

THE USE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN THE BACKGROUND OF THESIS PROPOSALS WRITTEN BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Discourse marker affects the logical meaning that is conveyed by an author to the readers. This article reports the analysis of discourse markers inside the background of master thesis proposals. The data presented were gained from eight students who had finished their comprehensive paper seminar in a postgraduate program. Eight backgrounds of master thesis proposals had been analyzed qualitatively. The results of this research revealed that there was a mix-used of the discourse markers. Each draft showed both appropriate and inappropriate use of three discourse maker classes. The appropriate discourse markers had no digression of the stipulated form and were found free from misuse patterns. On the contrary, the discourse markers were found as inappropriate use. The most dominant problem experienced by the students was the high density of discourse markers in a short text or connective overuse misuse pattern. The three classes of discourse markers had some common variants. There were two common contrastive discourse marker variants, i.e. *however* and *but*. *Moreover*, *and*, *furthermore*, and *in addition* are four common elaborative discourse marker variants. The six common inferential discourse marker variants are *therefore*, *because (of this/that)*, *thus*, *then*, *so*, and *in this/that/any case*. The article concludes by highlighting the importance of the students to be developed more their linguistic strategy.

KEYWORDS: Discourse markers, background, master thesis proposal

INTRODUCTION

Writing a thesis proposal is a complex thing, especially the background. Kornuta & Germaine (2019) used the term 'big picture' to describe the background. It presents the current context of the problem that is being investigated, the purpose of the current study, discussion for the history of the current issue (e.g. approach to developing the problem in overtime, the trend of the related issue, unresolved parts), and ways to finish the current study. Hence, the authors need to arrange the information inside their background in a unity and coherent fashion. Effective writing can be accomplished through a linguistic strategy, i.e. using a discourse marker (Al-khazraji, 2019). The use of Discourse Markers (DMs) is one of the influential aspects contributing to compose a good text; it influences the coherence of a text (Surjowati, 2018). Discourse marker has a role to render the interpretation of the prior segment (S1) and the following segment (S2) (Fraser, 1998). Furthermore, Fraser (1998) emphasized that the use of discourse markers affect the coherent and incoherent of a text.

Discourse marker has been extensively studied. Adeyemi (2018); Al-khazraji (2019); Ali & Mahadin (2016); Andayani (2014); Jalilifar (2008) are some researchers who have conducted their researches in written text with Discourse Markers (DMs) as the research focus. Many linguistic experts have concerned about discourse marker, but they have no explicit explanation for the term of discourse marker, how it works, and what the specific classification. Fraser wrapped this vagueness into the account of discourse markers classification and it has been used broadly in different academic writing genres.

Rahayu & Cahyono (2015) conducted corpus-based research and involved Fraser's (1999) discourse marker classification. The research revealed that the most dominant misuse pattern in undergraduate students' exemplification essay, comparison and contrast essay, classification essay, process analysis essay, and cause and effect essay is wrong relation pattern. In this case, the students have a lack to relate the discourse segment containing the DM (the following segment) with the prior discourse segment because of the wrong usage of the discourse marker. The students place a contrastive discourse marker rather than an elaborative discourse marker to elaborate a series of sentences that share the same idea. It makes the sentence containing a contrastive discourse marker does not correlate to the previous sentence or prior discourse segment.

Surjowati (2018) did comparative research for discourse markers produced by low and high-grade undergraduate students based on Fraser's (1996, 2005) taxonomy. The low-grade students are difficult to achieve coherence and cohesion in their essays because of their limited knowledge of these concepts. Consequently, the essays of low-grade students do not run smoothly. The high-grade students' essays are better than the essays of low-grade students.

Adewibowo, Imranuddin, & Azwandi (2018) analyzed the background of the undergraduate thesis. The authors also used Fraser's classification, but they did not mention what version of DMs classification. Temporal discourse markers are found as the most accurate; meanwhile, elaborative discourse markers are the lowest accurate. However, the malfunction use of each discourse marker class always occurs. The discourse markers fail to relate between discourse segments. For example, the use of an inferential discourse marker that does not conclude what should be concluded. The first sentence explains a reason to discuss a particular topic, but the presence of the inferential marker in the second sentence is followed by an explanation of the topic contribution.

Patriana, Rachmajanti, & Mukminatien (2016) did a descriptive study for analyzing argumentative essays of Master students who enrolled in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program in the second semester. The analysis was based on the adapted DMs taxonomy classification from Fraser (1999) and Halliday and Hasan (1976). The results showed that students use discourse markers appropriately and effectively. It makes their writing are logically connected. However, the students also meet problems in using the discourse markers. Those problems are non-equivalent exchange, surface logic, overuse, mistranslation, and misinterpreted relation.

