

## The Pragmatic Argumentation of Discourse Markers in English Academic Writing: A Corpus-Based Analysis



### Linguistics

**Keywords:** discourse markers, university essay, L1-L2 writers, coherence-based approach, language use in academic writing, etc.

Mareb Mohammed Sangoor Al-Baidhani

Suleyman Demirel University  
Department Of Western Language and Literature.  
Turkey-Isparta.

### Abstract

Academic writing is a key skill for success in academic life, particularly for graduate students of a foreign language. The importance of writing to academic culture, practice, and knowledge building has led to a great deal of research in many fields, including rhetoric and composition, linguistics, applied linguistics, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Often, studies and research investigating academic writing are motivated by the need to inform the learning of writing to native and non-native English-speaking students, through both descriptions of professional academic writing as well as through comparisons of novice writer (native and non-native English-speaking) and expert production. However, while learning about academic writing to better inform teaching content and practices is an important aim, Bazerman (1994, P. 10) points out that understanding language use in the disciplines also helps us to use language more effectively, can guide writers and editors as they work with contributor texts, and helps provide non-specialist readers with access to the discourse of the disciplines. Thus, describing and understanding patterns and pragmatic of argumentation of language use in academic writing allows us to understand the disciplinary cultures and practices that they embody. This is why many linguists and scholars have long been fascinated with the language of academia, particularly in the form of written texts. This interest has developed and expanded over the past few decades, in part due to the premise that much can be learned about disciplinary practices and cultures by examining academic writing: the primary means of the transmission of knowledge in academic fields.

Most university essays and assignment tasks require the graduate student to take a stance and argue for this or that viewpoint. Pragmatic arguments are one of the most important elements of any successful piece of writing. The main aim of this study is to investigate to what extent existing approaches to pragmatics and discourse shed light on how the form of a text creates pragmatic and stylistic effects in the academic writings of the highly proficient writers and learners of English as a foreign language. It analyzes the pragmatics of argumentation of discourse markers in the writing of 80 graduate students in Iraqi and American universities at the Master level. I do this using a corpus-based method. In particular, I investigate the differences and similarities between two groups of graduate students; Iraqi students as learners of English as a foreign language and students studying at American Universities as students come from English speaking countries. Since part of the data in this study belong to Iraqi writers as EFL students (English as a foreign language), a secondary purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that may influence L1 (first language) use in the L2 (second language) writing-process. Despite the fact that many studies about the area of L1 and L2 academic writing have been conducted, some important questions still remained. One of these important questions is How does the effect of the L1 used as an exclusive composing language interact with factors such as learners' L2 proficiency, learners' selective deployment of the L1 in different functions, and cognitive demands of the writing tasks (Friedlander, 1990; Akyel, 1994; and Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001). According to Richards (1983, p. 117-154) writing in foreign language is difficult and laborious when compared with writing in the first language. Accordingly, a secondary aim of this study is to provide more insights into the difficulties and challenges faced by L2 writers by examining their L2 writing processes. The specific research questions addressed in this study are:

1. How do discourse markers, as an aspect of academic writing, affect the writings of Iraqi graduate students studying at Iraqi Universities (as learners of English as a foreign language) and graduate students studying at American Universities (as students from English-speaking countries)?
2. How do Iraqi and American graduate students differ from one another in the use and realization of discourse markers in their writing?
3. How and why do discourse markers occur more in one text than another?

## **2. Pragmatics: Definition and Background**

Traditionally, pragmatics cannot be defined independently from other fields of linguistics. For example, Carnap (1956, p.73) has made pragmatics equal to descriptive semiotics and natural languages because the term pragmatics that he adopted from Morris was baffling specially to distinguish between the pure and descriptive studies. Accordingly, those who were interested in pragmatics at that time faced a problem in defining pragmatics. This problem was that pragmatics was not considered as an independent field of linguistics. To solve this problem, they needed to de-limit the scope of pragmatics and make it independent from other linguistic neighbors, in particular, semantics. There were many attempts to define pragmatics in isolation from other areas such as semantics. For example, pragmatics focuses on studying the natural and artificial languages which include the deictic and indexical terms (Bar-Hillel, 1954, p. 23-40) and this definition was adopted by some of those who are interested pragmatics.

