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MEDIATING MULTILINGUALISM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Investigating the Employment of Discourse Markers by EFL Learners in Their Speaking Performance

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Abstract

This study investigates the employment of discourse markers by learners in their speaking in classroom interaction. This study applies a qualitative method in describing the use of discourse markers in learners' speaking to make their speaking understandable to their partners. This study borrows the theory of types of discourse markers from Biber et. al (1999). The data are taken from a video-recorded portfolio posted in Google classroom. The data are transcribed and analysed. The results of the research show that the discourse markers are used by the learners. It is shown that the discussion contained ten types of discourse markers, which are interjection, greeting and farewell expressions, linking adverbials, stance adverbials, vocatives, response elicitors, response forms, hesitator, various polite speech-act formulates, and expletives. The learners use linking adverbials as the most frequent use of discourse markers. It concludes that every type of discourse marker that is employed by the learners is beneficial in helping the speakers communicate their thoughts to the listeners and helpful in assisting the listeners to comprehend the talk.²

Keywords: Discourse Markers, Classroom Interaction, Speaking

Background of the research

Teaching English consists of teaching English skills and components. One of the productive skills that learners should master is speaking. Speaking can be called a technique of oral communication because speaking is one of the most significant abilities to improve learners' competence. Palmer writes in his book (2011) that "the vast majority of human communication is oral." Therefore, learners are required to speak with a variety of people face-to-face. Furthermore, Walqui and Heritage (2018) also explain that the characteristics of productive talk in the classroom have many aspects, such as (1) having depth: the specific idea being discussed is central to the theme of the lesson, is presented in interconnected ways, and engages learners' analytical thinking. (2) sustaining: one student's statement is followed by another student's response, which extends, refutes, or questions what is first said. (3) controlling: learners control what they say, not the teacher. But teachers set up parameters for the interactions, sometimes framing questions that start the conversation.

In reality, connectors in spoken English, such as "well," "alright," "now," "yeah," "I see," can be used naturally to combine and expand more complex words into sounds. It is supported by Karlina and Setyaningsih (2015) state that the learners' speech should be organized appropriately to maintain the conversation's coherence and continuity. Therefore, learners need to employ Discourse Markers (DMs, henceforth) in their speaking in order to meet these characteristics and have relevant classroom interactions. Classroom discourse is a type of discourse that takes place in a classroom setting. Classroom discourse analysis is a type of classroom process study that allows teachers to keep track of both the quantity and intensity of their students' work. Classroom discourse analysis is simply defined as looking into the language used in the classroom to see how different patterns influence one another. (Lubis,2020). Furthermore, Martn-Laguna and Alcon-Soler (2018) discover that DMs are one of the pragmatic elements that aim to make the conversation in the classroom more communicative. By adding certain terms of DMs, the interlocutor might easily get the point of what the speaker is talking about.

Thus, learners are to possess the pragmatic competence to communicate in English. They are knowledgeable about not only language usage but also language in use. Pragmatic competence, according to Tauchi (2009), is the capacity to use language effectively in a social situation. It can be used to reduce misunderstandings of the speech acts used in the classroom. The information that the speaker-hearer utilizes to engage in communication, including how speech actions are successfully done, is referred to as pragmatic competence. Then, when foreign learners interact with their peers in English, this is referred to as an interlanguage pragmatic (ILP).

In the teaching speaking, it is necessary for teachers to be knowledgeable about what speaking competence entails and how various speaking competence components relate to one another in order to teach speaking holistically and comprehensively. As Burns (2019) points out, speaking is an important skill to teach and master in any language education setting since it not only provides "affordances" for learning as the primary channel of communication in the classroom but also plays a significant role in the syllabus content and learning objectives. According to Bahadorfar, M., & Omidvar, R. (2014), teaching speaking has many purposes. These are (1) to teach the learners to produce the sounds and patterns of English speech; (2) to use the second language's rhythm, intonation patterns, and words as well as sentence stress; (3) to choose acceptable words and sentences for the audience, situation, and topic matter in the appropriate social setting; (4) to organize their thoughts in a logical and relevant order; (5) to express values and interpretations by the use of language; and (6) to employ language fluently and confidently with few unexpected pauses, which is called fluency (Nunan, 2003).

