

# The Use of Discourse Markers among Form Four SLL Students in Essay Writing

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## Abstract

This paper investigates the use of discourse markers among Form Four second language learner (SLL) students in essay writing. The objectives of this study are to discover how Form Four SLL students use discourse markers in their essay writing and to identify the teachers' perception about the usage of discourse markers among students. 30 intermediate semi urban school students were chosen where all of the student's essays writing were analyzed. The researchers analyzed the use of discourse markers in each paper and stated the usage of discourse marker under its own theme. Then, an interview was conducted with four English teachers who taught those students and it was transcribed before being analyzed. The result involved three categories of discourse markers in terms of misused, overused and advanced used.

**Keywords:** discourse markers, intermediate, essay writing

## 1. Introduction

Improving writing competency has always been the goal in education which is used in everyday social situation and one must stretch his or her mind within this complex intellectual activity (Sanford, 2012). According to Siniajeva (2005), writing involves uncommon situation as it needs to be inferred from the text but without considering readers' correct schemata, it might hinder the communication. Chow (2007) viewed writing as an essential learning tool as it helps students to comprehend the ideas and concepts better. According to University of Westminster (n.d), writing does not have usual extension as learning speaking as it required an organized instruction and practice. As mention by this University, writing is not only concerning about speech written down on paper but it is also the expression of ideas and meaning on the page which is relied by the writers.

Based on Rhetorical Structure Theory, it also concentrating on the relation that joining between parts of text in the text organization (Taboada & Mann, 2006). In addition, these researchers also stated that besides than supporting the text organization and coherence theory, Rhetorical Structure Theory also supported coherence by suggesting a hierarchical, related organization of text, where every text has its role, a function with other parts of the text. Discourse markers indeed provide all of above elements as viewed as Sanford (2012), it consists of the meaning of the sentences as well as communicative competence expressions and realistic message efficiency. In addition, discourse markers are also crucial in helping both reader and writer to understand better and as a support for comprehension of text (Z. Eslami & A. Eslami, 2007). This is also aligned with Dergisi' (2010) idea, where he stated that a good writing is not only about grammar, but it is also about coherence and cohesive as well. This researcher also added that particularly in English writing teaching, discourse markers should be focused on instead of being ignored.

According to Al-Kohlani (2010), the scarcity of competency in using discourse markers indeed affects the coherence in writing especially in advanced level while Devi (2012) stated that both macro and micro coherence in a text implied by coherence markers. In relation with coherence, Crane (2006) stated that coherence relates the semantic ties which involving dependent link between items that combining the meaning. It helps to group sentences into paragraphs, and paragraphs into sections forming a hierarchical structure to the text as viewed by Devi (2012), that the coherence relations combine different part or unit of text and develop a structure view of the text. Al-Kohlani (2010) asserted that besides than providing the cohesion in connecting-words in the text, discourse markers are also an important tool in gaining communication in the text. However, Jucker and Ziv (1998) stated that discourse markers are lack of semantic content as well as syntactic and phonological

characteristics while Schiffirin (1987) added that markers having no meaning or vague meaning (as cited in Muller, 2005).

Based on the previous study made by Hamzah and Karuppiah (2010) regarding the coherence in writing among English Second Language learners in UTM, Malaysia, they found that students indeed faced problems in coherence when it comes about writing which can be improved in many ways. These researchers also added that ESL learnerd focused entirely on sentence and word level rather than the textual coherence although coherence is crucial in essay writing.

Based on Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah or KBSM in Malaysia, communicative language teaching or CLT has been included in Malaysian secondary schools to enhance English proficiency in classroom communications (Raissi et al., 2013). According to Raissi et al. (2013), CLT motivates students to communicate with each other in classroom context in a second language. These theorists added that CLT focuses on students' real life needs and developing their communication. CLT is an approach that views language as a social tool where speakers communicated with someone for some purpose either orally or in writing (Berns, 1990 as cited in Sreehari, 2012). In Form Four textbook, there are many types of communicative activities have been included to encourage secondary students to participate in communicative interaction and it involves the usage of discourse markers as well. (English Textbook Form Four, 2002) By rights, the students who have already exposed with this kind of approach should be able to include the use of discourse markers in their speaking and writing.