Recently, modern linguists and grammarians have focused on presenting pragmatics as an important component of grammar. Due to the fact that a language system must be seen as unified, they believe that phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are the main components of grammar and they are not autonomous from one another (Givon, 1984, p. 138 and Comrie 1987, p. 266). Further support for the view that pragmatics is not autonomous from other components of grammar and field of linguistics, or in other words from human interactional processes, comes from studies such as Fox & Thompson's (1990, p. 51-64) study on the distribution of relative clause types in English, in which they show that the relation between the relative clause and its head is governed by characteristics of the referent in question, and secondly by characteristic information flow patterns in natural dis-course about these referents. Pragmatics as a field of linguistics was started in the 1930s by Morris, Carnap, and Peirce, for whom linguistic structure meant the formal relations of signs to each other, in Semantics, the connection of signs to what they signify, and pragmatics, the connection of signs to their users and interpreters (Morris 1938, p.132). As indicated by Liu (2007, p. 53), Charles Morris presented the first modern definition of pragmatics, and since then many other specialists have kept on conceptualizing this branch of linguistics. Morris initially characterized pragmatics as "the discipline that studies the relations of signs to interpreters, while semantics studies the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable". Based on the idea of language users, pragmatics is the investigation of aspects of language, such as deictic and indexical words, that have reference to the users of the language (Levinson, 1983, p.97).

Mey (2001, p.43) reveals that the study of language is divided into two independent parts; language as human product and language in its human uses. In other words, he clarifies them as a description of language structure and a description of its use. Accordingly, he defines pragmatics as the study that concentrates on studying the use of language by humans and the humans that produce a language. This is associated with the Chomsky's view of pragmatics as 'Performance'. Performance means how an individual uses a language and it contrasts with competence which is the user's knowledge of the language and its rules.

Based on a view of writing as a social and communicative engagement between writer and reader, pragmatic argumentation centers our attention on the ways writers design and present their work to signal their communicative intentions. It is a central pragmatic construct which permits us to see how writers aim to influence reader's comprehension of both the text and their attitude towards its content and the audience. In sum, despite the fact that various definitions of the term pragmatics have been investigated so far, adopting a definition that widely reflects the purpose of this study is essential. For this reason, pragmatics can be defined as the subfield of linguistics produced to study the use of the writers' language with the most accurate level of appropriateness and correctness possible on their performance according to the type of academic writing where the language is used. For the purpose of academic writing, pragmatics can be seen as the relation with which the writer of the academic work cooperates with the readers of the academic work by using language re-sources to do that.

### **3. Argumentation**

Consulting more than nine English Dictionaries such as Dictionary of English Language (2011), English Etymology Dictionary (2010), Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2012), and Webster's College Dictionary (2010), one can put together the following definition: Argumentation is the process of presenting, discussing, and debating a controversial point of argument and reasoning it methodically by setting forth reasons with the conclusion drawn from them. Taking into consideration the literal meaning of the term "Argumentation", it can be defined in a broader sense as an attempt to give reasons in a communicative situation by people. More specifically, it is the ability to present justifications of acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values (Harcourt, 2011). This definition has been widely adopted at the National Developmental Conference on Forensics where the British philosopher "Stephen Toulmin" raised an important question, "What kind of justificatory activities must we engage in to convince our fellows that these beliefs are based on 'good reasons'?" Examining Toulmin's question, one may note that it is all about mental and logical persuasion. This may lead to another question: what are "good reasons?". To answer this question, it is worth quoting Eemeren et al (2002) who states: "People who make use of argumentation always appeal--whether explicitly or implicitly to some standard of reasonableness. This, however, does not always mean that each argumentation is indeed reasonable". The main point to be noted here is the "some standards of reasonableness", i.e. the aim of argumentation is to conduct a convincing reasonable critique of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward one or more propositions to justify this standpoint.

