Digital Discourse Markers in an ESL Learning Setting: The Case of Socialisation Forums

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Analysis of the linguistic discourse plays an important role in the social, cultural, ethnographic, and comparative studies of languages. Discourse markers as indispensable parts of this analysis are reportedly more common in informal speech than in written language. They could be used at different levels, i.e. as 'linking words', 'linking phrases', or 'sentence connectors' to bind together pieces of a text like 'glue'. The objective of the study is to ascertain the discourse markers employed in synchronous online interactions and networking through constant comparison of discourse markers used in the discussion forums (DF) with the discourse markers already reported in the literature. The study maintains discourse markers (DMs) used in the formal written discourse in order to identify any probable pragmatic, or discoursal level differences in the DMs used in the two modes of writing (formal writing and typing in online communication). The findings indicate that the written language that students use in their electronic posts is to a great extent similar to that of the *process view of writing*. Specifically, the written language used in a digital socialisation forum is at times, monitored, reviewed, revised, and corrected by the students themselves and their peers.

Key Words: discourse analysis, discourse markers, networking, online communication, language learning

INTRODUCTION

Discourse analysis is broadly defined by educators as the communicative study of language and/or the linguistic study of communication (Delin, 2000). The scholars studying discourse struggle to analyse the everyday interaction of language users, notice how patterns of language are employed in actual language use, while also taking into account participants, situations, purposes, and outcomes of language use. Grice's cooperative principles (the CPs), in this regard, are generally believed to be the most effective framework. These maxims include quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. The maxims of quantity, quality,

and relevance have to do with *what* people say while the maxim of manner is related to *how* people say it; therefore, this latter aspect of the maxims, as also pointed out by Pawlak and Bielak (2011), will encompass non-verbal and paralinguistic information. The discourse analysts try to do the noticing consciously, deliberately, systematically and as far as possible, objectively. The end result of discourse analysis is to account for descriptions, interpretations, and explanations of the outcome of the investigations. Discourse analysis plays an important role in the social, cultural, ethnographic, and comparative studies of languages. Some discourse analysts in their investigations of a language tend to focus on the items which make discourse more coherent. These items are referred to as discourse markers (DMs) that are mainly reported to be used in everyday informal speech rather than the more formal written language. Discourse markers are "optional linguistic items that fulfill an indexical function, in that they connect an utterance to its co-text and/or the context" (Buysse, 2012, p. 1764). They are believed to be an important component of any given discourse. Hellermann and Vergun (2007, p. 158), for instance, argue that discourse markers seem to be "crucial" to the organization of native speaker discourse. In order to show the importance of discourse markers, suffice it to say that they are among the top ten word forms (Fung & Carter, 2007).

Different educators working on the discourse markers have suggested the use of different terminologies to refer to the same concept. Polat (2011) for example, regards discourse markers as "one of the most ambiguous" phenomena which have been "described and categorized differently by various authors over the past three decades" (p. 3746). Mukundan and Tannacito (2012) in their comprehensive review of the concept came to the conclusion to call them as "discourse connectors" simply because they believe that the term better describes the function of discourse connectors linking one portion of information to another one in a text. This conception of DMs is in line with the ones put forth by both Lee-Goldman (2011) and Schourup (1999). Lee-Goldman, for instance, posits that DMs "cue or create relationships from one part of a text to another, or to the background assumptions and goals of the participants. The term DM on the other hand, was found to be a suitable term for spoken discourse" (p. 1669). Discourse markers (e.g. words like 'however', 'although' and 'Nevertheless'…) could be used at different levels, i.e. as 'linking words', 'linking phrases', or ''sentence connectors'. They are like the 'glue' that binds together a piece of writing; making distinct parts of a text 'stick together'. It is vital for a text to contain a specific amount of discourse markers, because a piece of writing without sufficient discourse markers seems illogical and ill formed with its parts not going together. Discourse markers as for their syntactic identity range from non-lexical items (e.g. oh) to recognized words such as 'actually', and phrases like 'of course' and 'you see' (Klerk, 2005).

Functions of Discourse Markers

Based on Brinton (1996), Muller (2005) makes a list of discourse markers performing different functions in the texts. According to this list, discourse markers are used to**:** a) initiate discourse, b) mark a boundary in discourse, c) preface a response or a reaction, d) serve as a filler or delaying tactic, e) aid the speaker in holding the floor, f) effect an interaction or sharing between speaker and hearer, g) bracket the discourse either cataphorically or anaphorically, and h) mark either foregrounded or backgrounded information (see Müller, 2005, p. 9).

