

UPDATING THE STUDENTS' MASTERY ON DISCOURSE MARKERS TO IMPROVE THEIR READING SKILLS

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Abstract

The current study aimed at justifying that updating or upgrading the mastery on discourse markers (DMs) could improve the students' reading skills. It is arguably true that DMs do facilitate readers to comprehend texts in terms of the logical and grammatical relation. Therefore, an action research involving 21 students randomly selected as the subjects of the study were conducted in Reading Classes. Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2 were administered to generate the data consisting of the progress of their reading skills. Theoretical insights on DMs (function and uses) were also highlighted including the teaching procedures to support the findings of the classroom action research. It turns out that despite the fact that there are 4 types of DMs, only three of them were mostly used in the reading texts, namely **contrastive**, **elaborative** and **inferential** markers. Updating or upgrading DMs proves **effective** to improve the students' reading skills as there were increases in scores to indicate improvements.

Key words: discourse markers, action research, reading skills

1.1 Background

Reading skill has become a major concern over the past decades since it has come to be known that reading is the mother of learning. In an academic context, a student cannot write a single sentence for his or her essay assignment without ever reading references related to the topic of the assignment. He or she will also keep mute (silent) in a classroom discussion without prior reading activities of the materials under discussion. Thus, reading inspires both writing and speaking activities. In other words, an individual simply reproduces what he or she has read in writing and or speaking. Through reading input of knowledge will enter the thinking repertoire.

However, the index of reading skill for the people of Indonesia is still relatively low. It is argued that "...Adults in Jakarta show low levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy compared to adults in the other countries and economies that participated in the Survey of Adult Skills. This is not surprising, given that most participating countries/economies are more economically developed than Indonesia" (OECD, 2016). This is a serious problem faced by the Indonesian generation. They are mostly not motivated to read lengthy articles to develop their knowledge.

Instead, they are busy Facebooking, even some producing hoaxes to destabilize the country. In case, they need or are required to know something of importance, they will simply turn to Google search engine which can provide people with almost any knowledge of both practical and theoretical grounds.

Reading society has not been well established in Indonesia. It was argued (Iftanti, 2012) that most of the EFL students do not indicate to have good English reading habits despite their completion of studies from Elementary School to College level. Besides, the length of time to learn English does not have any positive correlation with the level of proficiency.

The underlying problem of the current study is that, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, nowadays students pay less attention to the **discourse markers (DMs)** help them comprehend the text next to, of course, the word power or vocabulary stocks (Kusumarasyati, 2008) which will guarantee complete comprehension. It is argued that discourse markers may sometimes help the students guess the meaning of unknown words. To say it in other words, discourse markers (cohesive devices) will guide the readers to the flows of ideas—what comes before what and for what purposes

A recent MA thesis (Pjurko, 2015) proved that in general DMs in the four genres is quite differently distributed. It turns out that the frequency of occurrences of DMs is higher in the spoken genres than in the written ones. The highest distribution of DMs is in the interviews, whereas the lowest in the conventions. Considering the variety of forms of DMs, many different forms of DMs in the analyzed genres were identified. The most diverse forms of DMs were found in the interviews (97 different forms), and the least diverse in the conventions (21 forms). Based on the above background, the research questions of the current study can be formulated as (1) Theoretically, what discourse markers do the students have to know in order for them to fully comprehend English texts? (2) How does a teacher of reading classes update the students' mastery of discourse markers?(3) Does updating discourse markers prove effective to improve the students' reading skill?

2. Theoretical Highlights

Much has been talked about English as a Foreign language since the beginning of translation method implementation to the emergence of multimedia approaches to English Language Teaching (ELT). The discussion finally converges that learning a language (of which English is one) into the mastery of the four language skills. In the past, however, a language class may emphasize on anyone of the four language skills. It depends on how English will be used by the students. This leads to the emergence of ESP (English for Specific Purposes).