Thus, justifying is a decision to affirm or reject a standpoint. Nussbaum (2005, p. 55), Andriessen, Baker, & Suthers (2000, p. 112), and Reznitskaya & Anderson (2002, p. 319-334) differentiate between the terms ‘Argumentation’ and ‘Argument’. They state that although sometimes these two terms are used interchangeably in spoken language, they are given more restricted meanings in the academic writing. According to them, argumentation is the process of arguing around a particular topic in a written discourse. The process of argumentation that people construct and present is a series of arguments which provide evidence to support or oppose a point of view.

The relationship between language and argumentation can be seen obviously in the notion that the specifics of linguistic communication can be explained in terms of argumentative communication. Vasilyev (2002) states that “Argumentation is written into the language-system itself, into most linguistic aspect of the structure of our utterances”. The main emphasis of Vasilyev's quotation is on the pragmatic framework as an essential tool in any linguistic communication including academic writing. This pragmatic framework can be predicted from the activity of giving and asking for reasons in any linguistic communication. Vasilyev goes on to state that the more we consider human language as a tool for communication, the more we ought to concentrate on argumentation as its paradigm. For the purpose of academic writing, this study will focus on the academic sense of ‘argument’: a statement that includes a claim and some form of support and on ‘argument construction’ to mean the process of putting together, building, and/or strengthening an argument. To sum up, argumentation in academic writing serves to uncover and address irregularities and inconsistencies among ideas and evidence; it is a central means by which the community evaluates the promise of conjectures and the validity of claims. As stated by Berland & Reiser (2009, p. 26–55), academic writers engaging in argumentation are making sense of phenomena, articulating those understandings and persuading others of their ideas. Meeting these goals requires that academic writers construct and support claims using evidence and reasoning and that they question, challenge and revise their own and other's claims, evidence and reasoning.

#### **4. Academic Writing**

Definitions of Academic writing vary. These variations are in accordance with the approaches used to investigate writing for academic purposes such as product text, individual writer cognitive process, norms of the interpretive community or audience, and interaction between writer and reader within a situated discourse context. Each approach has its own features and historical development. In the last 50 years, these approaches have been labeled under two main groups: (1) product based aspects and process based aspects of writing; and (2) (individual) cognitively based aspects and socially based aspects. These two groups are considered by most linguists and researchers in the field of writing for academic purposes as providing a useful base for examining and identifying the meaning and aspects of academic writing (Raimes, 1991, p. 407-430; Silva, 1990, 89-91 and Witte & Cherry, 1994, p. 211-218).

Another viewpoint of English academic writing can be seen in the work of linguists and researchers who believe that a better understanding of academic writing can be obtained by examining its rhetorical origins. Connor (1996, p. 292) agrees with Kaplan (2014, p. 12) on the fact that English academic writing and its rhetorical elements “have evolved out of the Anglo-European cultural pattern”. Like other modern linguists who write on academic writing, Connor and Kaplan adopt the idea of the “central topic” of any piece of writing. They state that English paragraphs should logically contain a topic sentence. This topic sentence is followed by illustrations and examples that develop the central idea of that paragraph and connect it with other main ideas of other paragraphs in the text.

Graduate students experience some degree of difficulty with academic writing in English for academic purposes. This fact is mentioned by Rumelhart (1980, p. 22), Anderson et al (1978, p. 433-440) and Freedman & Calfee (1984, p. 75-98). When faced with insufficient or inaccurate linguistic and social/cultural knowledge, EFL graduate students tend to fall back on prior knowledge and experience in their LI (first language) writing and reading, and simply try to apply them as is to their L2 (foreign language) English writing tasks. This often leaves a large gap between what EFL writers bring to their L2 English academic writing and what the English academic community expects of them (Angelova&Riazantseva, 1999 and Belcher & Braine, 1995).

