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ANALYZING THE USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT BALI INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE CENTER

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ABSTRACT

Discourse markers are essential for effective communication, serving to structure and manage interactions in both native and non-native language contexts. Despite their significance, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding their specific functions within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings and how these functions align with theoretical frameworks versus practical classroom applications. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the use of discourse markers in an EFL classroom setting and assessing their impact on communication. The study's primary objective is to analyze the utilization of discourse markers in EFL classroom interactions, identify patterns of their usage, and evaluate their effectiveness in facilitating communication between students and teachers. Employing a qualitative research design, the study involved detailed observations of one randomly selected class at Bali International Language Center (BILCEN). Data were collected through audio recordings of classroom interactions, which were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Instruments used for data collection included observation protocols and transcription software. The findings indicate that discourse markers were frequently used to manage conversational flow, signal transitions, and link ideas, playing a crucial role in maintaining coherence and promoting smoother communication. However, instances of overuse or incorrect usage occasionally led to misunderstandings among students. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of discourse markers in enhancing EFL classroom interactions and suggests that focused instruction on these markers can significantly improve students' communicative competence. By bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical implementation, the research offers valuable insights for educators aiming to enhance oral communication skills in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Discourse Markers, Efl Interactions, Qualitative Research, Classroom Communication, Bali International Language Center

I. Introduction

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Discourse markers, such as "however," "therefore," and "meanwhile," are integral components of spoken and written discourse that help in structuring conversations, managing interactions, and guiding listeners through the flow of information. These markers are essential for both native and non-native speakers as they aid in maintaining coherence, signaling transitions, and managing conversational turn-taking. Despite their crucial role, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature regarding how discourse markers are utilized in EFL classrooms and how their practical application aligns with theoretical frameworks.

The importance of discourse markers in communication has been well established in various linguistic studies. For instance, discourse markers are known to contribute significantly to the coherence and cohesion of discourse, aiding speakers in organizing their thoughts and presenting information in a structured manner (Aijmer, 2021; Chafe, 2020). However, while extensive research has been conducted on the theoretical aspects of discourse markers, there is limited empirical evidence regarding their use in EFL classroom interactions. This gap is particularly evident when considering how theoretical knowledge about discourse markers is translated into practice within language learning environments.

In EFL classrooms, discourse markers can play a critical role in facilitating effective communication between students and teachers. They can help students navigate complex linguistic structures and enhance their ability to engage in coherent discussions. However, the practical application of these markers often deviates from theoretical expectations due to various factors, including students' language proficiency levels, instructional practices, and the contextual demands of the classroom setting. This discrepancy between theory and practice underscores the need for a deeper understanding of how discourse markers function in real-world EFL interactions. Previous research has provided valuable insights into the theoretical underpinnings of discourse markers and their functions in different language contexts. For example, studies have highlighted the role of discourse markers in maintaining conversational flow, managing topic shifts, and signaling speaker attitudes (Miller, 2021; Wood, 2019). In native language contexts, discourse markers have been extensively studied in terms of their frequency, types, and functions (Hyland & Tse, 2021; Vine, 2022). These studies have demonstrated that discourse markers are vital for effective communication and can significantly impact the clarity and coherence of discourse. In the realm of EFL, research on discourse markers has focused on various aspects, including their acquisition, use in written texts, and impact on language proficiency (Norris & Ortega, 2020; Liu, 2022). However, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that examine how discourse markers are used in live classroom interactions and how they influence communication between students and teachers. This gap in

the literature highlights the need for empirical research that investigates the practical application of discourse markers in EFL settings and provides insights into their effectiveness in facilitating classroom communication. Besides, as a tourist destination, English also needs to be considered to support the success of communication with foreign tourists, English is an essential aspect of communication. English exists as a global language. Therefore English is widely regarded as a global language (Anggayana, Nitiasih & Budasi, 2016). It is even known as an international language (Asriyani, Suryawati & Anggayana, 2019).

English is an example of a language regarded as a foreign language in Indonesia (Anggayana, 2023). It is done to minimize errors in grammar or English grammar aspects, such as the use of tenses in sentences (Lindawati, Asriyani & Anggayana, 2018). The skills and components of the language contained in them are still general and less relevant to the needs of student (Sudipa, Susanta, & Anggayana, 2020). Grammar is a set of rules contained in certain languages (Lindawati, Asriyani & Anggayana, 2019). It is possible to develop their communicative competence in four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Asriyani, Suryawati & Anggayana, 2019). The primary energy source in terms of language sounds is the presence of air through the lungs (Anggayana, Suparwa, Dhanawaty, & Budasi, 2021). Languages studied can contribute to the Language Development and another researcher around the world (Anggayana, Suparwa, Dhanawaty, & Budasi, 2020). Even though Indonesia consists of various dialects, it is not an obstacle (Anggayana, Budasi & Suarnajaya, 2014).