According to Yule (2006), "The term **"discourse"** is commonly defined as **"language beyond the sentence."** Discourse analysis comprises a social perspective on language use and communication exchanges, including both spoken and written discourse. To put it another way, discourse analysis believes that discourse is closely linked to everyday life and what we do with language when the speaker uses it. Brenes (2005) says that discourse analysis focuses on how speakers use language and how

listeners understand it in verbal communication. Discourse analysis is linked to linguistic components in achieving social awareness in interpreting written and oral texts, as stated in that statement. Discourse markers (DMs) are one of the topics discussed in discourse analysis.

A discourse marker is a word or phrase in linguistics that is essentially syntax-independent, does not modify the sentence's truth-conditional meaning, and has a rather empty meaning (Charter & Ronald, 2011). DMs are words or groups of words that are employed in expressions without changing their true meaning, and these markers have no significance in some cases. As stated by Schrifin (1987) as cited in Charter & Ronald (2011) also called linguistic elements that index different relations and coherence between units of talk. Another definition is also given by Fraser (1999), as cited in Lubis (2020), that DMs are useful markers that remark on the next utterance. They reveal the path of an utterance and explain how the speaker expects the basic message to relate to the prior discourse. Moreover, DMs are insertions that often start a turn or utterance and serve two purposes: (a) to signal a change in the conversation's ongoing direction, and (b) to indicate an interactive relationship between the speaker, the hearer, and the message.

Therefore, in social interaction, discourse markers are utilized as a pointer to sequential discourse. In other words, discourse markers are words, phrases, or expressions that can be used by speakers to link and structure their sentences. This set of markers is used to express an attitude in a conversation. Since each study focuses on various elements of these markers, different classifications are possible. The book Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, by (Douglas Biber Biber, 1999; Hasniar, 2017; Nurul & Amrin, 2021) shows many types of DMs that are typical and comprehensive. Some of them are:

1. **Interjection:** The term "**interjection**" refers to inserts that serve as an exclamation point and reflect the speaker's mood.

Oh is frequently used in conjunction with other words, such as *Oh Yes, Oh No, Oh Well, Oh God, Oh I See*, and so on. Although **oh** is often used, its primary function appears to communicate a sense of surprise, unexpectedness, or expressive excitation.

Ah! This term **ah!** is capable of expressing both joyful and bad feelings (in its primary use). Furthermore, this statement is far less common and tends to indicate a higher level of emotion.

Wow! Usually means the speaker is surprised and impressed, and even sometimes delighted.

Oops and **whoops** are two variations of the same interjection that are used when the speaker drops something or has a minor mishap.

Ugh, usually used to indicate displeasure.

Ow or **ouch** are used to express (mostly physical) pain, but **aargh** or **urgh** are used to communicate pain and grief, displeasure, and etc.

2. **Greetings and Farewells:** In specific discourse circumstances, greetings and farewells take place and represent conventional reactions to the circumstance. It refers to a "symmetrical exchange" manner in which greetings are frequently reciprocated as shown below:
A: Hi, Sue
B: Hello, John
3. **Linking Adverbial:** The major role of linking adverbial is to state the speaker or writer's perception of the relationship between two units of discourse. It is because they expressly signal the connection. e.g. Enumeration and addition; *Firstly, secondly, thirdly, additionally, to begin with, next, then, moreover, furthermore, besides*, Summation; *Altogether, overall, in sum, to conclude, to summarize*, Apposition: *namely, in other words, for example, for instance, specifically*, Result / Inference; *Therefore, Consequently, So, Then*, Contrast; *On the other hand, though, however, well* (Although "well" is a flexible discourse marker, it seems to serve as a "deliberation signal," indicating that the speaker needs to give the topic under discussion considerable (short) thought or attention.)
4. **Stance Adverbial:** The principal function of the stance adverbial is to remark on the substance or style of a clause or a specific element of a clause. It relates to how a speaker or writer expresses their personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments in relation to what they say. There are three types of adverbial stances: (1) Addressing a statement of certainty (or uncertainty), trustworthiness, or limitations. In essence, this conveys the speaker's or writer's level of certainty or the source of the information. e.g. *probably, definitely, actually, really, apparently, reportedly, mainly, typically, kind of, roughly, like, approximately, nearly* (2). Attitude stance Expressing the speaker's values, opinions, or perceptions of what is spoken by the speaker. e.g. *surprisingly, curiously, unfortunately* (3) Style stance describing the manner of the information's representation. Thus, this kind of expression shows the manner in which something is spoken by the speaker. e.g. *Honestly, Frankly, quite simply, usually, especially* and so on.
5. **Vocative:** The addressee is frequently referred to through vocatives, which are not syntactically or semantically included in the argument. It can be used as a "stand-alone" non-causal unit, with or without inserts: *Darling! Susan*, how are you? They are most commonly used as prefaces or tags to larger constructions, such as imperatives or

declarative clauses. e.g. (1) Yes, **sweetie**, I'll be there in a minute; (2) **Hey you**, you just scratched my car with your Frisbee; (3) The truth is, **Madam**, nothing compares these days.