Recently, theories from anthropology, applied linguistics, linguistics, and second language acquisition make attempts to explore academic writing from the viewpoint of L1 and L2 relation. These modern theories investigate academic writing in a broader scope and intercultural rhetoric and call attention to the social situation in writing. The main hypothesis of these theories was seeing writing as a social situation where purpose, audience, and relationship with the reader are highly considered (Martin, 1995, p. 3-60; Connor, 1996, p. 293; and Kaplan, 2014, p. 14). Since the main purpose of this study is to investigate the pragmatic argumentation of discourse markers in the academic writing of graduate students as learners of English a foreign language and graduate students of English-speaking countries, it was important to research the term ‘academic writing’ from the view of L1 and L2 writing relation. Due to a lack of knowledge of and familiarity with the features of written academic discourse and rhetorical principles in English, and with English academic discourse culture and audience expectations, many EFL (English as a foreign language) graduate students experience some degree of difficulty with academic reading and writing in English for academic discourse purpose.

## **5. Discourse Markers**

In Academic writing, specifically speaking in the writings of graduate students, it is important for the writer to lead his/her reader to the message that writers intend to deliver. One of the essential ways is to use “Discourse Markers”. According to Andersen, G. & T. Fretheim (2000, p. 108), the importance of discourse markers in academic writing is that they guide the reader through the discourse and show him/her how each sentence is connected to others.

This automatically helps the reader to approach the coming sentence with the knowledge of how it relates to the theme the writer is constructing. Jucker (1998) sheds light on another point of view of discourse markers in academic writing. For him, the main mission of a discourse marker is to signal a change in direction of the text, i.e. if the writer wants to signal a change in the direction of his/her writing, he/she will utilize a marker. For example, (on the other hand, conversely, in contrast with, in opposition to....etc.). Furthermore, Gerard (2010, p.24-26) argues that discourse, in general, refers to pieces of language larger than a sentence that function together to convey a given idea or information and discourse markers are devices that are used to hang the pieces of language or expression together.

These discourse markers are used, specifically speaking in academic writing, to identify and show the relationship between ideas or information in a given context. They are words or phrases used by writers to link ideas or information in a discourse. It is essential for any academic writer to be aware of the fact that discourse markers do not convey meaning on their own nor change the meaning of a sentence. Instead, they are grammatical or functioning words that perform grammatical functions by linking ideas in a piece of writing and signal the reader of continuity in text or the relationship between the preceding and following text (Bestgen, 1998, p. 91-92). Many linguists recommend that to understand the effective use of discourse markers, graduate students, in particular, should read a great deal paying special attention to discourse markers.

Linguistically speaking, three main linguistic approaches to discourse markers were established by linguists such as Schiffrin (1987, p. 31), Redeker (1991, p. 113), Lenk (1998, p. 245-257), Fraser (1990, p. 383-395), Carter and McCarthy (2006, p. 208), Blakemore (1987, p. 105), and Andersen (2001, p. 147). These three linguistic approaches are grammatical-pragmatic approach, coherence-based approach, and relevance-based. In terms of grammatical-pragmatic definition, discourse markers have been taken as a pragmatic class. Carter and McCarthy (2006, p. 212) and Fraser (1999, p.931-952) deal with discourse markers as a sub-class of pragmatic markers, which also include stance markers, hedges and interjections. They state that discourse markers can be seen as seen as a lexical category of any grammatical form used to “link segments of the discourse to one another in ways which reflect choices of monitoring organization and management exercised by the speaker”. Coherence-based approach sees discourse markers as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (as cited in Schiffrin’s work (1987, p. 31). Schiffrin (1987, p. 37) went on to state that “markers are devices that work on a discourse level; they are not dependent on the smaller units of talk of which discourse is composed”. Discourse markers within relevance theory approach are termed discourse connectives. Blakemore (1987, p.105) define discourse markers as “expressions that constrain the interpretation of the utterances that contain them by virtue of the inferential connections they express”.