To the best of our knowledge, there is little research that involves post-graduate students' discourse markers in the background of the master thesis proposals. According to White (2011), many beginner writers in the fulfillment of the master's degree program have difficulty in composing the background. Master students, the highly educated and literate students, still often make mistakes in some written aspects (Mukhlis, 2017). In one of the universities in Surabaya, not all of the postgraduate students are successful to write their research background. The rejected research proposals were often caused by the lack of students in writing the background. They were failed to convince their advisors. They could not show the relationship between their research area and their demand inside the background. They were unable to unite their sentences for showing the correlation between the related literature as the supporting reference in their research background. Besides, sometimes their writing did not reflect what they want to write. These facts are noteworthy while conducting further research. Why one's writing is good and why others are not in delivering the idea can be affected by students' linguistic strategy, especially the use of discourse marker.

The present research aims to investigate the use of discourse markers in three classes, namely Contrastive Discourse Marker (CDM), Elaborative Discourse Marker (EDM), and Inferential Discourse Markers (IDM) inside the background of master thesis proposals.

METHODS

This qualitative research was addressed to investigate the use of discourse markers by Indonesian students in writing the background of master thesis proposals. It explored the appropriate and inappropriate use in three classes of discourse markers based on the primary work of Fraser (2009). Eight master thesis proposals were gained from eight students in one of the universities in Surabaya who enrolled in the Master Program of Language and Literature Education-English concentration in the 2018 and 2017 academic years. Each student had a different or possibly had the same research focus. Table 1 presents the research focus of the students. The researchers asked permission from the students for sharing their latest proposal of the comprehensive paper thesis seminar that had been validated by the advisors and examiners.

Table 1 Information of the authors and research proposals

Students	Research focus
Student 1 (S18A)	Teacher's talk
Student 2 (S18B)	Language awareness
Student 3 (S18C)	Project-Based Learning (PBL)
Student 4 (S18D)	Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)
Student 5 (S17E)	Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)
Student 6 (S17F)	Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)
Student 7 (S17G)	Teacher's talk
Student 8 (S17H)	Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

The collected thesis proposals were separated from the background and placed in the new files. The researchers split each background into sentences and gave numbers to ease the process of identifying discourse markers. For each full stop (.) was considered as a unit of a sentence. Aarts (2014, as cited in Yin, 2016) defined a sentence as the main clause, including all its dependent clauses, that is recognized by orthographical cues. The orthographical cues refer to the presence of a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end. Using Microsoft word search-feature, the researcher typed each discourse marker variant of Fraser's (2009) classification and placed them in record tables. The classification of discourse markers by Fraser (2009) is written in Table 2.

The items that fill the characteristic as a discourse marker were kept on the tables. The items that did not fill the characteristic of a discourse marker were eliminated from the tables. The nature of discourse markers signals the relationship between interpretations of the discourse segment they introduce (S2) and the prior discourse segment (S1). In other words, the main characteristic of a discourse marker lays in the availability of a separate message between S1 and S2.

Table 2 Discourse Markers Classification by Bruce Fraser (2009)

DMs Classification	Primary DMs	Secondary DMs
Contrastive Discourse Markers (CDMs)	But	alternatively, although, contrariwise, contrary to expectations, conversely, despite (this/that), even so, however, in spite of (this/that), in comparison (with this/that), in contrast (to this/that), instead (of this/that), nevertheless, nonetheless, (this/that point), notwithstanding, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather (than this/that), regardless (of this/that), still, though, whereas, yet ...
Elaborative Discourse Markers (EDMs)	And	above all, after all, also, alternatively, analogously, besides, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, for example, for instance, further(more), in addition, in other words, in particular, likewise, more accurately, more importantly, more precisely, more to the point, moreover, on that basis, on top of it all, or, otherwise, rather, similarly, ...
Inferential Discourse Markers (IDMs)	So	all things considered, as a conclusion, as a consequence (of this/that), as a result (of this/that), because (of this/that), consequently, for this/that reason, hence, it follows that, accordingly, in this/that/any case, on this/that condition, on these/those grounds, then, therefore, thus

The analysis process was exploring whether the use of discourse markers is appropriate or not. The appropriate discourse marker is a DM that follows the rule of the stipulated form. It can be written in a canonical form as <S1. DM+S2> or a non-canonical form as <S1, DM+S2> (Fraser, 1999, 2009). Furthermore, an appropriate discourse marker is free from misuse patterns.