Discourse Markers and Writing

Regarding using DMs in writing, Modhish (2012) points out, the more students learn to use DMs, the more effectively they can connect the sentences and paragraphs. Furthermore, through the use of DMs, the students are able to reveal the syntactic and semantic relations between what was already said and what is going to be said (Daif-Allah & Albesher, 2013). Consequently, the reader would have an easy job to interpret the whole discourse. A similar idea has been put forth by Rahimi (2011) who considers that mastery in the use of DMs can be advantageous for students in both creating articulate and expressive discourse as well as providing full comprehension of the text. In short, DMs seem to be helpful for EFL/ESL student writers because as Modhish (2012) asserts, an "awareness of the use and practicality of Discourse Markers can immensely contribute to the overall quality of the discourse created by ESL/EFL learners" (p. 56).

Online Socialization and Networking

Considering the immense role of technology and its related applications in this digital era, students are supposed to master related skills in technological advances as they do in so called 'print-based' writing convention. On the other hand, four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are generally used in language education. They are also present in almost any conceptualization of communicative competence. However, when it comes to the online communication, these four skills seem not to be adequate.

The impact which the digital online social electronic environments and technology have had on our life is therefore by no means deniable. The electronic environments have put forth almost different and redefined categories of familiar concepts of participation and text. Being involved in these digital and connected environments would open new roads to identity engagement and development (Boyd, 2008), writing and authorship (Black, 2008), citizenship and democratic participation (Boler, 2008), social capital and connectivity (Ellison et al., 2007), as well as intercultural and multilingual communication (Thorne, 2008).

The last decade has witnessed a proliferation of network interactions in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. Synchronous communication, e.g. IMs, chats and discussion forums (DFs) ask for immediate real-time interaction; while asynchronous mode allows for more reflection time on the part of the interactors. In online networking tone and register are conveyed through the *typed* script, and this is not unlike conversational discourse. The non-verbal cues utilized in face to face conversation are absent from online communications and consequently demands for in-text paralinguistic cues such as emoticons or the creative use of symbols to denote meaning. More recently linguists have scrutinized both the online language and its formality. Ong (2012) calls the 'informalisation' of written discourse as "second orality". This 'informalisation' has impacted many traditional distinctions, such as the association of formality with written language and of informality with the spoken word (Montero-Fleta et al., 2009).

'Informalisation' or 'conversationalisation' and 'technologisation' of discourse are the main theme of Fairclough's (2013) study. He proposes that in the discourse of digital age there are

many "mixtures of formal and informal styles, technical and non-technical vocabularies, markers of authority and familiarity, more typically written and more typically spoken syntactic forms" (Fairclough, 2013, p. 64). Tornow (1997) proposes that the borderline between the spoken and written language is blurred in the language of networking. According to Kern (1995) electronic discourse is an informal hybrid of oral and written communication, and a conduit between the spoken and written skills of the learners. However, the studies conducted by Gray (2002) and García-Carbonell (1998) provide empirical evidence pertaining to the significance of the written aspect of computer communication in promoting writing skills, oral proficiency, and linguistic and metalinguistic competence.

Discourse analysis scholars (e.g.,Baron, 2000; Crystal, 2001; Turney et al., 2003) have scrutinised the synchronous and asynchronous characteristics of electronic communication. Their main focus has been on net speaks, prefixes, compounds, abbreviations, emotional expressions and discourse conventions. Second language learning studies and computer-mediated communication (CMC) research have begun focusing on the role that online interactions can play in language acquisition.

These studies, according to Warschauer (1996) have concentrated on the methodology being used, and how effective it has been in improving students' language proficiencies. For example, García-Carbonell (1998) and MacDonald Lightbound (2005) studied the assessment of the learning process, while García-Carbonell (1998); and García-Carbonell et al. (2001) compared computer text-based interactions to face-to-face interactions. Regarding the discourse of discussion forums (DFs), modality appears to reproduce the 'orality' typically ascribed to synchronous interactions (Montero-Fleta et al., 2009). Little has been published on the discourse markers used by the participants of professional discussion forums.

Discussion Forums

Discussion forums in the new millennium are used as effective vehicles to enhance student learning outcomes. Online DFs allow for the sharing of a collaborative and cooperative learning space as a consequence of the discussion occurring amongst individuals with similar interests regarding a particular topic. Interactions necessitate the students be involved in authentic interaction, and develop relationships with their peers, professionals or members of the scientific community. In this way a real learning community is created (García-Carbonell et al., 2004; Sutherland et al., 2003). A learning community is for Bielaczyc and Collins (2009) a cohesive group which embodies "a culture of learning in which everyone is involved in a collective effort of understanding" (p. 271). Discussion forums necessitate by nature, mutual engagement, shared thinking, and joint effort or collaboration as well as necessary elements to fabricate a team learning procedure. According to Gray (2002) the collaborative aspect of a learning community ensures commonality of thought, task authenticity, advancement of knowledge, and reflective practice. In fact, according to Abraham and Williams (2009), this collaboration is so high that "today's discussion forum is commonly referred to as a Bulletin Board System, or BBS" (p. 264). DFs based on an already established concept can help students resolve issues they have encountered, learn the communication skills necessitated by the learning objectives, as well as improve their English language proficiency. The present study looks into another aspect of digital interaction as its objective and focuses on the linguistic aspect of DM, in which the verbatim use of DM in online DF contexts are compared to their use in corpuses of formal written language to identify any differences.