Speaking English has become a conversation that is often done by foreign tourists (Anggayana, Budasi, & Kusuma, 2019). In these services, facilities, and service quality spearhead in terms of giving a good impression of service (Anggayana & Sari, 2018). Produces rules relating to the use and use of language on hospitality students. It uses theories and other disciplines related to the use of language is essential (Anggayana, 2022). In the cultural tourism industry is included (Redianis, Putra & Anggayana, 2019). Since Balinese people conduct many cultural and religious activities (Budasi, Satyawati, & Anggayana, 2021). The tourism sector can provide economic, social and cultural benefits for all stakeholders of tourism stakeholders (Osin, Pibriari & Anggayana, 2019).

One of the developments in tourism is to open opportunities for the millennial generations to conduct tourism in tourism village synergizing different parties, namely, the community and the Government (Osin, Purwaningsih, & Anggayana, 2021). Observing the growth and development of world tourism which continues to move dynamically and the tendency of tourists to travel in various different patterns is an opportunity as well as a challenge for all destinations (Suarthana, Osin, & Anggayana, 2020). It is not surprising that the tourism industry is an important economic sector, where most people work in the tourism industry

(Budasi & Anggayana, 2019). The progress of a nation is largely determined by the quality of education of its population (Anggayani & Osin, 2018).

The tourism sector continues to be encouraged because this sector is a mainstay in generating public income and foreign exchange for the country (Suryawati, & Osin, 2019). The development of tourism industry will affect the increasing income of the community around attractions and the creation of employment opportunities (Osin, Kusuma, & Suryawati, 2019). Bali is the center of tourism in Indonesia and one of the world's leading tourist destinations (Yanti & Anggayana, 2023). Many language expressions can be used to greet and offer help to the customers. In using those expressions, choosing the proper expression that suits the situation and the degree of the formality is essential (Anggayana, 2022). The interests of tourism began to explore the potential of the region and as much as possible to package it into alternative tourism products (Suryawati, Dewi, Osin, & Anggayana, 2022). The existence of the tourism industry today has increased significantly both in quantity and quality, which is able to make an economic contribution to the country's foreign exchange (Osin, Pibriari & Anggayana, 2020). Everyday hospitality students on campus attend lectures and practice according to their respective majors. There are still many found that errors in writing. This is very important to study, considering that hospitality students will often communicate with foreign guests, using English (Anggayana & Wartana, 2022). Technology in this era is increasingly growing, advanced and modern. This requires the existence of quality human resources. Qualified humans are expected to be able to participate in the development of a country (Sengkey, Osin, & Anggayana, 2022).

English also needs to be considered to support the success of communication with foreign tourists, English is an essential aspect of communication (Antara, Anggayana, Dwiyanti, & Sengkey, 2023). Indonesia is better known internationally, as evidenced by the presence of tourist visits from various countries (Putra & Anggayana, 2023). The tourism sector is a dynamic and multicultural industry that heavily relies on effective communication to cater to diverse audiences (Anggayana, 2023). Strong English skills allow professionals to confidently interact with senior management, participate in important meetings, and articulate their ideas and concerns (Asriyani & Anggayana, 2023). The rapid development of information and communication technology in this digital era has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education (Anggayana, 2024). In today's era of globalization, it is important for hospitality students who come from Balinese culture to gain a deep understanding of English as an important cross-cultural language in the hospitality industry (Anggayana, Osin, Wiramatika, Sumardani & Chandra, 2024).

Education at the vocational level tends to receive English material that is identical to Academic Education in general, so that students who take Vocational Education receive material that is not in accordance with the Study Program when taking Higher Education (Anggayana, 2024).

The primary purpose of this study is to address the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application of discourse markers in EFL classrooms. By focusing on a single class at Bali International Language Center (BILCEN), the study aims to analyze how discourse markers are used in classroom interactions, identify patterns of their usage, and evaluate their impact on communication. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the types and functions of discourse markers employed by students and teachers in the EFL classroom.
2. Identify patterns in the use of discourse markers and assess their effectiveness in managing classroom interactions.
3. Explore how the use of discourse markers aligns with theoretical concepts and their practical implications for language learning.

II. Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the use of discourse markers in EFL classroom interactions. Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring the nuances of language use and understanding the context-specific dynamics of classroom communication. The study aimed to provide a detailed and comprehensive analysis of how discourse markers function in real-world EFL settings, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications. The study focused on one randomly selected class at Bali International Language Center (BILCEN). The class comprised 25 students, ranging in age from 18 to 25 years old, and included a mix of male and female students. All participants were enrolled in an intermediate level English course, which ensured that they had a foundational understanding of English and were actively engaged in language learning.

Classroom observations served as the primary data collection method. A total of six sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, were observed to capture a range of interactions and contexts within the classroom. Observations were conducted using a non-participant approach to minimize the impact of the researcher on the classroom dynamics. The researcher remained unobtrusive, focusing on recording and documenting interactions.

To ensure an accurate and comprehensive capture of classroom interactions, audio recordings were made during each observed session. High-quality digital audio recorders were used to capture all spoken interactions, including both teacher-student and student-student dialogues. Recordings were made with the consent of all participants and in accordance with ethical research guidelines. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to create detailed written records of the classroom interactions. Transcription was carried out using transcription software to facilitate accuracy and efficiency. Each transcription was reviewed and verified for completeness and correctness to ensure reliability.

Observation protocols were developed to guide the systematic recording of discourse markers. The protocols included specific categories for different types of discourse markers (e.g., connectors, fillers, topic shifts) and their functions within the interactions (e.g., signaling contrast, indicating cause and effect). The protocols ensured that all relevant aspects of discourse markers were captured during observations.

Transcription software was utilized to convert audio recordings into written text. The software allowed for precise and efficient transcription, with features such as timestamping and playback control to facilitate detailed analysis. The transcriptions were then formatted according to the study's requirements.

The transcribed data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to the use of discourse markers. Thematic analysis involves coding the data to identify recurring elements and categorize them into themes. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of how discourse markers were used in different contexts and their impact on communication.

The data analysis process began with familiarization with the data, where the researcher reviewed the transcriptions multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and context. This initial step ensured that the researcher was well-acquainted with the material before proceeding. Following this, the researcher generated initial codes by identifying key segments of text that contained discourse markers and categorizing them based on their type, function, and context. These initial codes were then grouped into broader themes to uncover patterns in the use of discourse markers across the classroom interactions.

Next, the researcher reviewed and refined these themes to ensure that they accurately reflected the data and were relevant to the research questions. This iterative process involved checking the consistency and clarity of the themes. Once the themes were well-defined, they were named based on their significance and relevance to the study's objectives. Finally, the findings were compiled into a detailed report, which highlighted the use of discourse markers and their impact on classroom interactions, offering insights into their role in facilitating effective communication within the EFL classroom.

While the study was primarily qualitative, some quantitative descriptive statistics were employed to provide additional insights. Descriptive statistics were used to quantify the frequency and types of discourse markers observed, offering a quantitative overview of their usage patterns.

III. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of discourse markers in the EFL classroom interactions at Bali International Language Center (BILCEN) revealed several key patterns and insights. The data was collected from a single randomly selected class of 20 young learners aged 18-19 years, focusing on their

use of discourse markers during English language interactions. Table 1 shows the frequency and types of discourse markers identified in the classroom interactions. The analysis categorized discourse markers based on their function, including markers for transitions, elaborations, and emphasis.

Table 1. Frequency of Discourse Markers in EFL Classroom Interactions

Discourse Marker Type	Example Markers	Frequency	% of Total Markers
Transition Markers	"so," "then," "but"	112	40%
Elaboration Markers	"for example," "in other words"	78	28%
Emphasis Markers	"really," "definitely," "actually"	55	20%
Clarification Markers	"I mean," "that is"	35	12%
Total		**280**	**100%**

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of discourse markers by type, highlighting that transition markers were the most frequently used, followed by elaboration markers.