6. **Response Elicitors:** Generalized questions question tags, such as *huh? okay?* can be used as response elicitors. *Right? Eh? Alright?* This response is frequently more speaker-centered, looking for confirmation that the message has been received and understood. Furthermore, this elicitor answer is often utilized in familiar, casual discussions, and would be considered impolite if used in a professional setting.
7. **Response Forms:** Response forms are brief inserts that are timed to a previous statement made by another speaker. Responses to questions (usually *yes* for a positive response and *no* for a negative response, and variants), reactions to directives (e.g. *okay*), and responses to assertions are examples of these (e.g. backchannels such as *uh, huh, mhm*). Furthermore, if the statement is *Okay*, it can be used as a standard compliance answer to a variety of other speech acts involving future activities, such as suggestions, offers, advise, and permission-giving.
8. **Hesitators:** This type of marker is called a pause filler, and its major purpose is to allow the speaker to pause in the middle of a message while yet conveying the desire to continue speaking. e.g. *Hm, Er, Uhm, Erm*
9. **Various Polite speech-act formulas:** Thanking, apologizing, requesting, and congratulating are examples of common speaking activities that use this marker expression. For example; *yes, please? Thank you, and best of luck, sorry, that's fine, pardon me, excuse me, congratulations, apologize*, and so on.
10. **Expletives:** This marker is used for taboo expressions (swear words) or semi-taboo expressions used as exclamations, particularly in response to some traumatic experiences. Furthermore, there are two different categories of expletives. To begin, taboo expletives, such as *Blast!* are markers that are used to indicate something negative and not in a polite manner. *Damn! Oh my god! Hell on earth!* whereas modified expletives, such as "*my goodness!*", are socially acceptable in many situations. *Oh, my God! Oh, my goodness! Thank you, God!*

Related to this topic, there are previous studies related to the use of DMs in the classroom. The first study is conducted by Karlina, Suparno, and Endang (2015). The purpose of this study is to discuss DMs as a specific aspect of classroom interaction and language use. The qualitative study case approach is shown in this investigation. The data analysis reveals that there are 19 different varieties of DMs, all of which are in English, Indonesian, or Javanese. The fact that DMs are excellent resources for facilitating the structuring of classroom discourse shows that English teachers should be more aware of

DMs' use in teacher talk. Another study is conducted by Lubis (2020). The purpose of this study is to look at how teachers employ discourse markers in English classroom interactions. In other words, this study aimed to determine the types of discourse markers that are most commonly utilized by teachers, as well as the reasons for their existence. Moreover, the data is analyzed using Fung's method and Carter's theory (2007). The research revealed that there are four types of discourse markers used by teachers in English classroom interactions, e.g., interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive. The English teacher used interpersonal the most, with 38.94 percent; referential 25.26 percent; structural 30.52 percent; and cognitive 5.26 percent. The presence category (teacher's belief) and the context category (the class in which the teaching process took place) both influenced why the instructor utilized interpersonal markers as the dominating one.

The research conducted for this paper is different from the studies previously mentioned. It is different from the data in several ways. First, the previous studies were mostly based on the teacher talk and initiation respond- feedback (IRF) meanwhile this study examines the different discourse markers that appeared between students' conversations in the classroom. Second, the theory also reveals other distinctions. The theory presented by (Douglas Biber Biber, 1999; Hasniar, 2017; Nurul & Amrin, 2021) is employed in this study. In contrast, the previous research employed the theories presented by Fung and Carter (2007), Swan (2005), and Carter et al. (2011). Third, while the first study discussed function, this study focuses more on types and how the speaker and listener interpret the dialogue. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by examining the discourse markers used by learners in conversation classes and how they can help them make their speech more understandable in speaking classes.

The study's objective is to investigate the types of discourse markers employed by the learners in classroom interaction and how the speakers assist them in making their discussion understandable, which is in line with the problem described above.