METHOD

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify the discourse markers used in synchronous online interactions and networking through constant comparison of the discourse markers used in online interactions with the already known discourse markers reported in the literature. This should allow identification of any probable pragmatic, or discourse level difference in the discourse markers used in the two modes of writing, the DF and the formal written discourse.

The sampling was based on availability and data collection comes from a discussion forum that was a requirement for the subject 'the ICT and language learning' in a Malaysian university as part of an English BA program. It should be mentioned here that the discussion forum conversations were stored and saved in the UPM (University Putra Malaysia) for scientific purposes, and the first author was permitted to use the data from the same server for this research study.

The impetus for the study came from Yates's (1996) qualitative work on the use of modals in online interactions where modal auxiliaries in computer mediated communication (CMC) shared similarity to verbal language usage, but was purported to be greater for written language.

FINDINGS

In order to determine how study participants communicate electronically in forums on a particular subject (their task-based assignment) while improving their English communication skills, the researchers sought permission to access the university server to obtain the data as members of the proposed discussion board were communicating online. The topic of the discussion was to find out ordinary terms that were also used in ICT and computer science that had a different meaning. Purposeful communication with the peers and colleagues based on an already identified topic or idea seemed to be a proper cultural context for enhancing professional communication and language learning at the same time. The study participants were both novice and experts in computer use. Their participation in the forum was to explore and share their most recent information (ICT terms) regarding the latest devices being used.

There are a number of discourse markers that maintain different connections between the ideas expressed in the text. Swan (2005) elucidates these connections via his definition of the way the current utterance relates to prior discourse and contributes to the meaning of the message. What follows is a preliminary list of discourse markers mainly chosen from Attarde's Encyclopedic Graded Grammar (2007) which to the best of the researchers' knowledge seem to be the most recent encyclopaedia for the standard written and formal English. It contains the DM's respected area of use and their specified functions.

Immediately after the introduction of discourse markers from the Encyclopaedia, the same DMs are presented in *Italic* forms in the way that they have been used in the online communication. The extracts from online communications are reported *verbatim*, i.e. no corrections or editing has been made. Pseudonyms are used to maintain the privacy of the participants.

1- Focusing And Linking as reported in the Encyclopaedia : With reference to, Speaking/Talking of/about, Regarding, As regards, With regard to, With respect to, In regard to, As to, As, For
Verbatim DM data from online environment:
*"if u have any guidline or infomation **about** the second task please tell me ok ".*

"***For*** *the ICT terms we have to state the true meaning base on dictionary and also the meaning in the ICT terms itself.But* ***for*** *the webpage I did not really understand.* 😁😁*"*.

The DMs used here do not seem to undergo any differences in the two modes of writing.

2- Contrasts as reported in the Encyclopaedia:

a) Direct Contrast: However, Nevertheless, Mind you, Yet/Still/In spite of, Conversely, In contrast/In contrast to

 Verbatim DM data from online environment:

"don think we are done, ***still*** *we need to serch for 2 new ict term".*

The DMs used here do not seem to undergo any differences in the two modes of writing.

b) Concession and Counter Argument: It is true, Of course, If, May, But, However, Even so, nevertheless, Nonetheless, All the same, Still
Verbatim DM data from online environment:

"here some ict terms from me, ***if*** *im wrong please correct me ok".*

The DM (if) here is also denoting a kind of counter argument.

c) Contradicting: On the contrary

d) Balancing Contrasting Points: While, On the other hand, Whereas
(Verbatim DM data from online environment):

 "me and ash will choose 8 terms ***while*** *yana and uyu choose 7 terms. is it will be fine?"*

"Mother board, it could bring a meaning such that the board is the genetive's of the mother. ***while,*** *in the ict term it means the thing that controls the system of the computer."*

"While" used in the first conversation seems to denote 'smoothing of the argument', but the use of "while" in the second conversation seems to replace "when". This may indicate less care in the use of DMs.

e) Dismissal of Previous Discourse as reported in the encyclopaedia: Anyway, At least, At any rate
Verbatim DM data from online environment:

 "Maybe if you can find a website with Penglish Vs English, it will be better. ***Anyway,*** *awesome lists you have here! \(^.^)/"*

"Anyway" is used in the online conversation to denote a separation from previous discourse, but the creative construction of a smiling emoticon seem to be special to digital environment.