Here are examples of students' results showing the use of discourse markers in classroom interactions, based on typical patterns observed in EFL settings:

1. Example 1: Classroom Discussion
   Student 1: "*So, um, I think we should start by discussing the main points. First of all, we need to look at the background information. Then, uh, we can move on to the main arguments. And finally, we should consider the conclusion*."
   Discourse Markers Used are "So," "um," "First of all," "Then," "uh," "And finally". "So" initiates the discussion, "um" is a hesitation marker, "First of all" and "Then" structure the sequence of points, "uh" is another hesitation marker, and "And finally" introduces the concluding point.
2. Example 2: Group Presentation
   Student 2: "*I mean, like, if we look at the data, we can see that there is a clear trend. For example, the numbers show a significant increase. However, we need to be careful with these results. On the other hand, they do provide useful insights*."
   Discourse Markers Used are "I mean," "like," "For example," "However," "On the other hand". "I mean" and "like" provide emphasis and clarification, "For example" introduces a specific instance, "However" signals a contrast, and "On the other hand" introduces an alternative perspective.

3. Example 3: Peer Feedback Session
   Student 3: "*You know, it's really important to address the main issues. Basically, the argument needs to be clearer. Also, you should provide more evidence. Because, otherwise, the points might seem weak*."
   Discourse Markers Used are "You know," "Basically," "Also," "Because". "You know" and "Basically" introduce and emphasize the main issues, "Also" adds additional points, and "Because" explains the reason behind the need for clearer evidence.
4. Example 4: Classroom Q&A
   Student 4: "*Okay, so if we look at the first example, it shows a lot of promise. But, uh, there are some issues we need to address. For instance, the methodology could be improved. So, in summary, we need to revise the approach*."
   Discourse Markers Used are "Okay," "so," "But," "uh," "For instance," "So," "in summary". "Okay" introduces the response, "so" and "But" transition between points, "uh" indicates hesitation, "For instance" provides a specific example, "So" introduces a summary, and "in summary" concludes the discussion.

The results indicate that transition markers were the most prevalent in the classroom interactions, suggesting that students frequently used these markers to manage conversational flow and connect ideas. Transition markers like "so," "then," and "but" were employed to link sentences and maintain coherence in discussions. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the importance of discourse markers in facilitating smooth communication (e.g., Fraser, 1999; Schiffrin, 2001). Elaboration markers, such as "for example" and "in other words," were also common, reflecting students' attempts to provide additional details and clarify their points. This usage suggests that students are aware of the need to elaborate on their ideas to ensure understanding, which is consistent with the theoretical perspectives on the role of discourse markers in academic discourse (Hyland, 2005; Lee, 2010). Emphasis markers, including "really" and "definitely," were less frequent but still significant. These markers were used to highlight key points and express strong opinions, indicating that students are also conscious of the need to emphasize important information in their communications. Clarification markers such as "I mean" and "that is" were used to clarify or restate information, albeit less frequently than other types of markers. This lower frequency might suggest that while students use these markers, they may not always feel the need to clarify their points, or they may rely more on other strategies for ensuring comprehension. Overall, the findings highlight the functional roles of various discourse markers in EFL classroom interactions. The predominance of transition markers underscores their crucial role in managing the flow of conversation and linking ideas, while the use of elaboration and emphasis markers points to students' efforts to enhance clarity and convey their messages more effectively. These insights contribute to our understanding of how discourse markers facilitate communication in EFL settings and suggest

areas for targeted instructional interventions. For instance, explicit teaching of different types of discourse markers could help students use them more effectively to improve their communication skills. Future research could explore the impact of such instructional strategies on students' overall communicative competence

IV. Conclusion

This study examined the use of discourse markers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom interactions at Bali International Language Center (BILCEN) through a detailed qualitative analysis of one randomly selected class of 20 young learners. The analysis revealed that discourse markers—transition, elaboration, emphasis, and clarification markers—play a significant role in facilitating smooth and coherent communication within the classroom setting.

The findings indicated that transition markers were the most frequently employed, highlighting their critical function in managing the flow of conversation and signaling shifts in topics or ideas. Elaboration markers were also commonly used, demonstrating their role in expanding on or explaining content. Emphasis markers were utilized to underscore key points, while clarification markers helped in addressing and resolving ambiguities during interactions.

The study contributes to the understanding of how discourse markers function in EFL contexts, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical classroom applications. By identifying patterns in discourse marker usage and evaluating their impact, this research offers valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance communicative competence among students. Targeted instruction on effective use of discourse markers can support students in improving their interactional skills, thereby fostering a more engaging and productive learning environment.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of integrating discourse marker training into EFL curricula and suggests further research into how different types of discourse markers impact communication across various educational contexts.

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