

## Scrutinizing the Lecturers' Spoken Discourse Markers Used in the Virtual Classroom

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**Abstract.** Classroom learning is an active interaction between the lecturer and students. In its implementation, support from both parties is needed to achieve the learning objectives as expected. Discourse Markers (DMs) are tools used by lecturer and students in the classroom to control their conversation so that the core of the conversation is readily accepted. Since Indonesian students belong to EFL learners, using DMs between native and non-native speakers at the school is an exciting discussion to explore. Of course, many distinctions between both may enrich our insight into DMs. The subjects of this research are two lecturers who teach virtually via Zoom; one of the lecturers is a native speaker, and the other one is a non-native speaker. The qualitative descriptive design will be applied in this research. The data are taken from the learning Zoom recording in the English study program and uploaded to the YouTube channel. It will be transcribed into writing, and then the transcripts will be analyzed to find variations and the functions of discourse markers used by lecturers in the classroom. The theory applied in this study is Biber 2007) theory about linking adverbials or DMs. This research's expected result is that the study will show the similarities and differences between DMs used by native and non-native speaker lecturers.

**Keywords:** Spoken discourse markers, classroom interaction, online learning.

### 1 Introduction

The dynamics of the world's people's lives have changed drastically in line with the outbreak of Covid-19 cases two years ago. This is what causes a lot of switching methods in the implementation of human activities. One proof of the method transition in daily human activities is the existence of a work-from-home policy for workers and study-from-home (PJJ) for students [1]. Online learning during this pandemic seems to have had many impacts in the field of education, especially on the teaching and learning methods that should be applied.

The Minister of Education and Culture (MOEC) worries about learning loss due to the pandemic because face-to-face learning is abolished; then he sets an emergency curriculum as a substitute for the formal curriculum at all levels of education. Kemendikbud said that MOEC has prepared scenarios to enhance online learning for students through an application named "portal Rumah

Belajar” [2]. The emergency curriculum that has been established is expected to be able to reduce the difficulties of distance learning (PJJ). This curriculum applies blended learning as a learning method that is considered effective for optimizing PJJ. In its implementation, blended learning is carried out through Learning Management System (LMS) and Video Conference (VC) applications such as ZOOM Meeting and Google Meet.

During face-to-face learning so far, student activity in the classroom is easy to assess. The interaction between lecturers and students seems alive when it is done in the classroom. Lecture classes are expected to have an intimate atmosphere between lecturers and students. Interaction in the form of discussions or questions and answers in the classroom can turn the class on so that the learning process carried out will be easily understood by students.

However, this is no longer the case for online lectures. Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen explain that since lectures were conducted online, student activity had drastically decreased [3]. In our country, up to 60% of students are worrying about losing their studies at the school level because of the pandemic crisis. Besides, students who are still getting a chance to study virtually are less active. It seems that students are bored since they tend to use the audio mute and camera-off features when the lecturer asks questions. This affects classroom interaction which has been well established in the real classroom.

When communication between lecturers and students has been communicatively established, then the essence of learning will certainly be easily absorbed by students. Especially in the teaching and learning process in the English Education Study Program, where the language of instruction is English, communication between lecturers and students is an interesting topic to be discussed.

The use of English in Indonesia is as a foreign language (EFL), so it is not applied as a daily language. Fluency in speaking English is not owned by everyone, of course. However, some points need to be considered to have good English speaking skills. One of them is by using discourse markers in their conversations in class.

Many studies investigated spoken DMs in the teaching context. The study about students' oral presentation shows that students still lack words and connector words [4]. It reveals that the students are not familiar with DMs. Besides, Trihartanti reports that in casual and spontaneous utterances, students are still wrong in using discourse markers [5]. They cannot maximize the use of DMs in their conversations. Those problems support the importance of delivering some materials about DMs to students. It should be discussed then since there are many problems with using it.

Discourse markers are tools used to connect one sentence to another. Richards and Schmidt reveal that discourse markers are expressions that are found in discourse; they connect the discourse structure but do not have crucial meaning. Without DMs, the sentences are not making sense. By utilizing DMs, the gaps or stops between words in our utterances seems natural. That goes without saying, discourse markers in daily conversation are needed to show the speaker's expressions to make the conversation alive.