The set of misuse patterns of DMs by Kao & Chen (2011) split the cumbersome explanation for inappropriate use of discourse marker. The six categories, including non-equivalent exchange, connective overuse, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incomplection, and distraction, in Table 3 ease the way in analyzing the background of the master thesis proposals.

Table 3 Misuse Patterns of Discourse Markers

Misuse Patterns of DMs	Definition
1. Non-equivalent exchange	The use of a bias pronoun for (an) antecedent(s) that causes the presence of a discourse marker remains illogical.
2. Connective Overuse	The high density of the use of discourse markers in short texts. It will make the fragment of a text or the readers are lost for what the text is going to lead.
3. Surface logicity	The failure of a discourse marker to impose the logicity of the segments with the absence of deep meaning inside. Also, the same variant of a discourse marker class may replace another variant to convey a well-elaborated context.
4. Wrong relation	A variant of the particular discourse marker class has a failure to bridge the meaning between or among the context(s). An appropriate discourse marker from another class replaces the inappropriate DM.
5. Semantic incomplection	The missing point (message) of segment(s) that causes the use of the discourse marker is illogical.
6. Distraction	The use of the discourse marker is redundant or unnecessary, or the context of a text can be coherent by itself without the discourse marker.

RESULTS

This research found that the background of master thesis proposals covered the appropriate use and inappropriate use of discourse markers. The appropriate discourse marker was free from misuse pattern and follows the stipulated technical form of canonical or non-canonical forms such as the placement of period, comma, and the discourse marker, the form of the discourse marker, and the sequence of prior and following segments. The examples (1) and (2) are representative of the appropriate use of discourse markers.

- (1) In English intensive class in one of University in Surabaya, the learners who learn English in foreign still have difficulties to master target language. In addition, the learners also have to pass proficiency test. (S18B)

The discourser marker *in addition* conveys appropriate procedural and conceptual meaning. Procedurally, both of the segments share similar information to be elaborated. In other words, the use of elaborative discourse marker in the example is logical. The prior segment explains the condition of

learners in one of the universities in Surabaya. The following segment gives simply additional information on the condition of the learners. Thus, the use of *in addition* is conceptually correct. The

(1) follows a canonical form appropriately.

The sentence below is written in a non-canonical form appropriately. The idea to place the discourse marker *but* to bridge the segments is appropriate both procedural and conceptual.

(2) The findings indicate that these Turkish lecturers are knowledgeable about ICC, and ready to put their knowledge into practice to raise students' cultural awareness, but certain challenges to their implementation on ICC are shown, namely crowded classes and uninterested students. (S17F)

The sentence employs a contrastive discourse marker to bridge two segments. It is intended to review an item of previous research. The prior segment highlights the positive side of Turkish lecturers; meanwhile, the following segment reveals the negative side of Turkish lecturers towards the implementation of intercultural communicative competence in their class. The use of *but* is logical to give simply a contrastive idea.

In the following example, the author writes the sentences in an innovative form while using a discourse marker.

(3) Teachers are expected to understand well about the TPACK framework especially for teachers who teaching in blended-learning classrooms. Because, blended-learning refers to the collaboration between online and traditional classroom learning experience which required technology in the learning process (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). (S18D)

The inferential discourse marker *because* works only in a non-canonical form. It is different from other discourse markers. Thus, the prior segment and the following segment in (3) must be combined in one sentence without a comma.

The appropriate use of discourse marker also depends on the form of the discourse marker itself and its position in a sentence. The following sentences contain discourse markers in a non-standard form. One of the sentences places a discourse marker in an inappropriate position.

(4)

A. In the other hand, learner will do more negotiation because they get many problems in understanding other opinions (Gass & Varonis, 1985 as cited in Ibarrola & Martinez, 2015). (S18B)

B. In another word, teacher talk aims to establish and maintain good interaction between teacher and students in a complex series discourse in the classroom. (S17G)

- C. By hence, by doing observing, investigating, and analyzing the teacher talk, it provides awareness for the teacher to aware and improve their talk in a meaningful way while teaching the target language. (S17G)
- D. Other studies on the other hand, overlooked the HOT skills' elements that actually exist and can be described in the writing process of students' composition by the use of instagram. (S17H)

The sentence in (4A) has a non-standard form of contrastive discourse marker *on the other hand*. The discourse marker in (4B) must be written as *in other words* instead of *in another word*. The (4C) contains a discourse marker *hence* that is written in a non-standard form with the additional *by*. The second *on the other hand* in (4D) must not be written in the medial position.