3- Similarity as reported in the encyclopaedia: Similarly, In the same way, Likewise, By the same token
Verbatim DM data from online environment:

 "buti never thought word like window can be so intersting to look at."

"some of our terms are ***similar*** *but "still fun to share..no?"*
"similar" does not seem to denote any difference from what we already know about these DMs. The interesting points are that in the *"buti"* the use of space is not observed; in the "*interesting*" the spelling is wrong and is underlined by the software as a wrong word; and in the "*its*" which is also underlined, less or no attention is employed in correct writing. It seems that in online writing the principles of accuracy are not fully observed.

4- Change of Subject as reported in the encyclopaedia*: By the way, Incidentally, Right, Now, O.K*

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"**ok..** i agree, i'd like to suggest the term bus? ok or not???"*

*" let try and serach for it.. nice job **by the way**!* 😐 *"*

*"i already included the term for 'bug' **by the way**."*

"ok" and "by the way" do not seem to be different in the two modes of writing.

5- Structuring as reported in the encyclopaedia: First(ly), First of all, Second(ly), Third(ly), Lastly, Finally, To begin with, To start with, In the first/second/third place, For one thing, For another thing

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"From what I know,we have two task here which is **first** we have to list down 30 ICT terms and the **last one** is List 10 webside for english learner."*

The use of "first", "last one" do not seem to be different; but the less attention in online writing is observed in the " *webside"and" english"* and also in *"I know,we".* As it could be seen the spacing is also problematic.

6- Adding as reported in the encyclopaedia: Moreover, Furthermore, In addition, As well as that, On top of that, Another thing, What is more, Besides, In any case, Also

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"For the ICT terms we have to state the true meaning base on dictionary and **also** the meaning in the ICT terms itself".*

*"**besidesi'm** having difficulties in logging on to this forum before.. sorry again...* 😵 *"*

The use of "also" and "besides" do not seem to be different as both of them indicate addition, but in *"**besidesi'm**"* the capitalization of the subject and spacing is disregarded.

7- Generalizing as reported in the encyclopaedia: On the whole, In general, In all/most/many/some cases, Broadly speaking, By and large, To a great extent, Apart from, Except for....

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"**most** of the words that you picked are the ones that are easy to remember!!!!!"*

*"there are many examples. **some of them** i already know, and **some** of them u can just try to find".*

The use of "most", "some of them" and "some" are not different; but, capitalization is disregarded again in" *there are", "some", and "most".* Besides, some forms of symbols are used instead of some words e.g. use of " u" as for "you". Also the frequent use of exclamation marks seem to replace tag questions and ask for agreement.

8- Exemplification as reported in the encyclopaedia: For instance, For example, In particular, Such as, e.g.

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"another example is **virus**."*

It does not seem that we experience any difference for exemplification.

9- Logical Consequence as reported in the encyclopaedia: Thus, Hence, Accordingly, Therefore, As a result, Consequently, So, Then, That's why

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"I divided it **so**, Eyzzah and Elisha are required for each person to find another 2 websites.*

*"all of you can just reply through my earlier post "ICT TERM" **so that** we all can read your answer just in one page..."*

The use of "so" and "so that" shows the logical consequence in online writing too.

10- Making Things Clear/Softening and Correcting: I mean, Actually, That is to say, In other words, I think, I feel, I reckon, I guess, In my view/opinion, Apparently, So to speak, More or less, Sort of, Kind of, Well, Really, At least, I am afraid, I suppose
 Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"**i think** the 2nd task require us to find any language site to learn a language..."*

 *"window,**supposedly** refers to a thing in the house, **while** in ICt term it refers to the program in the computer."*
The use of " I think", "supposedly" and "while" do not seem to undergo any change in the meaning except for less care employed about the use of capitalization and spacing.

11- Gaining Time as reported in the encyclopaedia: Let me see, Let's see, Well, You know, I don't know, I mean, Kind of, Sort of

Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"**well** its part of our student life"* and*"AZIE   **well**, how about backbone, handshake and cookies?"*

*"**imkinda**[kind of] outdated when it comes to computers".*

Both use of "well" seem to indicate gaining time and *"**imkinda**[kind of]* seem to denote making things more clear.

12- Showing One's Attitude to What One Is Saying: Honestly, Frankly, No doubt
Verbatim DM data from online environment:
*"**To be honest**, i've never heard about the term 'ANCHOR' in ICT".*

*"i **honestly** think that it would be easier*

The use of "to be honest" and " honestly" seem to denote no change from the standard written discourse. But, the less care about capitalization is observed.

13- Persuading as reported in the encyclopaedia: After all, Look, No doubt
Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"**See**, we can work together and boost our English".*

The use of "see" seem to indicate persuasion in the digital writing too.