With respect to the study of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, there has been somehow a controversial issue attributed to the shifting paradigm of the terms 'foreign

language’. In the past (Purwanto, 2018; Fadhillah, 2011), the term ‘foreign language’ refers to a language which is not used as a formal or instructional language at school or college. It is simply a lesson to introduce the students to the new horizon of thinking, to passively know a little bit of English. However, the world has turned otherwise, whether you like it or not, EFL has to be taught covering the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing. Every high school leaver is expected to be able to carry on simple exchanges in English; though the reality is not as expected.

It is commonly argued (Purwanto, 2018) that English as a foreign language is not used as a medium of communication in a discursive practice in the society. Rather, it is only taught at school as one of the school subject aimed at equipping the students with basic communicative competence in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) though in practice reading has been very much emphasized. However, as it has been touched upon that the concept of a foreign language has been changing over time, it is necessary to review historically the changing concept of a foreign language.

In Dutch colonialization, as Fadhillah (2011) quoted in Purwanto (2017) elaborates, it is surprising that a graduate of MULO (SMP level) had got a considerably good English proficiency. It was logical since the system of education was very good and only rich people could manage to study in MULO. Nevertheless, it is not fair to compare the present condition with that of the past. Now, except a graduate of the English Department, a college graduate may not be able to carry on simple Exchanges in English (Purwanto, 2009). It is argued that the English is focused on reading comprehension skill. Is it? The fact turns otherwise, many, if not all, students at college level, keep reading the translated versions of the textbooks of their core subjects of studies, instead of reading the original texts written in English or any other foreign language.

2.1 Language Policy in English Letters Study Program Classes

At national level, the government of RI has set a ‘language policy’ in the world of education, in which it is an obligation to use bahasa Indonesia as a medium of instruction from early education (PAUD) through college level as further strengthened through nationalist movements, fought for the imposition of Indonesian (BI) as the language of unity throughout the country. As an explicit plan, language policy in Indonesia is stipulated in the country’s 1945 Constitution, in which the status of BI as a national and official language and the vernacular languages being recognized was clearly stated and elaborated. As the heart of Indonesia’s language policy, the 1945 Constitution, Chapter XV, provides a guideline for linguistic unity through the adoption of BI as the only national and official language, and linguistic diversity via the maintenance of the diverse local languages (Paauw, 2009; Renandya, 2004:).

However, for foreign language study programs (English, French, Germany, Japanese, Mandarin etc.), the target language can /may be used in some core subjects related to linguistics,

literature and culture as a medium of practice for the students for both receptive and productive skills.

Thus, English Literature study program FBIB Unisbank, as it is argued (Purwanto, 2017) uses English for all subjects related to language. This is not a problem because of the 1st semester, students are equipped with four (4) basic English skills 'performative Spoken English' with the weight of 10 SKS (Unisbank: Academic Guidelines 2015).

In the 2nd semester, (Purwanto, 2017) the students start learning the core subjects that force students to use English as the language of academic (instructional), such courses: Introduction to Linguistics and introduction to English Literature. In both these courses of English shall be used in the presentation of materials, textbooks, and evaluation (mid and final) semester, to name only few.

Back to the central discussion of this research, English for the English Letters Study Program—even though it is still labelled as a foreign language— must be minimally at post-intermediate level of English proficiency or B2 of Cambridge Proficiency in the four language skills. This is due to the fact that as of the second semester, some core subjects use English as the language of delivery (Unisbank: *Pedoman Akademik 2015*). Moreover, as the name suggests, letters study program has also responsible for teaching the theories of literature in which the reading skill has to be used to acquire knowledge at both theoretical and practical levels. Nevertheless, the students indicate that they have only moderate level of the reading skill. This can be seen from the fact the students prefer to read simplified novels, contemporary poems and short plays. To put it in a different way, they have not achieved the maximum level of reading competency.

2.2 The Reading Skill(s)

Of the four language skills, the reading skill(s) has been very much emphasized on any study program curriculum. Let alone in the English Department, other faculties such as Faculty of Information Technology, Faculty of Economics and business still face the same problems, such as (1) lack of reading motivation, (2) low interests in reading classes, preference of reading textbooks that have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia (Takase, A. 2007).