Form Four students are chosen since they are considered as skillful learners. As skillful learners, they are supposed to know on how to use the discourse markers effectively in essay writing and moreover, with the new implementation of CLT in their textbook syllabus, supposedly they use discourse markers when they speak or write in doing the activities inside their classroom but whether they use it or not is also a question here. Discourse markers have been taught in their primary school as well as secondary school for many years, but how the students apply the use of discourse markers when writing needed to be investigated.

Hence, the purpose of this research is to investigate the use of discourse markers among Form Four students in essay writing. Henceforth, the objectives of this research are to discover how Form Four students use discourse markers in their essay writing. In addition, this research is also made to identify the teachers' perception about the usage of discourse markers among students.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Second Language Learner and Discourse Markers*

Second language learners (SLL) are those who used another language besides than their own mother tongue. In Malaysia context, normally SLL use English as their second language which become more prominent day by day as English is mainly known as the world language. Writing is seen as a discouraging task due to its difficulty for SLL as written symbols can not be memorized when it comes about writing (Yunus et al., 2012). Based on Ali and Yunus (2004) previous research which was conducted in one of the universities in Malaysia, it was concluded that nearly half of SLL respondents perceived writing as more difficult than speaking skills and students expected higher in their ESL writing course. In the future research, as English is SLL non native language, more knowledge and skill about English should be learned for them to become more skillful and the use of discourse markers in essay writing is one of the skills that is important for them to develop their skills in writing.

### *2.2 Discourse Markers in Malaysian Curriculum Specification*

In Curriculum Specifications for English Form Four (Ministry of Education, 2003), the syllabus only involves some types of discourse markers such as conjunctions (either...or, neither...nor, although, however), logical connectors (however) and sequence connectors (later) to be learned by the students during the lesson. However, the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the English syllabus has exposed the variety of discourse markers in relation to Ministry of Education Curriculum Specification. There are many activities in the textbook or during the lesson that involve CLT approach which influence the students to communicate a lot among themselves (English Textbook Form Four, 2002). This also helps to introduce discourse markers along with the activities that they need to do in order to achieve good communication with one another. For example, activities in Form Four English Textbook (2002) involve active communication such as group discussion, dialogue and etcetera where the students need to use appropriate language and in a correct manner that are needed to manage a conversation. The textbook also has acknowledged some discourse markers that are appropriate in its correct usage to be implemented by the students. Thus, students whom are already been

exposed to CLT approach in Malaysia's school context supposedly know about the usage of discourse markers which not only important for the spoken skill, but also for the written skill as well.

### 2.3 The Varieties Function of Discourse Markers

Discourse markers have a lot of functions and below these are only some of the functions which are commonly used:

- **Coordinating Conjunction;** for example for, but and so.
- **Subordinating Conjunction;** for example as, in order that and since.
- **Connectors;** for example however, therefore and in the other hand.
- **Phrase Linkers;** for example due to.
- **Focusing and linking;** for example for reference to, regarding and as for.
- **Contrasts;** for example however, in contrast and conversely.
- **Similarity;** for example similarly, in the same way and likewise.
- **Change of subject;** for example right, incidentally and by the way.
- **Structuring;** for example first of all, finally and to begin with.
- **Adding;** for example moreover, in addition and furthermore.
- **Generalizing;** for example in general, apart from and broadly speaking.
- **Exemplification;** for example in particular, for instance and such as.
- **Logical Consequence;** for example thus, hence and accordingly.
- **Making things clear;** for example actually, in other word and in my opinion.
- **Referring to the other person's expectations;** for example actually, in fact and well.
- **Summing up;** for example to summing up, in conclusion and briefly.

(Fraser, 1993 as cited in Siniajeva, 2005).

### 2.4 The Benefit of Discourse Markers in Student's Essay Writing

Discourse markers provide the unity of texture in someone's writing which in the other word; it produces coherence in linking what someone wants to express. Coherence comes from the Latin word "cohaerere" (co = together, haerere = to stick) (Corbett, 1987 as cited in Dulger, 2007). With coherence, it will provide the flow of information which link from one idea to another idea. According to Halliday and Hassan (1977), cohesion occurs when the interpretation between some elements in the discourse is dependent with another. By providing a good flow of ideas, there will be less interruption for the reader to understand what the writer tries to conveyed, hence this will create a good quality of writing. Discourse markers also been perceives as indicator where it has a feature of conversational speech and it helps to assist the flow of speech. As CLT approach has been implemented in Malaysian Education recently, the students should have been exposed on how to incorporate discourse markers during the lesson and they should be able to apply the use of discourse markers in both spoken and written as well.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Selection of Respondents

The target population of this study was Form Four SLL students in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Hulu Kelang (semi urban school) who were considered as skillful learners. This research generally involved the selection of 30 intermediate proficiency level students in the school chosen which around three classes in every form but only one class in Form Four was chosen. All of the 30 students' essays writing were analyzed and four English teachers were interviewed to ask their opinion regarding certain matter about discourse markers. In this research, the researchers used purposive and cluster sampling.