14- Referring to the Other Person's Expectations: Actually, In fact, As a matter of fact, To tell the truth, Well
Verbatim DM data from online environment:

*"I **actually** think mona is right and blackboard is an ict term!".*

*"**In fact** i love the fact about the mouse pen."*

The use of "actually" and " In fact" seem to show reference to other's expectation, but again less attention to capitalization, even in the case of proper nouns e.g. "mona", and subject pronouns is observed.

15- Summing Up as reported in the encyclopaedia: In conclusion, To sum up, Briefly, In brief, In short, In Summary

Writing research could be generally grouped into two groups**:** (a) writing as a product of already learned knowledge, and (b) writing as a process the writers go through. Critiques of the first viewpoint argue that the written text is the outcome of a complex process (Williams, 2014). On the contrary, White (1998) points out that dealing with issues of grammar is not sufficient for writing. Seow (2002) proposes writing as a process of four main stages**:** planning, drafting, revising, and editing, and Brown (2015) argues that a writer needs to go through stages of 'pre-writing, writing, revision, and editing'. For sure, each stage necessitates different rules and activities to go through.

- In the pre-writing (planning) stage writers use different techniques such as**:** reading, skimming and/or scanning, brainstorming, listing, etc. to form ideas and organization in mind.

- In the writing (drafting) stage writers refine the thesis, link the ideas, and pattern the paragraphs which were put in an order.

- In the revision stage expressions and organization of the text are revised. Peer-reviewing for content, using the teacher's feedback, reading aloud among peers for sharing feedback on the draft, and proofreading are some of the useful techniques.

-After the revision, errors of surface grammar like spelling, punctuation and usage are corrected (Brown, 2015).

Communicators in discussion forums seem to go through all the four stages. However some stages seem to gain little attention for communicators that are actually typing their message in the electronic environment. The first stage, that is, pre-writing, seems to be easily performed using online affordances. Access to oceans of information in the form of written or pictorial modes, and the capability of digital age students in quick scanning and skimming of online materials, use of different supplementary information such as in text-hyperlinks, and the fast pace of online information presentation, actually facilitates the use of this stage in online writing practices.

The other two stages focus on distinctly different aspects. As for the second stage of drafting, computer facilities such as, the option of copying and pasting useful and relevant material makes the writing very convenient; although, it can increase the possibility of unethical activities like plagiarism. The convenience of the third and fourth stages of writing (revision and editing) are also increased through the ease of sharing information, getting feedback, ease of reviewing, and monitoring own and peers' posts in an online discussion forum for the editing stage.

Online writers seem to employ good writers' strategies as put forward by Cohen (1990) in that they take the purpose of the writing in mind, think about their readers, and clarify the intent and function of the text. Unity of the written material as another important aspect of writing is essential for topic development. Knowledge of cohesion and cohesive devices and their use is necessary in the text development. As Halliday and Hasan (2013) put it, cohesion is a semantic concept and refers to relations of meanings that exist within the text.

Coherence places elements of a text together. A coherent text provides the reader with the opportunity to follow the context easily. In this respect, cohesive devices, or what are called DMs in this study, provide the linkages within the text. In written discourse, punctuation, organization, and the DMs link sentences into paragraphs, paragraphs into sections, as the whole text is constructed. Although online Net-Generation communicators are actually writing (typing) the ideas in the form of words, sentences, and possibly paragraphs; they do not seem to care much about word choice, punctuation, lengthy DMs, or grammatical rules. Data from the participants'

online interactions provide the evidence. A quote from one of the students also seems to support the point**:**

"If I am speaking[online written communication] *to my friends, Grammar does not count, I just speak whatever comes into my mind, on the chat room it is even worse, you don't stick to full sentences, you speak in phrases and you speak in shortened words"*

As the purpose of writing is firstly to produce completely accurate and comprehensible pieces of information; style, word redundancy and avoidance of ambiguous terms occur at a later stage of the writing process. Raimes's (1983) outlines several principles of writing that contribute to the lucid, articulate, and effective communication of ideas in long- hand writing. These are noted below and compared with the online writings of the participants of the study**:**