## 6. Methodology

The investigation in this study employed a corpus-based approach to answer research questions of interest. This investigation includes two levels of analysis. One is the overall analysis and the other is an in-depth analysis of the pragmatic argumentation of discourse markers in the writing of learners of English as a foreign language and writing of students coming from English speaking countries.

The data consist of over than (950000) words of academic writings taken from 40 M.A. theses written by Iraqi graduate students studying at Iraqi universities as learners of English as a foreign language and 40 graduate students studying at American universities respectively. Both groups of graduate students share one field of specialization, i.e., social science and the humanities. In detail, Data is gathered in two corpora.

The first corpus consists of Iraqi graduate students' writings in Master Degree Program prepared by Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The second consists of the writings of graduate students at the Master Degree program in United States of America. It is worth mentioning that all the theses that form the data of this study is approved and accepted as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining the Master degree by both universities in Iraq and United States of America. They are all written by Iraqi graduate students studying at Iraqi Universities and graduate students studying at American universities. The total number of data is (80) theses: (40) theses are written by Iraqi graduate students and (40) theses are written by graduate students studying at American universities respectively.

Both quantitative and qualitative measures were employed in conducting the analysis of data under analysis. Using both quantitative and qualitative measures helps to delve deeper into the issues under analysis. Quantitative measures provide insights into the problem or help to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential qualitative measure.

In this respect, I overview Witte & Witte's (2009) viewpoint that quantitative and qualitative analysis "supplies a number of tools for generalizing information from a relatively small collection of observations, a 'sample', to a relatively large collection of potential observation, 'population'". Quantitative corpus methodology is an important aspect of corpus analysis. Generally speaking, frequency lists present detailed information about what words occur more often in a particular corpus.

By comparing the frequency lists of two corpora, distinctive words can be identified, which helps make interpretations or further investigations Biber & Conrad (1999, p. 181-189).

However, it is important to mention that much research into argumentation of English academic writing followed quantitative methodologies; this study builds up-on and enriches the previous studies by incorporating more of a qualitative analysis through the use of corpus linguistics to systematically analyze the pragmatic of argumentation of discourse markers as an aspect of academic writing.

The identification and classification of discourse markers uses and frequency in each text is the main aim of the analysis of this aspect. The software used in the analysis of this aspect is AntConc (Version 3.4.1). According to (Friginal& Hardy, 2014, p. 132) and (Anthony, 2006, p. 257-286) AntConc is a freeware, multiplatform corpus toolkit. It includes a tag aware concordancer and plot distribution tool, word and keyword generators, and tools for cluster, N-gram and collocate analysis. Another important feature of AntConc is that it is a more comprehensive and advanced software for fulfilling this sort of analysis, since it is able to search for case sensitive words and word clusters, providing the user with the page number and co-text (a couple of sentence before and after the highlighted word). In addition, it offers the ability to save the results from the 'Plot' tool to an image file. Based on the corpus linguistics assumption that multiple authentic examples facilitate inductive and discovery learning which enhances analytical and even metacognitive ability in learning, such a coding scheme can address the research question for this study (O'Sullivan, 2006). The coding will be in four levels: student coding, paragraph coding, chapter coding, and thesis coding. The coding structure is as follows:

1-(S#-##)

S= student, and the number after it is the student serial.

- Stands for the sentence number in the sequence. ##

2-(#S#-P)

S= student, and the number after it is the student serial.

P= stands for the paragraph number in the sequence.

3-(SSAU-#-CH #)

SSAU= student studying in American university, and the number after it is the student serial.

CH#= stands for the chapter number in his/her theses.

4-(SSIU-#-CH #)

SSAU= student studying in Iraqi university, and the number after it is the student serial.

CH#= stands for the chapter number in his/her theses.