There is a wide range of terminology used by DM scholars, reflecting their different perspectives. In the literature, DMs have been referred to by several terms, such as cohesive elements [6], conjunctions [7], discursive markers [8], pragmatic markers [9], discursive operators [10], conjunctive adverbs [11], linking words [12], logical connectors [13], linking

adverbs [14], and discourse connectors [15]. In this study, the term "discourse markers" is more familiar to be used. It refers to those various terms that mark the transitions within a text. The following provides the variation of DMs completed with their function and examples [14]:

- 1) Interjections.  
Words or sounds used to express emotions suddenly. e.g.: wow, ah, oh, and aha.
- 2) Greetings & farewell expressions.  
It is a response to the situation. For example: hello, hi, and good evening.
- 3) Linking adverbials.  
It is words or phrases performing the connection of an utterance and prior discourse. Such as: however, in conclusion, after all, etc.
- 4) Stance adverbials.  
Part of lexical things that carries on semantically as an operator upon the whole sentence. For example: perhaps, of course, usually, and hopefully.
- 5) Vocatives.  
Expressions of addressee, but are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the argument of prosodically; including addresses and call.
- 6) Response elicitors  
Showing expressions used by the speaker to get agreement from the listener. Such as: okay, huh, eh, etc.
- 7) Response forms  
To give responses or remarks. For example: yes, no, I see, etc.
- 8) Hesitator.  
Give space or take the time to think. Such as: hmm, err, and emm.
- 9) Various polite Speech-Act Formulate.  
Show polite expressions. E.g.: Thank you, excuse me, and sorry.
- 10) Expletives.  
Show impolite words or rude.

It shows that there are ten kinds of DMs, their examples, and their functions. The use of those DMs should be proper to avoid misuse or overuse. By considering the function and the context, the proper use of DMs will construct a coherent and cohesive unit of thought.

Considering the situation which is closely related between discourse markers and classroom interaction in virtual learning, the following are the research problems:

1. How is the extent of the use of DMs in Indonesian classrooms?
2. How is the use of DMs in the native classroom?

3. What are the similarities and differences between the use of DMs between both?

The theory that will be applied in this study is Biber et al. 2019 theory about the textual parts of DMs.

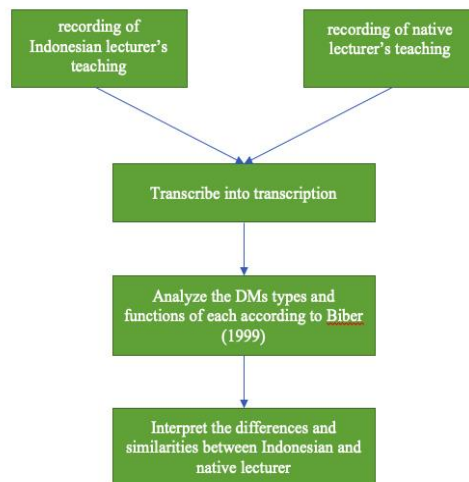
## 2 Methodology

This study investigates the discourse markers used in classroom interaction on Indonesian as EFL and what are the functions of them. This study aims to find the use of DMs among teachers in virtual learning. The descriptive qualitative approach is used in this paper. Documentation is becoming the instrument of this study. The lecturer's utterances are the object of the study. Two lecturers are the subjects; one is an Indonesian lecturer and the other one is a native lecturer.

In this study, researchers took data from two different sources. The first video is from a recording of a lecture at a state university in Indonesia and the second video is a lecture from the YouTube platform. The reason for using the first video as data in this study is that the subject is an English lecturer who is an expert in his field and has taken doctoral education abroad. That is why the researcher assumed that her mastery of English is good. Meanwhile, the lecturer in the second video data source is a native English speaker; he is a professor in Ohio, United States. The professor has 5.8 thousand subscribers on his channel. His current video has been watched by more than one million viewers. Both lecturers (Indonesian and native) are teaching for about 1,5 hours.

After that, the researcher found the DMs on the transcript. Those DMs are then categorized on a table; which one is an interjection, which one is a greeting expression, etc.