The sub-heading above, it was written 'The Reading Skill(s)'. The plural suffix [-s] indicates that actually reading consists of skill of skills. An individual who claims to have the reading skill actually there are more skills in itself, namely scanning, skimming, text organization, etc. Thus it is clear that reading requires skill of skills. This supports the power of extensive reading required of an individual who want to broaden the horizon of thinking (Renandya, 2007; Schwanenflugel, P. J., et.al., 2004; Yaang, A., 2007).

It is also commonly known that in order to be able to catch the ideas in a text, there are a number of reading strategies, one of which is by looking at the discourse markers (DMs) which will be explained and elaborated below:

2.3 Discourse Markers Defined

Lexically, discourse markers are words or phrases like *anyway, right, okay, as I say, to begin with*. We use them to connect, organize and manage what we say or write or to express attitude (Cambridge Dictionary accessed at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/discourse-markers/discourse-markers-so-right-okay>). From the definition, it seems that discourse markers are projected to be the property of spoken discourse. In written texts, DMs can be thought of as connectors or cohesive devices.

The study of DMs (Alami, 2015) can be approached employing Schiffrin's (1987; see Schiffrin et al, 2001) discourse perspective, Fraser's pragmatic approach (1999; 1990), Halliday and Hasan's (2006) semantic perspective on cohesion, Blakemore's (1987) theoretical perspective within the Relevance Theory, and Borderia, Salvador Pons (2005) a functional approach to the study of discourse markers.

However, in this study, Schiffrin's approach will not be elaborated since it mostly deals with spoken language while the current study deals with written text. Fraser's pragmatic approach covers three major classification of discourse (pragmatic) markers, as elaborated in Puirco (2015), namely (1) **topic change markers**, (e.g., *back to my original point, by the way, on a different note*), (2) **contrastive markers** (e.g., *in contrast, nevertheless, though*), (3) **elaborative markers** (e.g., *above all, what is more, in particular*), (4) **inferential markers** (e.g., *all things considered, consequently, therefore*).

It is argued Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meaning; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Mahlberg, 2006). Specifically speaking, expressed by conjunctions are meaning which are **additive** (e.g., *and, in addition, for instance*) **adversative** (e.g., *but, however, rather*), **causal** (e.g., *so, because, under circumstances*), and **temporal** (e.g., *then, next, finally*).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

From the above conceptual discussion, the theoretical framework of the current study can be outlined as follows:

Basically, a text consists of paragraphs which serve as the opening, the body and the conclusion of the text. Each paragraphs (of the text) consists of sentences joined to adhere to one another by means of conjunctions (discourse markers). There are two possible conductions, namely 'hidden' and 'present' conjunctions. One paragraph must have only one topic sentence. Other sentences may contradict, elaborate, adding more information, and possibly extent the idea developed in the topic sentence.

With respect to discourse markers, therefore, there are (1) **topic change markers**, (e.g., *back to my original point, by the way, on a different note*), (2) **contrastive markers** (e.g., *in contrast, nevertheless, though*), (3) **elaborative markers** (e.g., *above all, what is more, in particular*), (4) **inferential markers** (e.g., *all things considered, consequently, therefore*). There are also possibly **additive** (e.g., *and, in addition, for instance*) **adversative** (e.g., *but, however, rather*), **causal** (e.g., *so, because, under circumstances*), and **temporal** (e.g., *then, next, finally*).