- Syntax**:** Sentence structure, sentence boundaries; (in online environment, less structured sentences were used as the language used in the speech). As this**:** *"anyway miena, u did a good jopb, i like lots of ict term which some of them even me couldnt think of... kisses for you brainy!!~~* 😄*"*
- Content**:** Relevance, clarity, originality, logic; (in online environment, considerations of relevance, clarity, and originality were employed).
  Like what Miena said to Nurin**:***"i found that you manage to list a number of ict term as well as the original meaning very well."*
- Grammar**:** Rules for verbs, agreement, articles, pronouns; (in online environment, less care about grammatical rules were observed). Evidence comes from Annis and Miena communication**:** *"hyeanis!*
  after read through your list, i highlighted 3 words which are similar to mine.Bug, cookie and anchor. The interesting part is you have come out with terms that i have never come across before which is really good. 😁*"*
- Mechanism**:** Handwriting, spelling, punctuation; (in online environment, less care about spelling, and punctuation were employed in spite of the fact that they are red-underlined by the software)**:**
  "u did a good jopb, i like lots of ict term which some of them even me couldnt think of kisses for you brainy!!~~"
  "i think this will help student for their study ...we also can improved our language"
- Organization**:** Paragraphs, topic and support, cohesion and unity; (in online environment, there seems to be less care about organization, but care was employed regarding the relevance, cohesion, and unity of the text).
- Word choice**:** Vocabulary, idiom, tone; (the online written material contained simple, short, and mostly abbreviated form of the words)**:**
  "nisai think we hv to find website that use to language ,then decribe about that"
  "it;s ok i also not sure ,i ask my friend. see hw our other group member 😁*"*
- Purpose**:** The reason for writing; (in online environment, the writing also proved to be purposeful)**:**
  "maybe you can read my post to be more clear about that... 😁*" and* By Muni**:***"ya, priya, you can read my post as well."*
- Audience**:** The reader/s; (in the online environment, less care was employed regarding the audience through the sense of anonymity possibly provided by lack of eye-to-eye contact). Actually online communication proved to be more beneficial for shy and introvert students in that

they could overcome their fear and embarrassment and interact without the feeling of awkwardness**:**

"i think this[online DF]*will help student for their study ...we also can improved our language"*

- The writer's process**:** Getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts, revising; (in the online environment, less care was employed in writing drafts and going through the process of pre-writing. There is a sense of familiarity and closeness possibly brought about by frequent online interactions. There was no negative feeling reported for the possible committed errors. As for the revising, it could be and was easily done through ease of reviewing and monitoring their own and their peers' posts in discussion forums). Like what Nora said in response to her class mate who noted her for a mistake**:**

"oh. I am sorry. you are right. My mistake. Sorry... 😎"

Or what Nadia said when a friend told her that she had problems doing the task**:**

"I think I have done it correctly. I guess you need to read mine again." and in response, Nora posted**:** *"okay. thanks nora.. i'll edit mine.. 😬"*

McDonough et al., (2013) argue that writing is carried out through four related and, at the same time, distinct levels. The first level deals with handwriting, spelling, and punctuation; the second level with sentences, grammar, and word choice; the third level with paragraphs; and the fourth level with overall organization.

Data from the study showed that in an online interaction, some of these levels are *less emphasized* while others are *more*. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and word choice, for example receive less attention on the part of contributors to DFs; while cohesion, overall organization and functional short and simple DMs, seem to attract more of the participants' attention. In most cases, to compensate for the lack of eye-to-eye contact, signalling affect, surprise, delight, comprehension, approval, rejection, question, and many other aspects of discourse markers are performed through the creative use of symbols and emoticons (Shakarami, 2012).

DISCUSSION

As a productive skill, writing has received great attention from many educators. However, technological developments demand different types of writing skills. The study of discourse markers, as indispensable parts of writing, seems both logical and necessary. Discourse markers generally function to improve writing fluency and to help students break their limitation and barriers in terms of expressing themselves. From a teaching writing perspective there are two famous viewpoints**:** (a) the traditional product-view, and (b) the relatively new process-view (see Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005).

The product-view of writing focuses on the completed product and absolutely emphasizes correctness; whereas the process view emphasizes the students' potential of thinking and writing (see Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). One of the conclusions drawn from the results of this study indicates that the written language students used in their electronic posts contain similarities to that of the process view of writing. In short, the written language used was at times monitored, reviewed, revised, and corrected by the students themselves and their peers. The writing was led by the content, the topic of interaction, and the task in hand. Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) call this active, social, and learner-centred learning.

Another noteworthy finding of this study is that there exists high use of discourse markers that were shorter in structure, rather than lengthy ones and many abbreviated forms. This may be

explained through the fast pace of Net-Generation students' life and their desire for speed and immediacy. Less care for grammaticality and capitalization which were frequently observed in the study seem to be a part of 'individualization' or 'customization' of the use of discourse markers. In fact the 21st millennium language learners seem to customize the language of online interaction in the way they are facile with. According to Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) these are admirable goals for instruction and learning as well as being time savers.

