am in semi-finals. My opponent is an American who has beer belly. **But** he is really good at it.

Furthermore, Rahayu and Cahyono (2015), in their research, analyze the most frequently used type of discourse markers and the inappropriateness of the discourse markers used in the essays. The result of the research is process analysis and cause-and-effect analysis essays show more inferential markers. Each type of discourse markers shows some common variants: (1) contrastive markers (e.g. but, however, although, on the other hand, and in contrast), (2) elaborative markers (e.g. also, and, for example, or, moreover, and in addition), and (3) inferential markers (e.g. because, so, than, because of, in conclusion, and therefore). From the analysis of inappropriateness of using discourse markers, the most frequent misuse is in the wrong relation. Based on this preliminary study, the example of inappropriateness uses of discourse markers is : It is the one of the important things in the people 's life. Especially for people who have to work far away from their house. **But**, before they want to buy a motorcycle, the price is the one of people's considerations.

All of the examples above show that all essays certainly has different discourse markers which drive the idea from one line to another line. The essays which students were written also show how their understanding of discourse markers through the right use or appropriate discourse markers they used. The point is the use of discourse markers will connect the transition by suitable words to be cohesive. Discourse markers are not only conjunction, but also adverb and prepositional phrase. Students choose them in their essay because they need them certainly.

By some previous research that the writer conducts and read from some journals, it is not easy work for some students at level university to create the text cohesively because there are some misuse and inappropriate discourse markers that they used (Rahayu and Cahyono, 2015). This facts show that there are big possibilities of crucial problem in using discourse markers may appear in school level. Therefore, it is important to know how students at level school use the discourse markers naturally to make their writing become cohesive.

Based on the background above, it is interested in conducting a research concerning to describe what type of discourse markers used and what is the most frequent inappropriateness in terms of the use of discourse markers in the essay writing of senior high school students.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Discourse Markers is needed in writing essay because it contributes to create cohesiveness, coherence and meaning. According to Fraser, Discourse

Markers is divided into four kinds : inferential, contrastive, elaborative, and reasonable which has three patterns, such as : 1). Words like conjunction, conjunctive and descriptive adverbials, 2). Phrase like adverbial phrases and filler words, 3). Clause. All of them will be found in some essays, because they functions for signals reader about what conveyed by the writer.

In speaking, discourse markers like *ok, well, oh, etc.* It is normally found in conversation because it organizes what someone says. Whereas, discourse markers in writing must be suitable used between first segments with the next segment. Therefore, they help reader to know what did writer means and to create cohesion of the text.

Discourse Markers has been learnt by Indonesia students in formal school as a part of english as foreign language. The researcher also decides to see how the students of grade XI senior high school using discourse markers in the essay which they wrote. In this study, the researcher will be focus on what discourse markers found in essays written by them, the most frequent inappropriateness in terms of the use of discourse markers in the essays and why do they use the discourse markers. Certainly, there are some factors that influence the students to choose the discourse markers in their essay.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative design. By descriptive qualitative, it was expected for gathering the data of what types of

discourse markers, the most frequent inappropriateness of the use of discourse markers and also the data of why they used the discourse markers in their essays.

This research was conducted by following steps:

1. Asked the students to write analytical essay.
2. Identified the types of discourse markers in analytical essay written by the students and classify them by using theory of discourse markers by Fraser (1999).
3. Described the use of discourse markers in analytical essay.
4. Identified the inappropriateness of the use of discourse markers in analytical essay by using theory of misuse patterns of discourse markers by Kao & Chen (2011).
5. Described the inappropriateness of discourse markers in analytical essay.
6. Doing the in depth interview based on the findings to the research problem.
7. Transcribed the recorded in depth interview.

The subject of this research was students grade XI of senior high school. The class has thirty one students equally in the classroom. The objects of the study were the essays written by the students and the factors which caused the use of discourse markers in the essays. The essays were written in form of Analytical. In this study, the data of the research were found in phrases, clauses, or sentences in which the discourse markers were used. These data were used to answer the research problem number one and two. To answer the third research problem, transcripts of in depth interview to students were taken as the data.