The following diagram represents the construction of a text which consists of paragraph:

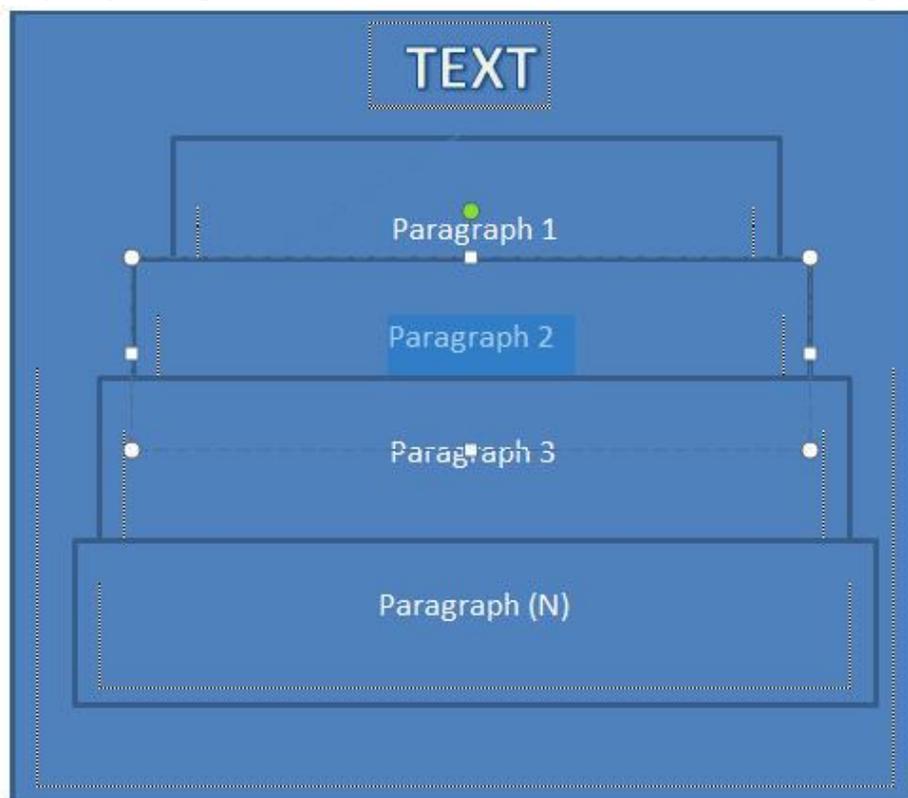


Figure 3.1 Construction of Text

It has been argued that sentences are tied together by means of discourse markers or conjunctions or cohesive devices in such a way that each of the paragraph forms a unite of idea with only one topic sentence supported by several other sentences. At the level of text, paragraphs are tied together by means of coherence devices to create a text of one unified whole.

3. Methods

3.1 Type of Research

The current study belongs to an exploratory action research (Arikunto, 2006) investigating the use of discourse markers to facilitate the students' reading comprehension skill. Next to being

helped by the mastery of lexical items, an individual or student might get facilitated in comprehending a text by making the best use of discourse markers as a guide line to construe the essential meanings of a text.

3.1 Unit of Analysis

There were two parts in terms of the unit of analysis in this study. One deals with the description of the grammatical features of all possible discourse markers. This was presented in the beginning of Chapter IV to answer Research Question 1 (RQ1) and RQ 2 based on the theoretical framework. The unit of analysis consisted of discourse markers.

The other one was a classroom action research to test the effectiveness of updating the mastery of discourse markers. The unit of analysis was the students' pre-test scores and post-test scores as benchmarks for effectiveness of updating the students' mastery of discourse markers.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

For the analysis of grammatical feature, namely the use of discourse markers to facilitate reading comprehension, library investigation were conducted to highlight the grammatical features of discourse markers.

In the action research, there were two cycles each of which contains a pre-test and post-test. The scores of the post-test in cycle 1 became the pre-test scores for cycle 2 of which the post test became the final mastery. Only from the test scores were data collected. The subjects of the study were 21 students randomly selected from two classes. The population was equally treated with respect to upgrading the mastery of discourse markers.

The action research can be illustrated below:



The above diagram shows that one action research cycle consists of six stages. Stage 1 called “Where are we now?” indicates the starting point of the students’ competence in a particular

skill. At this stage, a pretest was conducted to see the level of the students' mastery. Meanwhile, Stage 2 "Where do we want to be?" indicates the lesson plan to achieve the goal.