- Cluster sampling- Due to the unavailability of finding the list name, the researchers used cluster sampling by regarding each class in SMK Hulu Kelang as clustered where all of the individuals had the probability to be chosen as samples. The total population of Form Four students in SMK Hulu Kelang is about 150 students but the researchers chose only 30 students which study in one particular class. The reason in choosing only 30 students is because they had engaged in the CLT process and they had experiences more in English course compared to Form 1, 2 and 3 students.

- Purposive sampling- because all of the 30 students were from Form Four class and they were purposively chosen to meet with the objective of this research by the researchers since they shared similar characteristics; second language learners and similar intermediate proficiency levels. Four English teachers were chosen as the respondents for the interview as they personally taught in that particular school.

### 3.2 Research Design

This was a qualitative research design which focused on observation and interview. The researchers had a permission to conduct this research from the principal of the school. Then, the researchers asked the cooperation from the English teacher of the particular classroom to ask the students to write an essay and collected it. First, all of the 30 essays were read thoroughly one by one. As it was read thoroughly, all of the discourse markers were marked using different coloured pens. Each colour represented the function of discourse marker that the students had included in their writing. For example, red pen represented for addition, the pink pen represented for contrast, purple pen represented for change of subject and green pen represented for condition. The types, the functions, the frequencies and the examples of discourse markers used in each respondent's essay were analyzed. All of the results were elaborated under its own theme.

Secondly, the recorded interview was transcribed and the teachers' answers were analyzed to get extra information about their opinion regarding discourse markers based on their teaching experience. This extra information could help the researchers to have some conclusion about the usage of discourse markers.

## 4. Results and Findings

Based on the analysis that had been carry out, it revealed that although the students are intermediate level student and can be consider as a skillful leaner, they also made several mistakes in their essays which had been explained further in this section. These were the results of the observation and analysis of data from the students' essays.

### 4.1 Analysis of Observation

#### 4.1.1 Misuse of Discourse Markers

Based on the respondent's essays, there were quite a number of them who misused the function of discourse markers in their essays. For example as in third respondent's essay:

***But**, when I started tuition with her, she was not scolding me at all but she explained to me that I should not do that **when** I make many problems for her. Because of her patient, I started to become a student **which** is quite discipline in doing anything.*

The use of "but" at the beginning of the sentence is not suitable as it has been repeated at the middle of the sentence. Moreover, "but" is not suitable to be placed at a beginning of a sentence as "but" is used as a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses. "However" is more suitable because it also represents contrast. The discourse marker "when" is not suitable to be used in that position and sentence, as it seems that "when" does not represents any time or condition relationship within that sentence. In contrast, "because" is more suitable to be used in that sentence as it represents reason relationship. The third one, "which" is not suitable when we are talking about a person or someone, but "who" is more suitable as it is a relative pronoun to replace noun such as people. For example:

***However**, when I started tuition with her, she was not scolding me at all but she explained to me that I should not do that **because** I make many problems for her. Because of her patient, I started to become a student **who** is quite discipline in doing anything.*

Another example is in respondent number 26 essay:

***Dato Nicole** is also good in her studies, she scored seven A's for her PMR and **so as** her SPM. Her first national level victory was also in 1990 at the Milo-Dunlop Sport National Junior Championship **when as** she won silver in the under 16 category...**Later that**, she won the Women's World Junior Squash Competition in Belgium.*

This respondent misuses the discourse markers "so", "as", "when", "later" and "that" which signal different relationship towards each other. For example "so" indicates result or consequence, "as" indicates reason or cause, "when" and "later" indicates time, and "that" indicates description or identification. In the respondent content, "so as", "when as" and "later that" are used wrongly to express her meaning. Indeed, "so as" should be replaced with "as well as" as it shows similarity, "when as" should be replaced with only "when" as it shows time, and "later that" should be replaced with only "later" as it also shows duration of time. For example:

Dato Nicole is also good in her studies, she scored seven A's for her PMR and as well as her SPM. Her first national level victory was also in 1990 at the Milo-Dunlop Sport National Junior Championship when she won silver in the under 16 category...Later, she won the Women's World Junior Squash Competition in Belgium.