All of the sentences below are written in the same paragraph. The following segment (S2) can be written in one or more than two sentences. The (5) presents the 'extended following segment'.

(5) Instagram has many features that are constantly upgraded. However there are specific features that are commonly used by users for their social media activities. The first feature is instagram profile interface. It displays information about users' profiles. Secondly, there is profile content that provides viewers to scroll down the file. Viewers may see all profile photos and videos appear together. Thirdly, the feature includes what is called as Instagram's photo and video content. Here, viewers are able to like the photo or video, leave a comment, or read previously posted comments. Next, there is instagram story feature which allows users to post a selection of photos/videos into one story which will disappear after 24 hours. Last, there is navigational tools that consist of five icons which are placed at the bottom of each page and serve as the basic navigational tools for instagram (Handayani, 2016: 321-322). (S17H)

The prior segment reveals the availability of the upgraded features of Instagram. The following segment comes immediately with the contrastive discourse marker *however*. It emphasizes that only some features are commonly used. Conceptually, the use of *however* is logical to give a deep contrastive idea. The extended following segments, a series of sentences that follows the sentence with the discourse marker, explain each detail of the specific feature. The presence of the extended following segments delivers richer information to the readers. The only problem of the (5) lays in the absence of a comma after the discourse marker to deal with the appropriate form of a canonical form.

The 'extended prior segments' were also found among the drafts. But, the segments have a lack to enhance the intended information of the author. Consider the following example.

(6) It is common knowledge that teaching EFL in Indonesian schools is not an easy task. Some studies done by the scholars regarding to this issue showed barriers that English teachers in Indonesia faced in teaching EFL. First, a study done by Nuraini (2016) showed students' motivation and classroom

management in a big class became the crucial problems that the teachers face in teaching English. Second, the results of the study done by Songbatumis (2017) showed students' low concentration, their boredom of traditional teaching and learning activities, and their confidence issue in implementing their speaking skill were challenges from students' side that the English teachers in MTSn Taliwang had to face. Last, a study done by Widiati et al. (2018) showed the lesson's implementation due to students' various proficiency and students' boredom of repetitive teaching and learning activities as well as classroom management in handling big classes became the most challenges in teaching EFL.

Therefore, instagram can be used to solve those problems since the use of instagram in language learning really catches students' interest in social media. (S17H)

A series of sentences, it is common knowledge ... to in teaching EFL, was written in the fifth paragraph. The sentences highlight the problem of teaching English in Indonesia. The author begins a new paragraph, the sixth paragraph, with a sentence containing the discourse marker, *therefore*. It indicates that the author writes the series of sentences in the fifth paragraph as the prior segments of the initial sentence of the sixth paragraph because those sentences are the closest segments. After discussing the problem met by Indonesian teachers in a series of sentences, the author concludes suddenly that Instagram can be used to solve those problems. The author also argues that Instagram in language learning really catches students' interest in social media. No one of the prior segments gives evidence or discusses the two matters. It makes the use of the discourse marker, *therefore*, is not logical, and it causes semantic incompleteness. The author needs to give additional information to fill the missing point.

Other misuse patterns found in the drafts besides semantic incompleteness are connective overuse, non-equivalent exchange, surface logicity, wrong relation, and distraction. A single discourse marker is necessarily needed to bridge the prior and following segments. The high density of the discourse markers in a short text may confuse the readers to comprehend the intended message of the author. The sentence in (4A) contains the first variation of connective overuse. The author places two discourse markers *in the other hand* instead of *on the other hand* and *because* in the same place. Other variations of connective overuse are written in (7) and (8) below.

(7) Since the goal of language teaching is students can produce the target language, a teacher is to be keen on to be creatively establish an enthusiastic teaching learning through the language which being used. In another word, teacher talk aims to establish and maintain good interaction between teacher and students in a complex series discourse in the classroom. By hence, by doing observing, investigating, and analyzing the teacher talk, it provides awareness for the teacher to aware and improve their talk in a meaningful way while teaching the target language. (S17G)

As aforementioned, the discourse marker *in another word* and *by hence* must be written in a standard form. The wrong form of the discourse markers has been discussed in (4A) and (4B). The first

discourse marker *in another word* bridges the meaning for both prior and following segments appropriately, although the discourse marker has digressed form. The prior segment emphasizes the important role of a teacher to facilitate the teaching-learning process through the target language. The long sentences of the prior segment are simplified in the following segment by highlighting the important role of the teacher's language or teacher talk. The second discourse marker *by hence* in the last sentence of (7) meets the connective overuse misuse pattern because the closest segment that must be its prior segment has included a discourse marker *in another word*.