4. Findings and Discussion

In this study, reading texts became the object under investigation. The reading class started with distribution of a reading text of the day. Each student was assigned to identify the discourse markers in the text, which then were classified in the four categories, namely (1) topic change markers, (2) contrastive markers, (3) elaborative markers and (4) inferential markers.

It turned out that topic change markers were not found in the study of the reading text. In other words only **contrastive**, **elaborative** and **inferential** markers were found in the reading texts under investigation. It is understandable since 'topic change markers' are normally used in dialogues of spoken English.

The three categories of discourse markers exactly contribute to the flow of a text in terms of text cohesion and coherence. Cohesion refers to how each sentence in a paragraph is grammatically tied together to form a unified whole to achieve the principle that one paragraph must contain one central idea. Discourse markers help the readers catch up with the flow of ideas within a paragraph and among / between one paragraph and another.

4.2 The Learning Process in a Reading Class

During one semester, a reading class was assigned for the classroom action research. Twenty-one students were assigned to join as Subject of the research. Constructivism was used throughout the learning process in which the students had to participate actively in any classroom activities. They are responsible for their own learning progress.

In the research, two cycles of the classroom action research were employed to test the effectiveness of updating the mastery on discourse markers by means of constructivism (or the so called 'discourse approach' in a language class). The results of the pre-test are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 4.1 Results of the Pretest

No	Score Range	Number of Students	%
1	76 – 85	2	9.52
2	66 – 75	12	57.15
3	56 – 65	7	33.33
4	46 – 55	-	-
Total		21	100

Table 1 shows that the results of the pretest was not satisfactory with the fact that 33.33% of the students fell within the score range of 56-65 which is the failing grade according to the competency-based curriculum. If it were the true fact of the learning activities, the class would be considered as being 'inadequate'. The passing grade for the competency-based curriculum is B- which is within the score range of 66-70. In this study, the passing grade for B- falls within the score range of 66-75. In other words, such a profile of the results of pre-test is not very satisfactory because 33.33% failed. However, it was a pre-test. The students still have some room for improvement through the learning process.

The current action research started with 'pretest' of which the results have been described as above. The results of the pretest were used as the basis for determining whether or not the students improved at the end of the program through the completion of a post test.

As the current study employed two cycles, the results of the post test of the first cycle became the pretest of the second cycle. At this point the research has touched a point of reflection in which there was a focus group discussion between the two researchers, undertaking the current study. Some modifications of the techniques of teaching were made to some extent to avoid repeating the blunders that were made during the first cycle. Classroom notes (field note) were also made to identify the students' activities (responses) during the reading class. Some moderate blunders were made during the class, as outline below:

- 1) The students (some though) maintained to use Bahasa Indonesia during the discussion. Ideally, the discussion should be held in English to at the same time improve their speaking skills.
- 2) Discourse markers were new terms for them. What the students knew were things like 'conjunctions' which had been taught in their grammar class. Therefore the lecturer had to clarify that in one text, for full understanding, the readers should master both cohesion and coherence of the text. Some students were still confused with respect to the difference between cohesion and coherence.
- 3) The online learning resources by Google search engine had not been fully made use of. Ideally, the students were able to browse information through the internet with respect to the problem for vocabulary, such as by employing Google Translate (Good for reference of special terms).
- 4) Reading class was still thought of as a boring class as the normal procedures were fixed as text and responses (either in a spoken or written form). Discussion on the use of discourse markers was really thought of as something new.

In the current study, the normal procedure of the classroom teaching under study can be outlined below:

- 1) The reading class provided a text for each student to read and respond. The text was taken from various sources to represent a variety of genre assumed as picturing various

discursive practices. Meanwhile the level of difficulty of the text is within reach of the students' assumed knowledge of advance organizers of elementary level.

- 2) Discussion started by identifying the discourse markers across the text, classifying into *topic change markers, contrastive markers, or inferential markers* accordingly. The students took note on each of the discourse markers for later use, assuming the possible meaning contribution that each discourse marker had in relation to the whole text
- 3) Brainstorming on the knowledge of discourse markers, ending up in the lecturer's elaborated explanation. As far as possible, the lecturer gave opportunities to the students to take part in explaining the use of each discourse marker.
- 4) Reading activities started upon knowledge of the discourse markers. At this stage, the students were supposed to read the text in question and directly responded to the reading comprehension questions thereof.