Another example is in fifth respondent's essay:

Her personal qualities are she is a kind girl and smart. She is a fashion designer, actress and artist. She has a clothes-line of Abbey Dawn. And the big company of Abbey Dawn is in Japan...she was a cool and hot but has brain. Very pretty girl and cute...When I grow up I want to try to be a fashion designer and try my line clothes like her. And try something new in my life but not too much.

When the researchers analyzed her essay, the researchers noticed that the respondent did apply the use of discourse markers but most of it was in a wrong position. She always uses "and" at the beginning of her sentence in inappropriate way. This is because "and" is not suitable to be placed at a beginning of a sentence as "and" is used as a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses. The discourse marker "but" in the sentence "she was a cool and hot but has brain" is also wrongly used. "But" indicates contrast or concession relationship, however in the sentence, it is not appropriately used as it does not show any contrast in her statement. She should apply more appropriate discourse markers to make her sentences make sense, for example:

Her personal qualities are she is a kind girl and smart. She is a fashion designer, actress and artist. She has a clothes-line of Abbey Dawn which the big company is in Japan...she was cool and hot as well as has brain. Moreover, she is a very pretty girl and cute...When I grow up I want to try to be a fashion designer and try my line clothes like her. In addition, I also want to try something new in my life but not too much thing.

Another example is as in ninth respondent's essay:

I also get their news from koreoboo.com, allkpop.com, scompi.com and neither. I have known them for 3 years ago until now...As an idol, they are not arrogant at all. In the other way, they are really nice and supporting.

There are two mistakes in her sentences. The first one, "and neither" is not an appropriate combination as "neither" signals negative meaning such as "not this one nor the other or not this nor that." In her context, the use of "neither" does not support her earlier statement when she gives the examples in her sentence. The second mistake is "in the other way" which is wrongly used to support the earlier statement about the idol. "In the other way" also is inappropriately used as it has no connection which the previous sentence, "As an idol they are not arrogant at all. In the other way, they are really nice and supporting." The discourse marker "as" or "because" is best replaced it as it signals reason or cause. This is one example that could help to make her sentences better, for example:

I also get their news from koreoboo.com, allkpop.com, scompi.com and other websites as well. I have known them for 3 years ago until now...As an idol, they are not arrogant at all because they are really nice and supporting.

#### 4.1.2 Overused of Discourse Markers

There were also some students who overused the discourse markers in their essay, for example in fourth respondent's essay:

By the way, the guitarist is Synister Gates and Zacky Vengeance. By the way, the bassist is Johnny Christ. The vocalist is M.Shadow, by the way the drummer is Jimmy Sullivan...

The respondent's essay has no variety as he keeps repeating the same discourse marker over and over again just to ensure that his sentence is longer and extent. The overuse of "by the way" is too much and unnecessarily as it distracts the reader in focusing into his content. The sentences should be more appropriate for example:

The guitarist is Synister Gates and Zacky Vengeance while the bassist is Johnny Christ. The vocalist is M.Shadow, whereas the drummer is Jimmy Sullivan...

Another example is in respondent number 12 essay:

Torres is a football player for Spain and play for the premier league and for club name Chelsea. He is very discipline and cheerful player...He ran fast and strike the ball with his right leg and score goal.