Example (8) is considered as another variation of connective overuse. In the example above, two discourse markers in two separate sentences are written in a canonical form. On the contrary, the following example has a sentence with a discourse marker at the beginning. The sentence is preceded by another sentence that is written in a non-canonical form.

(8) In fact, successful communication in international contact is not largely influenced by the linguistic competence of the target language, yet intercultural knowledge of the target culture takes the crucial role in which the pupils will be faced to the English native and non-native English speaker with divers background. Thus, the English teachers are supposed to move from traditional notion of foreign language teaching, communicative teaching concern, to intercultural teaching in an integration for purpose to foster pupils' intercultural communicative competence. (S17E)

The discourse marker *yet* operates well both the conceptual and the procedural. There is a sense of *but* in this discourse marker conceptually. The following segment gives procedurally contrastive logic for the prior segment. The prior segment highlights the inferior role of linguistic competence in conducting successful communication while the following segment highlights the superior role of intercultural knowledge for having successful communication in the target language. The presence of the discourse marker *thus* is considered as connective overuse. It is caused by the previous sentence that must be its prior segment has included a discourse marker.

A non-equivalent exchange misuse pattern occurs in the following example. The following segment has a bias pronoun for referring to a particular antecedent in the prior segment.

(9) It shows that the teachers can use common scaffolding language but less ability in scaffold metacognitive of the students. Therefore, *it* needs some training to deliver scaffolding talk to provide more goal-oriented scaffolding. (S18A)

The word *it* does not clearly refer to a specific antecedent. Thus, the use of *therefore* in the following segment is illogical. The pronoun *it* can be replaced by the pronoun *they* to substitute the teachers in the prior segment. Moreover, a comma must follow the discourse marker.

There were two variations of surface logicity found in the drafts. First, the inappropriate use of a discourse marker in the same class. Second, the same discourse marker of the same class occurs twice in a short text with the absence of deep meaning. The following examples show the two variations of surface logicity.

(10)

- A. However, this study provides a little evidence in term of the application of these techniques in the real teaching and learning practice, so that it emerges a question in relation to the advantage and disadvantage of each technique to use in cultural teaching through English lesson. However, what has been arisen in the previous studies above emphasize more on objective in foreign language teaching in different view. (S17F)
- B. Teachers are required to be selective by choosing the digital technology tool which appropriates for the subject matter and specifically students learning goals. Moreover, teachers who are mandatory to integrate technology in the learning activities will experience a complicated problem. (S18D)

The first sentence in (10A) is written in the eleventh paragraph while the second sentence is written at the beginning of the twelfth paragraph. It makes the first sentence become the prior segment of the second sentence because the last sentence in the eleventh paragraph is the closest segment of the initial sentence in the twelfth paragraph. The double presence of the discourse marker *however* creates a surface logicity effect because there is no deep meaning to be contrasted.

In (10B), the sentences are also written in two different paragraphs. One is written in the last fourth paragraph while another is written at the beginning of the fifth paragraph. The prior segment emphasizes that teachers should be selective for using digital technology tools. The following segment gives a further explanation that the teacher will meet a complicated problem while they are selecting the best tool for the teaching-learning process. The elaborative discourse marker *furthermore* may bridge well the segments because the following segment gives an additional-advancing idea. If the following segment conveys an additional-advancing-different idea, the elaborative discourse marker *moreover* leads.

The sentence that is written in a non-canonical below meets one of six misuse patterns, i.e. wrong relation. The sentence needs a discourse marker from another class to bridge well the segments.

(11) The studies above still investigate the strategy and method used by the teachers to increase the students' engagement in the classroom but this present study will focus on the scaffolding talk produced by the teachers that may facilitate the students' engagement in the classroom. (S18A)

The author writes implicitly that there is a gap from the previous studies in the prior segment. In the following segment, the author wants to fill it by stating a different side of his current research. This

logic is under the procedural meaning of the inferential discourse marker. The prior segment is the cause of the following segment ‘why the author conducts his research’. Thus, the following segment is more logical for using an inferential discourse marker rather than a contrastive discourse marker. The author also misses a comma. A comma before the discourse marker is a must in a non-canonical form.

The distraction misuse pattern occurs in two conditions. It can occur because of the unnecessary discourse marker. Or, a sentence will be coherent by itself without the discourse marker.