The results of the post test (of the first cycle) are described below:

Table 4.2 Results of Post-Test 1

No	Score Range	Number of Students	%
1	76 – 85	12	57.15
2	66 – 75	5	23.80
3	56 – 65	4	19.05
4	46 – 55	-	-
Total		21	100

Table 4.2 above shows that there is an increase the percentage of the score range (76-85) from 9.52% in the pretest to 57.15% in the post test. Such an increase is supposedly significant. Meanwhile there was a decrease in the students' score range (66-75) from 52.15% to 23.80%, which is supposedly significant. In addition, another decrease in the students' score range (46-55) from 33.33% to 19.05%. Thus, it can be tentatively concluded that knowledge of discourse markers really contributes to better understanding of the text as seen from the increase to a better score range, the decrease to a worse score range.

The learning process of reading continued with similar focuses on developing the students' awareness of the use of discourse markers, maintaining the goal of the reading class, being able to respond correctly to a text based on the comprehension questions imposed by the lecturer. Thus the current study did not necessarily concentrate on the target of the reading class—instead, it tried to prove how important it is to master the construed meaning of the discourse markers to facilitate understanding of a text in question. The comparison between the results of the pretest and those of

the post-test 1 has justified that improvement of the knowledge of discourse markers really contributes to the overall understanding of a text.

It is also further justified by the results of the final test (post test 2), as follows:

Table 4.3 Results of Post Test 2

No	Score Range	Number of Students	%
1	76 – 85	17	80.95
2	66 – 75	4	19.05
3	56 – 65	-	-
4	46 – 55	-	-
Total		21	100

Surprisingly, Table 4.3 shows that everyone in the class passed the reading exam. A total of 19.05% of the students fell within the score range of 66 – 75 which is the passing score for competency-based curriculum. Better students (80.95%) fell within the score range of 76-85. Thus, another improvement of the reading skills through updating the knowledge of discourse markets has been justified.

Presented below is a table showing the significant increase of scores in Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2.

Table 4.4 Comparison of Results of Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2

No.	Score Range	Pre test		Post test 1		Post test 2	
		∑Students	%	∑Students	%	∑Students	%
1	76 – 85	2	9.52	12	57.15	17	80.95
2	66 – 75	12	57.15	5	23.80	4	19.05
3	56 – 65	7	33.33	4	19.05	-	-
4	46 – 55	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		21	100	21	100	21	100

Table 4.4 clearly indicates the increases of percentages of the score range from Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2. With respect to the results of Pre-test, only 9.52% of the students fell within the score range of 76-85, which is not a very good class performance. Meanwhile the majority of the students (57.15%) fell within the score range of 66—75 which is moderate passing scores. Furthermore, 33.33% of the students fell within the score range of 56—65, which is the passing score in competency-based curriculum.

Increases of the score range are shown in Post-test 1. Within the score range of 75—85, there was an increase from Pre-test to Post-test, namely from 9.52% to 57.15%, which is six times

as much. This is a good indicator of success. Meanwhile, there was a decrease within the score range of 66—75, from Pres-test to Post-test 1, namely 57.15% to 23.80%, which is a good indicator of success in the reading class.

Another decrease of scores are shown within the score range of 56—65. There were four students (19.05%) left in Post-test 1, from seven students (33.33%) in Pre-test. This is also another good indicator of success, namely a decrease in the low scores. It was also a good starting point that there were no students falling within the score range of 46—55, which is the failing scores.

It is arguably clear that there were increases of the score range are in Post-test 2. Within the score range of 75—85, there was an increase from Post-test 1 to Post-test 2, namely from 57.15% to 80.95%. This is a good indicator of success. Meanwhile, a decrease was observed within the score range of 66—75, from Post-test 1 to Post-test 2, namely 23.80% to 19.05%, which is a good indicator of success in the reading class. No students were observed as falling within the score range of 56—65 which is an indicator of better performance in the reading skills.