## 6. Statistical Analysis of Discourse Markers

This section provides a general overview of the data analysis. In this section, I will describe the statistical analysis of the discourse markers in the writing of 40 Iraqi graduate students studying at Iraqi Universities as learners of English as a foreign language and 40 graduate students studying at American universities as students coming from English-speaking countries. The data were analyzed in two stages. The first stage was the computer-supported analysis of discourse markers as an aspect of academic writing.

The second stage is a qualitative analysis. This analysis was carried out to verify the correctness, credibility, and reliability. The major part of the analysis was the new process, which used collocation phenomena, linguistic analysis, and co-text analyses to empirically derive the



pragmatic frequency, functions, and uses of discourse markers in the writing of SSAU and AAIU rather than interpreting them intuitively.

The statistical analysis of data under investigation, i.e., quantitative analysis helps to direct me to selective texts for qualitative text-based analyses. For the purpose of this study, the present analysis of discourse markers as an aspect of English academic writing started with a linguistic description of the words and phrases under investigation from the standpoints of grammar and discourse. The frequency information was used as a point of entry into the data. The frequencies of the discourse markers showed their distribution across the two corpora, i.e. writing of SSAU and SSIU. Consider table (1) below:

Table (1) Frequency of Discourse Markers in the writing of SSAU and SSIU

No.	Cluster	SSAU Freq.	SSIU Freq.	No.	Cluster	SSAU Freq.	SSIU Freq.
1	Above	93	110	42	Infrequently	2	0
2	Accord	1	0	43	Initially	7	14
3	Accordingly	10	37	44	Instance	39	128
4	Addition	87	123	45	Largely	23	23
5	Brief	26	43	46	Likewise	11	5
6	Broadly	13	3	47	Major	44	83
7	Characteristic	12	34	48	Matching	4	10
8	Chief	8	8	49	Moreover	25	72
9	Chiefly	2	6	50	Namely	8	51
10	Clarify	12	23	51	Necessary	92	63
11	Common	86	111	52	Nevertheless	20	28
12	Compared	48	44	53	Nonetheless	9	3
13	Comparison	26	60	54	Occasion	3	18
14	Conclude	8	21	55	Outline	4	4
15	Conclusion	32	21	56	Paraphrase	0	13
16	Consequence	9	9	57	Particular	130	232
17	Consequently	18	81	58	Previously	40	17
18	Contrary	21	29	59	Primarily	40	28
19	Contrast	55	77	60	Probability	2	11
20	Culminate	0	1	61	Relation	67	179
21	Currently	13	2	62	Result	93	129
22	Demonstrate	24	7	63	Revealed	29	8
23	Difference	80	82	64	Review	78	14
24	Directly	51	73	65	Short	43	124
25	Distinction	32	82	66	Significant	62	43
26	Emphasize	20	33	67	Similar	112	74
27	Equally	10	8	68	Similarly	22	18
28	Example	274	620	69	Simultaneously	6	11
29	Exemplify	2	7	70	Specifically	50	24
30	Extent	30	48	71	Stated	44	44
31	Following	128	364	72	Stress	31	79
32	Future	36	50	73	Subsequently	6	3
33	General	198	179	74	Summarize	4	3
34	Generally	54	65	75	Terms	162	239
35	Hence	19	72	76	Therefore	111	179
36	Henceforth	0	13	77	Thus	132	284
37	Highlight	15	17	78	Undoubtedly	5	9
38	However	333	234	79	Upon	91	78
39	Illustrate	21	34	80	Versus	20	5
40	Important	198	286	81	Whereas	31	92
41	Indeed	27	29		Total	3834	5588

Table (1) above shows that the frequency of discourse markers in the writing of SSIU is 3834 while it is 5588 in the writing of SSAU. It is worth mentioning that the analysis of ‘cluster’ mentioned in table (18) above conducted according to COCA; cluster within the range of 1-3000.

In addition, the analysis, and according to table (18), shows that the highest frequently used cluster is ‘However’ and ‘Thus’. ‘However’ occurs 333 and ‘Thus’ 132 in the writing of SSAU used 333 while in the writing of SSIU ‘however’ occurs 234 and ‘Thus’ 284.