(12)

- A. It is clear that there is a shift in term of the view of foreign language teaching objective in general, of which, traditionally, foreign language teacher focused on language competence of the target language that refers to native speaker’s knowledge of syntactic, lexical, morphological, and phonological features of the language. However, in contemporary, learners are not only expected to perform the target language accurately, but also to use the language in the real life in the target language setting, reflecting the native speakers’ culture (Alptekin, 2002). (S17E)
- B. She also added that “good” teacher talk meant “little” teacher talk, since when a teacher dominantly the talk can deprive students’ opportunities to speak the target language. Furthermore, a constructive communicational is essential in building students’ motivation to speak the target language. (S17G)

The idea in (12A) relates to the traditional objective of foreign language teaching. The following segment delivers the opposite of the prior segment. It is quite obvious with the placement of a prepositional phrase in contemporary. The following segment will not lose the message that wants to be conveyed, although the author eliminates the discourse marker *however*. In (12B), the fifth paragraph introduces a new paragraph with a sentence having a discourse marker *furthermore* in the initial position. It makes the last sentence in the fourth paragraph, *she also added ...*, become its closest prior segment. The following segment will be coherent by itself without the discourse marker because no closest segment discusses constructive communicational.

Analysis of the eight drafts found that the contrastive discourse marker and inferential discourse marker class met all of the six misuse patterns while the elaborative discourse marker class left one of the misuse patterns, i.e. wrong relation. Connective overuse was the most dominant problem experienced by students. The misuse pattern was always found in the drafts of each student.

The whole discourse markers used by students both appropriate and inappropriate in three classes, Contrastive Discourse Marker (CDM), Elaborative discourse marker (EDM), and Inferential Discourse Marker (IDM), are presented in Table 4. Inside of 8 drafts, there were two common CDM variants, i.e. *however* and *but*; four common EDM variants, i.e. *moreover*, *and*, *furthermore*, and *in addition*; and

six common inferential discourse marker variants, i.e. *therefore*, *because (of this/that)*, *thus*, *then*, *so*, and *in this/that/any case*. The most frequent inappropriate use of the inferential discourse marker was *therefore*; meanwhile, the inferential discourse marker *because (of this/that)* met the most frequent appropriate use. In the elaborative discourse marker class, the discourse markers *and* and *furthermore* were frequently used inappropriately. The elaborative discourse marker *moreover* was the most frequent discourse marker used appropriately. The last discourse marker class, contrastive discourse marker, had *however* as the discourse marker with the most frequent inappropriate use while the most frequent discourse marker that was used appropriately was *but*.

Table 4 The Use of Discourse Markers by Students

Student	CDM		EDM		IDM	
	I*	A**	I	A	I	A
1	but, however, on the other hand	-	and, for example, further(more), moreover	further(more)	as a consequence (of this/that), because (of this/that), therefore	because (of this/that), in this/that/any case, therefore
2	but, however, on the other hand, though	yet	and, for example, further(more), in addition, moreover, otherwise	in addition, moreover	so, because (of this/that), in this/that/any case, then, therefore, thus	so, because (of this/that), hence, in this/that/any case, then
3	however	-	and, further(more), in addition, moreover, similarly	and, besides, in addition, moreover	so, because (of this/that), then, therefore, thus	so, because (of this/that), therefore
4	however, nevertheless	but, however	and, further(more), in addition, moreover	further(more), in addition, moreover	so, as a result (of this/that), because of this/that), for this/that reason, in this/that/any case, therefore	because of this/that), accordingly, in this/that/any case, therefore, thus
5	however, (this/that point), on the other hand	but, yet	and, for instance, further(more), in other words, moreover	for instance	then, therefore, thus	because (of this/that), then, thus
6	though, whereas	but	and, further(more), in addition	likewise	because (of this/that), therefore, thus	-

7	but, however, nevertheless, nonetheless	but, even so	and, alternatively, further(more), in addition, in other words, moreover, otherwise	moreover	because (of this/that), hence, in this/that/any case), then	hence, thus
8	however, on the other hand	-	and, further(more), moreover	and, moreover	so, as a result (of this/that), then, therefore	-

*I = Inappropriate

**A = Appropriate

DISCUSSION

In this research, there were some common variants of discourse markers found. The discourse markers *however* and *but* were the most common variants of CDM. Four EDMs that were commonly used by students are *moreover*, *and*, *furthermore*, and *in addition*. The six discourse markers, *therefore*, *because (of this/that)*, *thus*, *then*, *so*, and *in this/that/any case*, were the most common variants of IDM. The findings are also covered in the other researches. Rahayu & Cahyono (2015) revealed that five common variants of CDM are *although*, *in contrast*, *however*, *but*, *on the other hand*. Six common variants of EDM, including *in addition*, *and*, *moreover*, *also*, *or*, *for example*. *Because*, *because of*, *therefore*, *so*, *then*, and *in conclusion* are the most common variants of IDM. Purwadina & Huda (2017) found that the discourse markers *but* (CDM), *and* (EDM), and *because* (IDM) are the variants used frequently by male and female students.