The following figure is the theoretical framework of the current study:



**Figure 1.** The Theoretical Framework of Scrutinizing the Discourse.

After the DMs were categorized and grouped, the researcher counted the amount and the percentage for each transcript. The description of DMs function was also interpreted to know the functions. Both results then compared: how many percentages of DMs in Indonesian classrooms and native classrooms are used.

### 3 Findings and Discussions

In this section, there will be an explanation and elaboration of the research result. There will be provided the result of the Indonesian lecture transcription and the native lecture transcription containing DMs.

#### 3.1 Discourse markers used by the non-native lecturer

The first video is a lecture that is done in Indonesia, in other words, it is a non-native lecturer. The lecturer is explaining SLA or second language acquisition. The online lecture class seems so fun because the lecturers and students can work together.

In the video, the researcher found that the lecturer was about too native-like in her utterances. From all the information said, the lecturer was accustomed to speaking English because she has been going abroad for about 3 years.

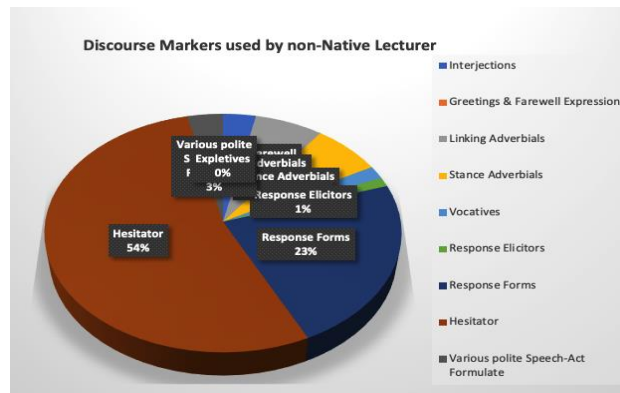
Now, the researcher would like to show the use of oral DMs in non-native classrooms.

<b>Kinds of Oral DMs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Interjections	24	3,26%
Greetings & Farewell Expression	0	0,00%
Linking Adverbials	50	6,79%
Stance Adverbials	51	6,93%
Vocatives	13	1,77%
Response Elicitors	9	1,22%
Response Forms	168	22,83%
Hesitator	395	53,67%
Various polite Speech-Act Formulate	26	3,53%
Expletives	0	0,00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

**Figure 2.** Discourse Markers Used by Non-Native Lecturer.

The table above shows the use of DMs by non-native lecturer. The most frequently used oral DMs are the hesitator DMs. According to the audio transcription, the hesitators used by the lecturer are: uh, hm, and so. She used uh many times; it is about 118 times. Then, the frequency of using hm is only once; meanwhile, she used DMs about 276 times.

Then, the response form is the second frequent DM used by the lecturer. She used response forms yeah many times, it is 168 times. Followed by stance adverbials DMs which have a frequency of 51 times; they are: maybe (29 times), perhaps (once), of course (twice), obviously (7 times), clearly (5 times), typically (once), unfortunately (once), and hopefully (5 times).



**Figure 3.** Percentage of Discourse Markers Used by Non-Native Lecturer.

The linking adverbials are the fourth most frequently used oral DMs, it is 50 times. There are only two DMs that are used by the lecturer, they are still (46 times) and however (4 times). The next is the various polite speech-acting DMs (26 times); they are sorry (14 times), thank you (8 times), and please (4 times). Besides, the interjections are the next kind of DMs; they consist of oh (21 times) and wow (3 times).

Then, the lecturer also used vocative DMs “mas“ and “mbak“13 times. The next DMs used are response elicitors by saying okay 9 times. The other DMs are greetings & farewell expressions and expletives, but here the lecturer did not use the DMs.

### 3.2 Discourse markers used by the native lecturer

In this part, the researchers would like to describe the lecture activity of a native lecturer. That was the first time the professor met virtually with his students. So, he told his students anything about him, the university, their department, and many more.

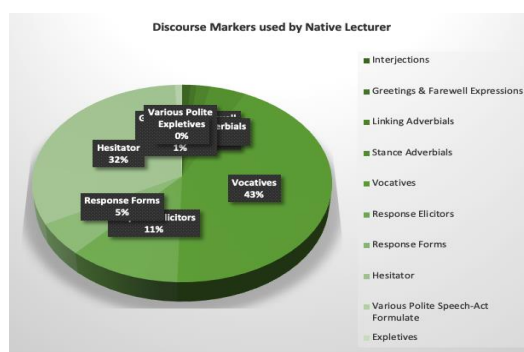
It appears in the video that the lecturer teaches in a relaxed and fun way. He talked a lot about everyday life. Because of this familiar atmosphere, the lecturer uses a lot of greetings: hey, you, and hey guys. The following table shows the use of oral DMs by the native lecturer.