Research Methodology

The descriptive qualitative method is applied for this study. The author employs this qualitative research and uses observation to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the types of discourse markers and how speakers facilitate their understanding. In conducting this research, the second-semester speaking class is presented as the data source for this study data source. The author selects three groups from a total of ten groups, whose topics are "*How to deal with bullying*," "*Love is blind*," and "*Celebrating the New Year*." This observation is obtained from a video conversation that they submitted to Google Classroom. The data collection is taken either from group discussions. In this study, the writer chooses data recording as an instrument to collect the data. These are some steps as follows (1) Collecting the video conversation one by one, (2) Selecting the relevant data relating to the study, (3) Listening to the group conversation from start to finish, (4) Transcribing the group conversation into

notes, (5) Highlighting the DM's word or phrases analyzed. The steps of data analysis are to (1) Classifying the various types of DMs that appeared in the conversation, (2) Categorizing the DMs markers used by the speakers using (Douglas Biber, 1999; Hasniar, 2017 ;Nurul & Amrin, 2021) theory, (3) Analyzing the DMs whether they assist the speakers to make their talk understandable.

Results Analysis and Discussion

The example of data analysis presented in this segment reveals that discourse markers are employed by the learners in speaking. The situation is first speaker is shown here introducing the topic of "*How to encounter bullying*" to his friends by providing a brief definition of bullying. He then requests his friends' thoughts on the issue. Then, one by one, each of his friends responded to his questions with their statement.

Various types of discourse markers are identified. It is shown from the first speaker starts the dialogue by explaining the definition of bullying. He uses the phrase "*First of all let me give you a brief overview of the topic.*" The phrase "**First of all**" is regarded as DMs because it expresses the speaker's understanding of the connection between two discourse units. This expression is useful for him because he wants to connect the previous speech to the next idea. In other words, he employs the linking adverbial enumeration to signal the ongoing conversation which leads to the explanation that the act of bullying is the activity of repeated aggressive behavior intended to hurt people.

Then he is keen to hear his friends' reactions to bullying by calling them "**Guys?**" to denote their calling to him. This phrase can be called the addressee which is frequently referred to through vocatives type of discourse, which is not syntactically or semantically included in the argument. It can be used as a "stand-alone" non-causal unit, with or without inserts. After that, the second listener directly answers to the prior statement by stating her agreement phrase "**I couldn't agree more with what you just said**" This is classified as a response from discourse because it expresses an insert that is timed to a previous statement made by another speaker. She agrees that victims of bullying may carry that emotional scar for the rest of their lives even if there is no physical contact between the abuser and victim. Furthermore, the other listener coincides with the idea by saying "**Yes, Vindy that is true**" which triggers a story in which she is reminded of a situation involving a friend of hers named Maya from her time in high school. Although the answers to inquiries are often yes or no, the speakers use slightly longer phrases in this situation, and both of these response forms show a positive response. Additionally, the name "**Vindy**" goes the same as "**Guys**" which helps make it clear to the audience that they are being addressed.

Thus, it is implied that discourse markers are beneficial in assisting the speaker deliver the message to the audience. Furthermore, they also enable the listeners to fully understand the dialogue about the circumstances. It is clear from the way the listener answers the speaker in a manner that is

suitable for the topic given, which in this case is the question regarding bullying. They respond by either sharing their thoughts or personal experiences. These markers function as a pointer to sequential discourse and are intended to demonstrate the relationship between the speaker, the listener, and the message.

Discussion

The analysis shows that the students in STBA LIA's second semester speaking class used the ten various types of discourse markers in accordance with (Douglas Biber, 1999; Hasniar, 2017; Nurul & Amrin, 2021) theory.

Table

No	Types of DMs	Data	Total
1	Interjection	2, 14, 15, 16, 19, 26, 28	7
2	Greeting and Farewell	10, 30	2
3	Linking adverbial	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,12,13,16,17,20,23,25	18
4	Stance adverbial	1,3,7,9,10,18, 19,20,26,28,30	11
5	Vocatives	1,8,10,21,22,23,26	7
6	Response Elicitors	4,5,10,12,15,16,24	7
7	Response forms	1,4,7,11,12,13,15,18,22,24,27,28,29,30	14
8	Hesitators	3,16,17,18,19,21,24,25	8
9	Various polite speech-act formulae	2,10,13,14,15,18,21,22,23,26	11
10	Expletives	1	1
			86