Each background of the master thesis proposal from eight students contained the appropriate and inappropriate use of discourse markers. The appropriate use of discourse markers followed the stipulated form and rules. The inappropriate use of discourse markers was caused by one or two reasons. First, a discourse marker was not operated based on the stipulated form and rules of (Fraser, 1999, 2009). Second, the discourse marker met a misuse pattern.

There was always found technical form problem in each draft. The innovative form occurs in a draft. The author separated the prior segment and the following segment while using the IDM *because*. Fraser (1999, 2009) offered two variants while using a discourse marker, a canonical form <S1. DM+S2> or a non-canonical form <S1, DM+S2>, except the Discourse Maker (DM) *because*. The logic of the DM is also different from other inferential discourse markers. The common procedural meaning of IDM signals that “S1 is the cause of S2” or “S2 is caused by the action or state of S1”. Sweetser (1990) claimed three roles of discourse marker *because*. It can be used as a speech act causation, epistemic causation, and content causation. Fraser (2009) claimed that Sweetser (1990) does not give the best explanation to distinguish the use of three roles, including the form of the DM in each role. Thus,

Fraser (2009) implies that the technical form of the DM *because* is the same as his work in 1999. The DM only works in a non-canonical form, it is written without a comma, and it has inversion logic for the common IDM.

Some of the drafts missed a comma for non-primary discourse markers. To separate segments, the full stop always involves in a canonical form, and the comma always comes in a non-canonical form. In canonical form, a comma always follows a discourse marker, although the comma is not written in the stipulated form <S1. DM+S2>. Fraser (2009) showed this rule implicitly through a series of examples in his works. Furthermore, Fraser (2009) gave a special rule for the primary DMs, i.e. *but* (CDM), *and* (EDM), and *so* (IDM). The DMs are permitted to include or exclude a comma while the DMs are written in a canonical form.

In some cases, the prior and following segments were written more than one sentence. These forms refer to 'extended prior segments' and 'extended following segments. The forms are other alternatives for the stipulated forms (Fraser, 2009). The extended prior segments and extended following segments are used to support the scope of a discourse marker. The alternatives exclude the interrupted segment or segment that has no correlation meaning with the prior or following segment.

Another case of the technical form of a segment here was found frequently. The authors started a new paragraph by introducing the top sentence with a slip of a discourse marker in the initial position. In other words, many of the authors start a new paragraph with the following segment. It will not be considered as it is if the prior segment is empty. However, the empty segment of S1 occurs only if non-linguistic factors provide a suitable context (Fraser, 2009). The non-linguistic factors, for instance, body language will be appropriate to replace the S1 in spoken language. Thus, the closest sentence or a series of sentences of the previous paragraph is considered as the prior segment of the following segment that is placed at the top position of a new paragraph. At least, the segments are in a sequence to be related as the scope of a discourse marker (Fraser, 2009).

The common position of a discourse marker is in the initial position of the following segment. And most of the authors did it. The overall position of the DMs in the drafts was in the initial position, but an author prefers to place the DM *on the other hand* in the medial position. For particular discourse markers, they may also occur in the medial position or the final position. But, not all discourse markers can place both of the optional positions. Fraser (2009) was quite obvious in explaining the position of the CDM *on the other hand*. The medial position of the DM is unacceptable.

The technical form also relates to the form of the discourse marker itself. Non-standard forms of the Contrastive Discourse Marker, Elaborative Discourse Marker, and Inferential Discourse Marker were found beyond the lists of Fraser's (2009) DMs. The CDM *on the other hand*, the EDM *in other words*, and the IDM *hence* were written in *in the other hand*, *in another word*, and *by hence*. There is an

indication for the author to have the effect of the first language (L1) while translating *oleh karena itu* to be *by hence* instead of *hence*.

Generally, there was no much variation in the use of discourse markers from the three classes. Each author tended to use consistently for some discourse marker variants. The author who was varying the use of discourse marker variants was rarely found. But, the draft of the fourth student in the 2017 academic year gives other views. The ordinary variation of the use of discourse markers was also found in the study of Purwadina & Huda (2017). They found that there is no indication for female and male students to have major differences in varying discourse markers.