Techniques of Data Collection

Bungin (2003:42) explains that technique of data collection is ‘how is the way and how the data may be collected in order to providing valid and reliable information. Data collection techniques allow the researcher to systemically collect information about our objects of study (people, objects, phenomena) and about the settings in which they occur. The techniques of data collection in this research were including:

1. Elicitation Technique

To obtain the data of how students used discourse markers, elicitation technique is applied. By this technique, the students are asked to write analysis essays. The types of the essay are used to trigger maximum use the discourse markers; the essay type is not the objective, because it is meant to get the objective, namely the maximum use of discourse markers.

2. In-depth Interview

To obtain the data of why do the students use discourse markers, the researcher used in-depth interview to the students who use the inappropriate and appropriate discourse markers in the essays.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Discourse Markers used by students in essays writing

This study focussed on the discourse markers that were used by the 11th grade of Budisatrya Senior High School students in writing their analytical essays. The data analysis showed that the students used 7 out 8 types of discourse markers.

The 7 discourse markers used by them are: Reason, Elaborative, Contrastive, Inferential, Exemplifier, Sequential, And Conclusive.

2. The Most Frequent Inappropriateness in terms of The Use of Discourse Markers in Analytical Essays

In answering the second problem of the study, the researcher analyzed the analytical essays by using the six misuse patterns of the inappropriateness in using discourse markers by Kao and Chen theory (2011). The six misuse patterns of the inappropriateness in using discourse markers theory that proposed by Kao and Chen are non-equivalent exchange, overuse, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incomplection, and distraction. The data analysis showed that the students used 3 out 6 types of discourse markers. The 3 misuse patterns of discourse markers used by them are: overuse, semantic incomplection and distraction. The most frequent inappropriateness in terms of the use of discourse markers in analytical essays which were written by the students grade XI of Budisatrya Senior High School is semantic incomplection.

3. The Underlying Reasons of the Student's Way in using Discourse Markers

The analysis conducted to the data derived from the interview showed that there were seven reasons causing the students to use the discourse markers in term of ways and content as presented in point 1 and 2. The seven reasons were: a. Students' lack of knowledge about the use of discourse markers, b. Students' lack of ability in writing essay, c. The students were uninterested in learning english, d. Students' lack of interest in writing essay, e. The students got resources from reading material, f. The students got resources from teacher, and g. The student copied the sentence consisting discourse markers from the internet.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

Based on the analysis, the conclusions were stated as follows:

1. There were 7 out of 8 types of discourse markers which occurred in the analytical essays written by students of grade 11th in Budisatrya Senior High School. The 7 discourse markers used by them are: Reason, Elaborative, Contrastive, Inferential, Exemplifier, Sequential, And Conclusive.
2. There were 3 out of 6 types of misuse patterns in using discourse markers. The 3 misuse patterns of discourse markers used by them are: overuse, semantic incompleteness and distraction. The most frequent inappropriateness in terms of the use of discourse markers in analytical essays which were written by the students grade XI of Budisatrya Senior High School is semantic incompleteness.
3. There were seven reasons why the students used discourse markers in the way they did: Lack of knowledge about the use of discourse markers is the first reason, they also lack of ability in writing essay, uninterested in learning English, and lack of interest in writing essay. The students used discourse markers in the way they do are the students got resources from reading material, English teacher's explanation, and the help of the internet affects the student used discourse markers because they copied the sentence consisting discourse markers from the internet and pasted it to his paper.

B. Suggestions

In relation to the conclusion, suggestions were offered as follows:

1. Students should understand about discourse markers because it is important to help them to produce good writing. They can get the knowledge of discourse markers from reading some resources (book, article, journal, etc), writing practice, and teacher's explanation.
2. Teachers should be able to introduce and explain the importance of the use of discourse markers in writing essays. Through teachers's explanation, students are able to understand what discourse markers is and how discourse markers used well.

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*Graduate Status
**Lecturer Status