In the respondent's essay, there is lack of variety in the usage of discourse markers as he also keeps repeating the same discourse markers over and over again. The respondent use too much "and" at one time until sometimes he joins two or three "and" in one sentence which make it inappropriate and unnecessarily in his essay. However, to make his content better, he should add another discourse marker, for example:

Torres is a football player for Spain and play for the premier league as well as for club name Chelsea. He is very

*discipline and cheerful player...He ran fast **and** struck the ball with his right leg. **At last**, he managed to score goal for his team.*

Another example is as in respondent number 18 essay:

*I only want to study for all my subjects in Form 4. I also try to imagine **that** in my SPM I got straight A, my feeling is so high. I make a schedule for myself **that** everyday to follow my schedule **that** want always study to forget my activity **that** I like most. **After that**, I really success in my SPM.*

Similarly, this respondent's essay is also lack of variety in the usage of discourse markers. The repetition of "that" is overused until it distracts the reader than continue reading. The sentence is too long; supposedly the reader should break it by adding more appropriate discourse markers, for example:

*I only want to study for all my subjects in Form 4. I also try to imagine **that** I got straight A's in my SPM. **Hence**, I will make a schedule for myself **so that** I can follow my schedule everyday. **In addition**, I always want to study to forget my activity **that** I like the most **so that** I will gain success in my SPM.*

The last example is as in respondent 21 essay:

*The Christian siege about 1 month **and** 2 weeks to take control **and** defeat the Islam warrior. **And so on**, the knight of the Christ across the Jerusalem **and** take over the other city...In the name of Jihad, Islam army wins the battle **and** takes over the city over a year **and so on**.*

When the researchers analyzed this essay, the researchers found that the respondent rarely used different discourse markers in his essays because the discourse markers that he used were almost the same and lacked of variety. The discourse marker "and" was used about two times in one single sentence and when the researchers read his essay, the discourse marker "and" was too many and overused in some sentences. It is true that discourse markers can extend our sentences, but overused of it can make the sentences appear awkward or inappropriate. The above sentences should be like this:

*The Christian siege about 1 month **and** 2 weeks **as** they want to take control **and** defeat the Islam warrior. **Thus**, the knight of the Christ across the Jerusalem **and** take over the other city...**At last**, in the name of Jihad, Islam army wins the battle **and** takes over the city over a year.*

#### 4.1.3 Advanced Use of Discourse Markers

There were also some advanced students who applied some advanced discourse markers in their essay. For example in the third respondent's essay:

***Besides that**, I will also think about the effect before I do anything. This is one of the way how she inspired me.....**But**, she is very clever and hardworking student **even though** we are only in Form one.*

In his essay, "besides that" is used to add on his idea in the sentence while "even though" is used to represent concession or result of his earlier statement. According to this respondent, he learned those advanced discourse markers when he interacted with people around him which been applied later in his writing.

Another example is in respondent number 18 essay:

*His characteristic has guides him to carry out a big international project that is included many famous person. **Moreover**, he is the person who suggests to build the famous KLCC, KLIA and Multimedia Super Corridor. **Besides that**, he is also a kind person that always helps those who suffer in their life.....*

The use of "moreover" and "besides that" show that this respondent uses some advanced discourse markers although it is not in his level. "Moreover" and "besides that" is used to indicate the addition in his content to extend his sentences. This respondent also learned those advanced discourse markers when he interacted in his daily conversation where he adapted it by learning and understanding the function of discourse markers stated above.

Another example is as in respondent number 25 essay:

*Have you ever thought about who you admire? Well, I certainly have. **Indeed**, everyone have their hero and heroin in their heart. The famous person I admire the most is football player Christiano Ronaldo.*

The use of discourse marker "indeed" shows that the respondent uses advanced discourse marker in his essay. He uses "indeed" to emphasis about his statement regarding the person that he admires as well as to emphasis his earlier statement. This respondent learned the discourse markers by watching television, where he made it into practice in his learning process. He already knew its function, so he just applied it in his essay writing.

Another example is as in respondent number 27 essay:

*He was so intelligent that he scored 1590 out of 1600 on his SATS and **subsequently** enrolled in Harvard College in 1973. **However**, he decided to leave the college after 2 years of study to start his own business...he wrote Altair Basic programmes, completed Microsoft which is indispensable for every PC now. **Moreover**, he was one of the richest people with an asset of \$59 billion in 2007.*

The respondent uses three advanced discourse markers in her essay which are “subsequently”, “however” and “moreover”. Impressively, she incorporates all of the advanced discourse markers in appropriate and correct usage that suit with her sentences. For example “subsequently” which is also known as later or afterward is used to show time relationship, “however” is used to show contrast to her previous statement while “moreover” is used to add and also support the previous statement in the same sentences. According to this respondent, she learned it during her tuition classes as well through her family as they spoke English language at home besides than Chinese language. In her tuition classes, the tuition teacher gave a lot of exercises and in one of her exercises was to write an essay, so her tuition teacher helped her a lot in building ideas as well as sentences.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Interview

The selected respondents for interview section was four English teachers who had more than 10 years of experiences in teaching English, age from 35-45 years, and the gender was one male and three females.