The rise of misuse patterns was another factor contributing to the inappropriate use of discourse markers besides the problems of technical form as aforementioned. The most common misuse pattern found in each draft of the eight authors was “overuse”. Kao & Chen (2011) described it as the high-density use of discourse marker in a short text. There were some variations of the authors to create the overuse effect. First, the presence of double discourse markers in a non-canonical form. The author used extra DMs in the same sentence. Second, a discourse marker meets another discourse marker in the same canonical forms. When the authors started a new sentence, there is nothing wrong to place a discourse marker at the beginning of a sentence. It indicates that the previous sentence is the prior segment (S1) of the DM. In other words, the author wants to relate the segments within a canonical form. The placement of the second discourse marker immediately after the following segment (S2) in the initial position of a new sentence, creates an overuse misuse pattern. Third, a discourse marker in a canonical form was preceded by another discourse marker in a non-canonical form. The first discourse marker in a non-canonical form may have well related the prior and the following segment. But, the use of the second discourse marker at the beginning of a sentence immediately after the non-canonical sentence is also considered as the overuse of DMs. The high density of DMs makes an obstacle for the context or the reader to expect what the text is going to lead. Indeed, the non-modified canonical form and non-canonical form proposed by Fraser (2009) will ease the authors to convey the meaning to the readers.

The second misuse pattern, distraction, was commonly found in the drafts. It was the top two of the misuse patterns after the connective overuse. The distraction may occur in two different conditions: 1) the presence of the discourse marker can be unnecessary or redundant 2) the segment can be coherent by itself without the DM (Kao & Chen, 2011). In the first case, many of the authors placed discourse markers in the segment that will not lose the meaning even with the absence of the DMs. The second case of the distraction occurred frequently compared to the first case.

Many of the drafts also met the surface logicity misuse pattern. The problem relates to the replacement of discourse markers. It occurs because a pair of the same discourse markers from a class is used to bridge no deep meaning of the sequence segments (Kao & Chen, 2011). Furthermore, the need for an inappropriate discourse marker to be replaced with another appropriate discourse marker

from the same class is also considered as surface logicity. Most of the authors overlapped in using the Elaborative Discourse Markers *in addition*, *moreover*, and *furthermore*. And, they often met to the second category of surface logicity.

The semantic incompleteness was found rarely among the drafts. The segments were written in a complete sentence grammatically, but the segment had no or vague particular essence to be related to another segment. The readers can be unable to expect the intended message of the author because of it. Sometimes the author needs to revise the segment because the crucial point has been excluded; the missing point causes the use of DMs is illogical or meets the semantic incompleteness misuse pattern (Kao & Chen, 2011).

“Non-equivalent exchange” was also another misuse pattern that rarely occurred among the drafts. It relates to the illogical use of DMs as a result of the absence of an interchangeable context between the pronoun and its bias predecessor (Kao & Chen, 2011). Many authors in their drafts involved the dummy pronoun “it”. They usually placed it as the subject immediately after the DM. In other words, the following segment has already understood the argument conveyed in the prior segment without re-writing the argument directly. While dummy pronoun “it” is acceptable to refer to nothing of the particular agent, other pronouns will cause non-equivalent exchange problems. The non-interchangeable context often occurred between the pronoun *they* and the non-dummy pronoun “it”. The author presented the plural agents in the prior segment, but the agents were suddenly replaced with the pronoun “it”. The argument of the following segment becomes unclear because of the biased agent for the pronoun *it*. The problem of the pronoun seems a simple thing, but it affects the logical use of the DMs and the intended meaning of the segments.

The unfair replacement does not restrict only to the pronoun and its predecessor. It also occurred to a discourse maker of a class that was replaced by another discourse from a different class. In this case, Kao & Chen (2011) classified the problem as the “wrong relation”. For example, the authors used the CDM instead of IDM, the CDM instead of EDM, or the IDM instead of CDM.

CONCLUSION

The backgrounds written by postgraduate students show a mix-used of the discourse markers. A draft of each student always covers the appropriate and inappropriate uses of the discourse marker. The most common CDM and IDM that are used inappropriately are *however* and *therefore*. The discourse markers *and furthermore* can be concluded as the common EDM that is used inappropriately. On the contrary, the DMs, including *but* (CDM), *moreover* (EDM), and *because (of this/that)* (IDM), are the most common variants that are used appropriately. Connective Overuse (CO) is the most dominant misuse pattern met by students because it always occurs in every draft. We concluded that the linguistic strategy, using discourse marker, of the postgraduate students should be more developed. Their exposure to written English text should reflect their high proficiency level.

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