4.3. Discussion

The current study deals with an attempt to justify that the knowledge of discourse markers contributes significantly to the improvement of the reading skills as a means of facilitating for better and easier comprehension process.

It is commonly known that there is a typical learning process in a reading class. Normally it starts with distribution of texts to the students. This activity is followed by asking the students to lips-read (silent-reading) for about 15 minutes or so in order for them to grasp the main idea of the text. Vocabulary discussion comes next by providing the synonyms of possible difficult or new words, or if it is too hard, translation into Bahasa Indonesia may be provided. Finally activities close in which the students are supposed to answer the questions on the basis of the on-going reading text. Therefore, maximizing the knowledge of discourse markers to facilitate the process of reading comprehension has not been well-undertaken.

Discourse markers are normally known as conjunctions in traditional grammar. Cohesively speaking, they are used to link one sentence to another within one paragraph to create one unified whole to meet the requirement that a paragraph shall only content one ideas supported by sub-ideas. Without the employment of correct discourse markers, it is hard to imagine how sentences are meaningfully linked to one another. In addition coherence also requires the employment of discourse markers for the whole text to meaningfully be connected in terms of ideas. In prose genre of literature, coherence can mean the logical plot of a story. In an academic genre it is referred to as the logical orders of arguments.

It was therefore hypothesized that, based on the above preliminary arguments, the knowledge of discourse markers contributes to the process of text-comprehension. The hypothetical statement was also foregrounded by the fact that ‘meaning’ could be also derived from the manipulation of the use of discourse markers.

The hypothesis was tested in a 2-cycle action research, starting from pre-test administration to see the current level of the students’ reading proficiency prior to the process of updating the mastery of discourse markers. The reading class was undertaken by discussion of the discourse markers used in the text, starting from identifying, classifying and construing meanings (of the discourse markers in textual meaning).

In any research involving hypothesis, there are only two possible outcomes, whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The current research defines that the hypothesis is accepted when there is a significant increase of scores occupying a certain category as outlined below

Excellent:	76—85 or above
Good :	66—75
Moderate:	56—65
Poor :	46—55

Starting from the results of pre-test, there was an increase in the percentage of students in the excellent category, namely more and more students jumped from good category to excellent category. Finally the moderate category was even left emptied. This implies that those who were in the moderate category moved to either ‘good’ or ‘excellent category’. Thus, this point justifies that **the hypothesis is accepted**. This implies it is important to continuously update the knowledge of discourse markers.

5. Conclusion

The current study is basically an action research which is focused on process (process oriented), unlike the pure quantitative research which is product-oriented. Sample of teaching reading focusing on updating the knowledge of discourse markers has been presented in the researchers’ reading classes.

Findings and discussion in Chapter IV can be concluded as follows:

- 1) Most texts used in the reading class make use of **contrastive**, **elaborative** and **inferential** markers. This is normal for written texts. Most students were able to identify and classify the discourse markers. However, most of them failed to construe the meaning in a textual contexts, and how each discourse marker contributes to the meaning of a text as one unified whole.

- 2) The process of learning starts from identifying, classifying to construing the discourse markers as used in the reading text. Some students felt that such a reading class was strange as it did not follow the normal procedures.
- 3) The hypothesis that the knowledge of discourse markers facilitate the process of comprehension is accepted as there were significant increases in the students' reading scores. Thus, pedagogically speaking, it is important to realize that the knowledge of discourse markers is very much required by those in pursue of excellent reading skills.

5.2 Suggestions

From the conclusion above, some suggestions can be of some use, as follows:

- 1) The use of discourse markers (conjunctions) must be updated from time to time, implying that the teaching of grammar focusing on conjunction shall be improved with more practice thereby improving both reading and writing skills
- 2) Further research employing 'experiment' shall be undertaken to justify the significant contribution of the mastery of discourse markers to the reading comprehension skills

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