To sum up, the results of the study suggest that relieving students from mandatory use of DMs might be promoted for online writing in today's mostly paperless educational systems. Based on Tornow (1997) it could be argued that the border line between the online writing system and the spoken language is to a great extent blurred, because most of the discourse markers traditionally believed to be specific to speech are used in online writing and are very close to informal spoken language. It seems that the principles of discourse markers used in written language are not translated into the online written interactions. In order to enhance the quality of online writing; students need first to learn how to form their new thoughts and then how to communicate them effectively using the digital discourse markers which suit their interactive, quick, and learner-based trends. These would overcome their limitations in their effective and effortless self-expression. No doubt, recognition and effective use of discourse markers in an online environment is essential in construction and communication of cohesive, unified, and task-based online written discourse as a prerequisite for enhanced language learning.

In conclusion, there was a difficulty in confirming the hypothesis that there were conversational elements in the online communication of DFs which reflect characteristics and use of DMs of oral discourse, in contrast to the language of formal written discourse in an educational and language learning setting. Future work could consider focusing on non-educational forums to see whether similar digital discourse markers apply.

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Turkish Abstract
İngilizce Öğrenme Ortamında Dijital Diskors Yapıcıları: Sosyalleşme Forumları

Linguistik diskors analizi dilin sosyal, kültürel, etnografik ve karşılaştırmalı çalışılmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu analizin kaçınılmaz diskors göstergeleri yazılı dilden daha çok informal konuşmada rapor adilmektedir. Bunlar 'bağlaç kelimeleri', 'cümleleri' ya da 'cümle birleştiricileri' olarak metinde yapıştırıcı gibi parçaları birbirine bağlamak için farklı seviyelerde kullanılabilir. Bu çalışmanın amacı senkronize online etkileşimde ve ağda kullanılan diskors göstergelerini literatürde daha önce rapor edilen tartışma forumlarındaki diskors göstergeleriyle karşılaştırmalı olarak belirlemektedir. Çalışmada formal yazılı diskorsda kullanılann diskors göstergeleri muhtemel pragmatik ve diskors seviye farklılıklarını yazmanın iki modunda (formal yazma ve online iletişimde yazma) belirlemek için dikkate alınmıştır. Bulgular öğrencilern elektronik postlarında kullandıkları yazılı dilin yazmanın süreç görüşüne oldukça benzediğini ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle dijital sosyalleşme forumlarında kullanılan yazılı dilin birkaç kere öğrencilern kendileri ve arkadaşları tarafından control edildiği, revise edildiği, üstünden geçildiği ve düzeltiği belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: diskors analizi, diskors göstergeleri, ağ içinde olma, online iletişim, dil öğrenme

French Abstract
Marqueurs de Discours Numériques dans un ESL Apprenant Arrangement: le Cas de Forums Socialisation

L'analyse du discours linguistique joue un rôle important dans les études sociales, culturelles, ethnographiques et comparatives de langues. Les marqueurs de discours comme les parties indispensables de cette analyse sont censément plus communs dans le discours informel que dans la langue écrite. Ils pourraient être utilisés aux niveaux différents, c'est-à-dire comme "la jonction des mots," la jonction des expressions, ou ' les connecteurs de phrase pour lier ensemble les pièces d'un texte comme ' la colle '. L'objectif de l'étude est de vérifier les marqueurs de discours employés dans des interactions en ligne synchrones et la gestion de réseau par la comparaison constante de marqueurs de discours utilisés dans les forums de discussion (DF) avec les marqueurs de discours déjà rapportés dans la littérature. L'étude maintient des marqueurs de discours (des DM) utilisés dans le discours écrit formel pour identifier n'importe quelles différences de niveau pragmatiques, ou discoursal probables en DM utilisés dans les deux modes d'écrire (l'écriture formelle et la dactylo dans la communication en ligne). Les découvertes indiquent que la langue écrite que les étudiants utilisent à leurs postes électroniques est en grande partie semblable à celui de la vue de processus d'écriture. Spécifiquement, la langue écrite utilisée à un forum socialisation numérique est de temps en temps, contrôlée, passée en revue, révisée et corrigée par les étudiants eux-mêmes et leurs pairs.

Mots-clés: analyse du discours, des marqueurs de discours, le réseautage, la communication en ligne, l'apprentissage des langues

