



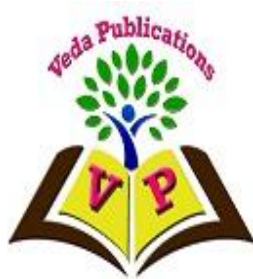
A CORPUS BASED ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE MARKERS USED IN MALAYSIAN ONLINE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Hafizah Binti Hajimia

(Universiti Utara Malaysia) Email: girlsophia001@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT



In recent years, digital genres have emerged tremendously, encouraging the use of the Internet and software applications. Globally, this phenomenon has brought forward an era of technology-based communication which includes online media-based communication such as online newspapers, for example, the STAR Online and The News Strait Times Online. Reading of newspapers has now been mainly confined to online accessing and reading news articles. Despite various studies conducted on the evolution of news genres from the printed to the online versions, there are scarcely found any study focusing on specific roles played by discourse markers in the online versions of news articles from the language and textual aspects. Bhatia (1993) for example, focused more on the contents and structure of the news and how it was produced rather than on specific registers of the texts. These researches are more inclined towards sociology, pedagogy, politics and cognitive. On the other hand, in Malaysia, research on English for Specific Purpose (ESP) in newspaper texts and genres is minimal. This language-specific use of discourse markers poses a challenge for L2 learners. Discourse markers are an important factor for the lack of coherence in L2 writing, especially at the advanced levels. The weakness in English proficiency can be seen throughout the primary, secondary and tertiary level.

Based on a study carried out by Hamzah and Karupiah (2010) regarding the coherence in writing among English Second Language learners in UTM, Malaysia, they found that students indeed faced problems with coherence in writing whereby they focused more on the sentence and word level rather than the textual coherence. Besides that, Melor Md Yunus & Siti Nor Fatimah Harris



(2014) carried out an observation on 4 student essay writing form and realized that they have a problem understanding the position and the functions of discourse markers and lacked variety when writing. This trend leads to graduates looking for employment, armed with insufficient English knowledge. Because of their crucial role in achieving a successful communicative act in a text, discourse markers are key elements in text production and perception. In order to produce acceptable, natural, and communicatively effective texts, text-producers are required to use discourse markers in a certain way that is expected and accepted by their text-receivers. Misusing these items renders the texts unnatural, affects their acceptability and increases the chances of communication breakdowns. Therefore, studying the function of discourse markers as elements that ensure the texts' acceptability, naturalness, and effectiveness is indispensable for studying texts in any language. The present study will be conducted with the aim to investigate the form and the level of functionality of the discourse markers in the cyber-genre of a newspaper. The aim of this study is to identify the frequency and types of discourse markers used by authors of published online newspaper articles namely the STAR Online newspaper in Malaysia. 30 online newspaper articles were analysed in order to create a genre-specific corpus and to conduct a genre analysis of the discourse markers used in the texts from the STAR online newspaper. The articles are compiled into a genre-specific representative corpus, to be known as the Corpus of Online Newspaper Articles (CorONAS). The present study will draw upon qualitative and quantitative interpretations of the data analysed, using the 2 research instruments mentioned earlier; the researcher and the corpus. There are five (5) stages involved: Determining the corpus of discourse, examining the corpus, corpus tagging, transfer raw data to a form of electronic data and data analysis. The data will be analysed using 2 steps. The first step is by using CLAWS software UCREL CLAWS7 Tagset. The second step is using AntConc which is a concordance software used to calculate the frequency.

Keywords: *Corpus Analysis, Discourse Markers, Online News Papers, Malaysia.*