Kinds of Oral DMs	Frequency	Percentage
Interjections	8	0,95%
Greetings & Farewell Expressions	6	0,71%
Linking Adverbials	13	1,54%
Stance Adverbials	35	4,16%
Vocatives	363	43,11%
Response Elicitors	95	11,28%
Response Forms	46	5,46%
Hesitator	269	31,95%
Various Polite Speech-Act Formulate	7	0,83%
Expletives	0	0,00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

**Figure 4.** Discourse Markers Used by Native Lecturer.

Figure 4 above shows the use of DMs by the native lecturer. The most frequently used oral DMs are the vocative DMs. According to the audio transcription, the vocatives used by the lecturer are: you, hey, and hey guys. He used you guys many times; it is about 32 times. Then, the frequency of using you is about 280 times; meanwhile, he used DMs hey only 3 times.

The next DM used is hesitator. It is the second most frequently used DM by the lecturer since there are 269 hesitators he used. After that, the third DM that is used by the native lecturer is response elicitors. There are 95 response elicitors in the virtual classroom; such as: huh and okay. The DM okay is used by the lecturer 94 times; meanwhile the DM huh is only one. Then, the lecturer also applied response forms DMs; such as: yes, no, I see, and yeah. The DM yeah is the most frequently used, it is 30 times.



**Figure 5.** Percentage of Discourse Markers Used by Native Lecturer.

The stance adverbials DM is the next DM used by the native lecturer. The researcher found the words maybe, obviously, usually, and hopefully. There are 35 DMs in this DM. Moreover, the DMs linking adverb is also used by the lecturer about 13 times. The interjections DMs are only 8 times; they consist of oh (5 times); wow (2 times); and ouch (only once). Next, is the various polite speech-act formulation. It is used by the lecturer only 7 times. Meanwhile, the greetings and farewell expressions (such as: hi, hello) are used 6 times. The expletives are none in this chance.

### **3.3 Discussion**

The findings show that the use of DMs by non-native and native lecturers is different. The non-native lecturer used hesitators much more than the native. Meanwhile, the native used more vocabulary than the non-native lecturer. The research assumes that the non-native lecturer needed much time to think before saying. While a native lecturer; he has mastered the use of DMs in his everyday life. He did not need much time before saying it; it is spontaneous DMs coming from his mouth.

The use of discourse markers on non-native tongues seems unfamiliar. Besides that, the mastery of non-native DMs is still low, so they tend to only use hesitator DMs (um, hm, ee) and response forms (yeah, yes). Meanwhile, a native English lecturer is good at mastering DMs, so the variations of DMs used are more numerous and varied. In addition, the similarities between both are: they did not use expletives DMs in their virtual classroom.

Related to learning in virtual classrooms; it appears that the atmosphere in the virtual class is more relaxed than in the offline class. Students in offline classes are more tense and serious in listening to the teacher's explanation. Whereas in online classes, students feel more independent and can listen to the teacher's explanation while doing other activities. Therefore, there needs to be an effort from the teacher to organize the class, so that students stay focused on the lesson. One of them is by changing the classroom atmosphere to be comfortable and familiar so that students can understand the material well.

In conclusion, the use of DMs between native and non-native is different in terms of diversity and mastery. While the similarities that can be concluded are, both of them do not use expletive DMs or harsh words in learning forums in the classroom.

### **Recommendation**

Through these research findings, the researcher recommends that DMs are truly needed in daily conversation. Especially for an English teacher, lecturer, or even English students; the mastery of DMs in communication can prove how master we are in English. DMs can make our communication seem so smooth and comfortable. It also can determine the quality of a person's communication with the other person. When the DM used seems to make the other person comfortable and connected, then the purpose of the interaction will be easy to achieve. When the DM used is too monotonous and disconnected, the interaction goals become difficult to achieve. That is why DMs are important to be taught and learned.

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