##### 4.2.1 The Implementation of Discourse Markers by the Teachers

Based on question number one, it was true that the teacher taught discourse markers to the students, but it was different between all of the teachers. For example, the first interviewee viewed discourse markers as a good indicator in coherence perception as aligned with what this research wanted to observe.

*Discourse markers are good indicators of how a student can write and express his ideas and thoughts in a logical and coherent manner.*

However, the second and third interviewees viewed it more as a part of grammar lesson as in below respectively:

*The usage is very important especially in essay writing. Students are able to write compound and complex sentences thus it varies overall sentence structures in their essay. This will help students score better.*

*It is important for the students to know how to use it correctly. It is also included in the English syllabus.*

Meanwhile, the fourth interviewee’s answer is a little bit shocking for a teacher who had already ten years of experiences in teaching as he viewed it in a negative way as in below:

*I think discourse markers should not be taught formally to students. Furthermore, it is not part of the syllabus requirement.*

##### 4.2.2 The Frequency of Discourse Markers Usage in Students’ Essay Writing

Based on question number two, although the first interviewee stated that most of the students can use discourse markers effectively, but what the researchers had found and analyzed proved the other way around. There were still many of the students made mistakes, and did not use discourse markers effectively in their essay writing:

*Occasionally, but the majority can use these markers effectively.*

The second interviewee stated that it depended on the student’s proficiency where the better students used discourse markers throughout their writing while the weaker students used them occasionally.

*It depends on the students’ proficiency. Good students naturally use discourse markers throughout their writing. Weak students use occasionally.*

Meanwhile, based on the fourth interviewee’s answer, he admitted that his students rarely used discourse markers in their essay writing. Apparently, the researchers found that this interviewee’s characteristic itself hinder the students’ usage of discourse markers as he is an examination-oriented type teacher.

*My students rarely used discourse markers because most of the time they are just writing.*

##### 4.2.3 The Functions of Discourse Markers from Teachers’ Perception

As in first interviewee’s answer:

*Indirectly in the process of writing to indicate sequence or order of the plot or story they are producing.*

Based on question number three, the first interviewee use it for coherence purpose although it is informal way, while the second interviewee integrated it more as part of grammar lesson in the class.

As in second respondent’s answer:

*Explain what are discourse markers are. Give a lot of examples of compound sentences. Asks the students to join sentences using conjunction or sentence connectors. Students identify discourse markers used in a passage.*

In terms of grammatical aspect, this could also be seen in second interviewee's answer based on question number four, where she incorporated discourse markers as one of the topics in grammar lesson. She viewed discourse markers as part of grammar, instead of incorporating it together in cohesive manner. She did not look out from the box, as theoretically discourse markers do not function only as conjunctions or connectors, but it has variety of functions as well like what the researchers have included in this research.

*Yes, discourse markers are taught as one of the topics in the grammar lesson, students do not have to memorize what discourse markers are but should be able to use them effectively in their writing.*

Besides that, the third interviewee also supported this view as she also incorporated discourse markers in grammatical purpose. This is view can be seen as below:

*By filling in the blank with the correct discourse markers. The students also use it by constructing sentence using discourse markers*

However, the fourth interviewee let the students independently learned it informally by their own which can be seen in his answer for questions number three and four respectively.

*I only teach conjunction. Most of the time students picked up discourse markers on their own either through movies or daily conversation.*

*I do not think the students even need to have adequate knowledge about discourse markers at their level.*

The fourth interviewee had a totally different opinion than other respondents. He said that the students not need to learn discourse markers in depth because it was not really important for their school level. In addition, he said that everything was about examination-oriented based only and discourse markers were rarely used in writing. Based on the researchers personal observation, this interviewee is really examination-oriented teacher and basically, most of his lesson only is done to achieve the examination-oriented goal so that is just the way he taught his students until now. He focused more on what the students needed to achieve during the examination rather than let the students learned out of the context. His previous class students also said that he had never taught them about discourse markers although they had been taught by him almost two years.

