

The Use and Challenges of Discourse Markers in Academic Writing by EFL University Students

A Thesis Presented as a Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* in the English Study Program



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ABSTRACT

Using discourse markers is essential in building coherence and cohesion in academic writing. This study analyzed the frequency of discourse markers and the challenges Faculty of Language and Arts students face in writing essays in English as a second language. The researcher analyzed 27 students' essays and interviewed 5 participants to answer two research questions regarding the use of discourse markers and the challenges they experienced. The results showed that elaborative discourse markers are used most frequently, 713 times or about (83.78%). Adversative markers appear 106 times or about (12.45%), while causal-inferential markers are the least used, only 32 times (3.76%). Although elaborative markers are used relatively widely, they are often used repetitively and unvaried, indicating that students do not understand the specific functions of discourse markers. Based on the interview results show that students tend only to use discourse markers that they are familiar with, while discourse markers that are considered unfamiliar are often avoided. This condition is caused by limited vocabulary and lack of knowledge, ultimately lowering their confidence. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of explicit learning based on real contexts. This approach is designed to help students recognize and be able to use discourse markers more effectively. The researcher expects that the results of this study can help students understand the different types of discourse markers and improve their ability to write academic texts.

ABSTRAK

Penggunaan penanda wacana sangat penting dalam membangun koherensi dan kohesi dalam tulisan akademis. Penelitian ini menganalisis frekuensi penanda wacana dan tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni dalam menulis esai dalam bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua. Peneliti menganalisis 27 esai mahasiswa dan mewawancarai 5 partisipan untuk menjawab dua pertanyaan penelitian mengenai penggunaan penanda wacana dan tantangan yang mereka alami. Adapun hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penanda wacana elaboratif paling sering digunakan, yaitu sebanyak 713 kali atau sekitar (83,78%). Penanda adversatif muncul sebanyak 106 kali atau sekitar (12,45%), sedangkan penanda kausal-inferensial paling sedikit digunakan, yaitu hanya 32 kali (3,76%). Meskipun penggunaan penanda elaboratif relatif tinggi, penggunaan penanda ini sering kali cenderung berulang dan kurang bervariasi, yang menunjukkan terbatasnya pemahaman tentang fungsi spesifik penanda wacana. Berdasarkan hasil wawancara menunjukkan bahwa siswa cenderung hanya menggunakan penanda wacana yang sudah mereka kenal, sedangkan penanda wacana yang dianggap asing sering dihindari. Kondisi ini disebabkan oleh keterbatasan kosakata dan kurangnya pengetahuan yang pada akhirnya menurunkan rasa percaya diri mereka. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pembelajaran eksplisit berdasarkan konteks nyata. Pendekatan ini dirancang untuk membantu siswa mengenali dan mampu menggunakan penanda wacana secara lebih efektif. Peneliti berharap hasil dari penelitian ini dapat membantu murid untuk memahami berbagai jenis discourse marker dan meningkatkan kemampuan mereka dalam menulis teks akademik.