Arabic Abstract

أقلام الخطاب الرقمي في إعداد التعلم ESL: قضية المنتضيات الاجتماعية

تحليل الخطاب اللغوي يلعب دورا هاما في الدراسات الاجتماعية والثقافية والإثنوغرافية، ودراسة مقارنة اللغات. أقلام الخطاب كأجزاء لا غنى عنها في هذا التحليل ويقال أكثر شيوعا في خطاب رسمي من اللغة المكتوبة. يمكن استخدامها على مستويات مختلفة، أي أنها "عبارة تربط بين '،' ربط العبارات '، أو' الموصلات الجملة" لربط معا قطعة من نص مثل "الغراء". الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو التحقق من أقلام الخطاب المستخدمة في التفاعل على الانترنت متزامن والتواصل من خلال المقارنة المستمرة من أقلام الخطاب المستخدمة في منتديات النقاش (DF) مع أقلام الخطاب ذكرت سابقا في الأدب. وتؤكد الدراسة أقلام الخطاب (DMS) المستخدمة في الخطاب مكتوبا رسميا من أجل تحديد أي اختلافات مستوى واقعية، أو discoursal المحتملة في الطرائق المستخدمة في وسائط اثنين من الكتابة (الكتابة الرسمية والكتابة في التواصل عبر الإنترنت). وتشير النتائج إلى أن اللغة المكتوبة التي يستخدمها الطلاب في مناصبهم الإلكترونية إلى حد كبير مماثلة لتلك التي من وجهة نظر عملية الكتابة. على وجه التحديد، اللغة المكتوبة المستخدمة في منتدى التنشئة الاجتماعية الرقمية هي في بعض الأحيان، مراقبة، مراجعة وتنقيح وتصحيح من قبل الطلاب أنفسهم وأقرانهم.

كلمات البحث: تحليل الخطاب، وأقلام الخطاب، والشبكات والاتصالات عبر الإنترنت، تعلم اللغة

German Abstract
Digitale Diskursmarker in einem EFS Lern Rahmen: Der Fall von Sozialisierung Foren

Die Analyse des sprachlichen Diskurs spielt eine wichtige Rolle in der sozialen, kulturellen, ethnographischen und vergleichende Studien der Sprachen. Diskursmarker als unverzichtbare Bestandteile dieser Analyse sind Berichten zufolge häufiger in der Umgangssprache als in der Schriftsprache. Sie könnten auf verschiedenen Ebenen verwendet werden, das heißt als "Verknüpfung Worte", "Verknüpfung von Phrasen" oder "Satz-Anschlüsse 'zusammen zu binden Stücke eines Textes wie "Leim". Das Ziel der Studie ist es, die Diskursmarker in synchronen Online-Interaktionen eingesetzt, um festzustellen , und die Vernetzung durch ständigen Vergleich von Diskursmarkern in den Diskussionsforen (DF) mit den Diskursmarker verwendet bereits in der Literatur beschrieben. Die Studie unterhält Diskursmarker (DMs) im formellen schriftlichen Diskurs um alle wahrscheinlichen pragmatische oder discoursal Ebene Unterschiede in den DMs in den beiden Modi des Schreibens (formale Schreiben und das Schreiben in die Online-Kommunikation) zur Identifizierung verwendet. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Schriftsprache, die Schüler in ihren elektronischen Beiträge verwenden ist zu einem großen Teil ähnlich der der Prozess-Sicht des Schreibens. Insbesondere ist die Schriftsprache in einem digitalen Sozialisierung Forum verwendet manchmal, überwacht, überprüft, überarbeitet und korrigiert von den Studenten selbst und ihren Kollegen.

Schlüsselwörter: diskursanalyse, diskursmarker, networking, online-kommunikation, sprachen lernen

Malaysian Abstract
Penanda Wacana digital dalam Cara ESL Pembelajaran: Kes Sosialisasi Forum

Analisis wacana bahasa memainkan peranan yang penting dalam kajian sosial, budaya, etnografi dan perbandingan bahasa. penanda wacana sebagai bahagian penting dalam analisis ini dilaporkan lebih biasa dalam ucapan formal daripada dalam bahasa bertulis. Ia boleh digunakan pada tahap yang berbeza, iaitu sebagai 'kata-kata yang menghubungkan', 'frasa menghubungkan', atau 'penyambung ayat' untuk mengikat bersama-sama kepingan teks seperti 'gam'. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan penanda wacana yang digunakan dalam interaksi atas talian segerak dan rangkaian melalui perbandingan berterusan penanda wacana yang digunakan dalam forum perbincangan (DF) dengan penanda wacana yang telah dilaporkan dalam kesusasteraan. Kajian ini mengekalkan penanda wacana (DMS) yang digunakan dalam wacana bertulis formal untuk mengenal pasti apa-apa pragmatik, atau *discoursal* perbezaan tahap kemungkinan dalam DMS digunakan dalam dua mod bertulis (penulisan formal dan menaip dalam komunikasi atas talian). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa bahasa bertulis yang digunakan pelajar dalam elektronik adalah sebahagian besarnya sama dengan pandangan proses penulisan. Secara khusus, bahasa bertulis digunakan dalam forum sosialisasi digital pada masa itu, dipantau, disemak, dan dibetulkan oleh pelajar sendiri dan rakan-rakan mereka.

Kata Kunci: analisis wacana, penanda wacana, rangkaian, komunikasi atas talian, pembelajaran bahasa