#### 4.2.4 The Teachers' View about the Students' Knowledge regarding Discourse Markers

Based on question number four, the first interviewee agreed that some of the students preferred not to use discourse markers sometimes because they were not sure of the correct usage of it. This is true because when the researchers observed their paper, there were some students who repeatedly used the same discourse markers over and over again in most of their paragraph. Most of their paragraphs were lack of variety and the used of discourse markers were redundant. However based on question number five, this interviewee thought that the students already had enough knowledge about discourse markers and they only needed to write more in order to incorporate it in their writing.

*I believe they do but some prefer not to use these as at time, they are little unsure of the correct usage.*

*Yes, I believe so since students need only to write more in order to learn the usage of discourse markers in their writing.*

In addition, based on question number four, the third interviewee agreed that the students should be able to use it correctly in their writing but based on her answer in question number five, she declared that the students did not or seldom implement discourse markers in their daily conversation.

*They should be able to use them correctly since they have learnt them since primary school. it means they should have adequate knowledge about it.*

*Yes, but unfortunately the students don't really or seldom use them in their daily conversation.*

Although all of the interviewees agreed that the students had already enough knowledge about discourse markers, but based on the analysis, the students did not really have adequate knowledge in using discourse markers. They only concerned about how to present their sentences, without emphasized on the coherence and the message that they wanted to deliver to their reader. Some of the students wrote everything in their mind and tried to combine the sentences so that it would make sense, but their overall essay was lacked of coherence and the usage of discourse markers did not appear effectively.

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

For the conclusion, when the researchers analyzed the use of discourse markers in secondary school students' essay writing, they had identified something about the use of discourse markers such as the misused, the overused and also the advanced used of it. This is not a problem that should be underestimated, but it is a problem that should be taken care of. In writing, it is true that almost everyone can write about anything, but there is not so many people can write about something. The writer's interpretation and the reader's understanding are different as it depends on how certain individual comprehend it, so it is very crucial for writers to ensure that their message is delivered appropriately to the receiver.

Truthfully, when the researchers interviewed the teachers, all of the interviewees seemed clueless and had no idea what discourse markers is all about. It can be seen that some of the teachers also lacked of knowledge about discourse markers and not only the students. If the teacher themselves were lacked of knowledge about discourse markers, how can discourse markers effectively been applied by their students? Even some of the teachers themselves agreed that they were not focusing too much on the discourse markers in the classroom so there was not enough exposure to make the students had a better understanding on how to incorporate the use of discourse markers in their essay. As the researchers had already mention in the previous chapter, discourse markers is not only important in joining words, sentences or paragraph, but it is also indispensable for the coherent of the whole essay. A writer writes because they have their own purpose, but without cohesion, it will be difficult to for the reader to understand the purpose that the writer tried to deliver.

Writing is not generally concerns only about grammar, but it is also about coherence. For example, some of the interviewees included discourse markers as part of grammar into the lesson. They only concerned about how discourse markers could help to join students' sentences and the sentences should be grammatically correct. This might be one of the reasons why there are still some students who do not know the correct usage of the application of discourse markers. Truthfully, discourse markers are not only bound as part of grammatical function only, but it has a variety of functions that are important to be learned by the students. Impressively, they are certain students use advanced discourse markers and indeed based on the observation, it helps to improve their writing better.

The result of the research showed that the misused and overused of discourse markers indeed affected the flow of the students' essay writing and makes it less coherent. Hence, discourse markers are obviously important in someone's writing and it should be emphasis in teaching and learning process. The students need not only to focus on grammatical or vocabulary meaning, but they also need to focus on the content and the objective of their writing as well.

## 6. Implication

Both teachers and students should focus and concentrate on the use of discourse markers to enhance more effective writing. The students need to be taught specifically about discourse markers in carrying out activities inside the class. They need not only be taught, but also need to be able to see the clear and the big picture of discourse markers. The teachers need to ensure that it is not only the students need to understand how to apply discourse markers as well as its vast usage, but the teachers also need to instill adequate knowledge about it before transmit it to their students as its role is not only to join sentences only. The teacher themselves, need not to avoid to teach discourse markers or expect the students to learn by themselves, but they need to pay more attention towards this as well when teaching writing to the students. Thus, by completing this research, the researchers hope that it could help the other researchers in exploring the usage of discourse markers as coherence provides good quality of writing and allow the writers' ideas to meet with the readers' understanding.

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