Table 1. The use of discourse markers

Chart

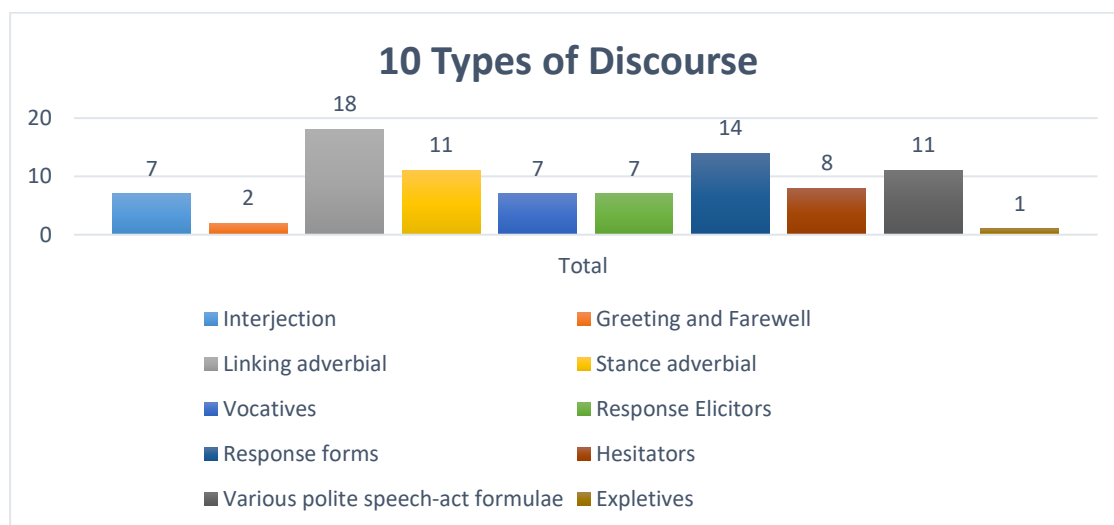


Chart 1. The use of discourse markers

From the data that has been analyzed, the result shows that According to the classification of the types of discourse markers above, there are ten types of discourse markers employed by the learners of STBA LIA in classroom interaction. Of the ten types of DMs, the most discourse is employed by the learners are linking adverbial because almost all the phrases or expressions need the connector in spoken English such as “**well**”, “**First**” “**Therefore**”, “**moreover**”, and on as it can be used naturally to combine and expand more complex words into sounds. Although DMs are groups of words that are employed in expressions without changing their true meaning, as Fraser (1999) stated in Lubis (2020), DMs are useful markers that remark on the next utterance. They reveal the path of utterance and explain how the speaker expects the basic message to relate to the prior discourse.

The DMs that are chosen by the learners are meaningful in the classroom interaction because it is shown from the data that the listeners understand the messages that are given by the speaker. They employ DMs as a pointer, which can assist the speaker link and organizing their thoughts. Every type of discourse marker that is employed by the learner is highly beneficial in helping the speaker communicate his/her thought to the listeners and helpful in assisting the listener to comprehend the talk.

Conclusion

The present discussion of the study confirms that there are ten types of discourse markers employed by the 2nd semester of STBA LIA learners, which are interjections; 7 data, greeting and farewell expressions; 2 data, linking adverbials; 18 data, stance adverbials; 11 data, vocatives; 7 data, response elicitors; 7 data, response forms; 14 data, hesitator; 8 data, various polite speech-act formulates; 11 data, and expletives; 1 data by using the book Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written by (Douglas Biber Biber, 1999; Hasniar, 2017; Nurul & Amrin, 2021). The linking adverbial is the most common discourse marker that is often employed by learners because it functions as a pointer, which can assist the speaker connect and organize what they say.

It is shown by the data analyzed that every type of DM that is chosen by learners is beneficial in helping the speaker communicate their thoughts to the listeners and helpful in assisting the listener to comprehend the talk. It can also be concluded that DMs have two main purposes: firstly, to signal a change in the conversation's ongoing direction; and secondly, to indicate an interactive relationship between the speaker, hearer, and the messages. Therefore, it is proven by Brown (2005) that discourse analysis focuses on how the speakers use the language and how listeners understand it in verbal communication in the classroom.

Suggestion

Finally, the author hopes that this study is valuable for future research. Although the author concentrates on 10 types of DMs, the author hopes that there are other aspects of the growth of this study that can be further examined, primarily for linguistic students. To improve one's knowledge of discourse markers as well as all types of discourse analysis, it is valuable for future researchers to conduct a comparative analysis of spoken or written English. This could come from a speech, presentation, movie, talk show, argument, literature, and more.

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