Practically, the results of the analysis of each cluster mentioned in table (18) above can be best illustrated in figure (1) below. It provides a visual percentage of the students’ uses under investigation for each cluster.

**Figure (1) Students’ Uses for Each Cluster**

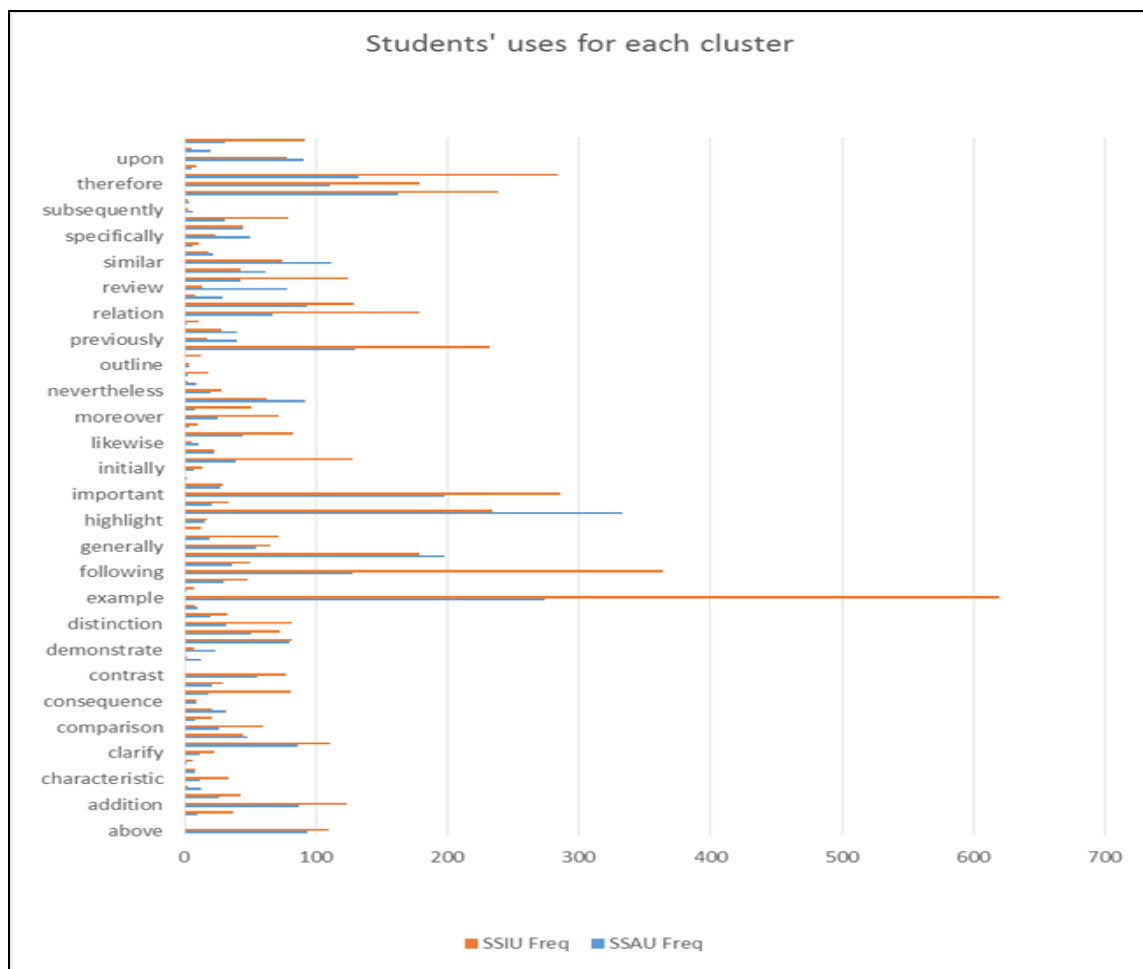
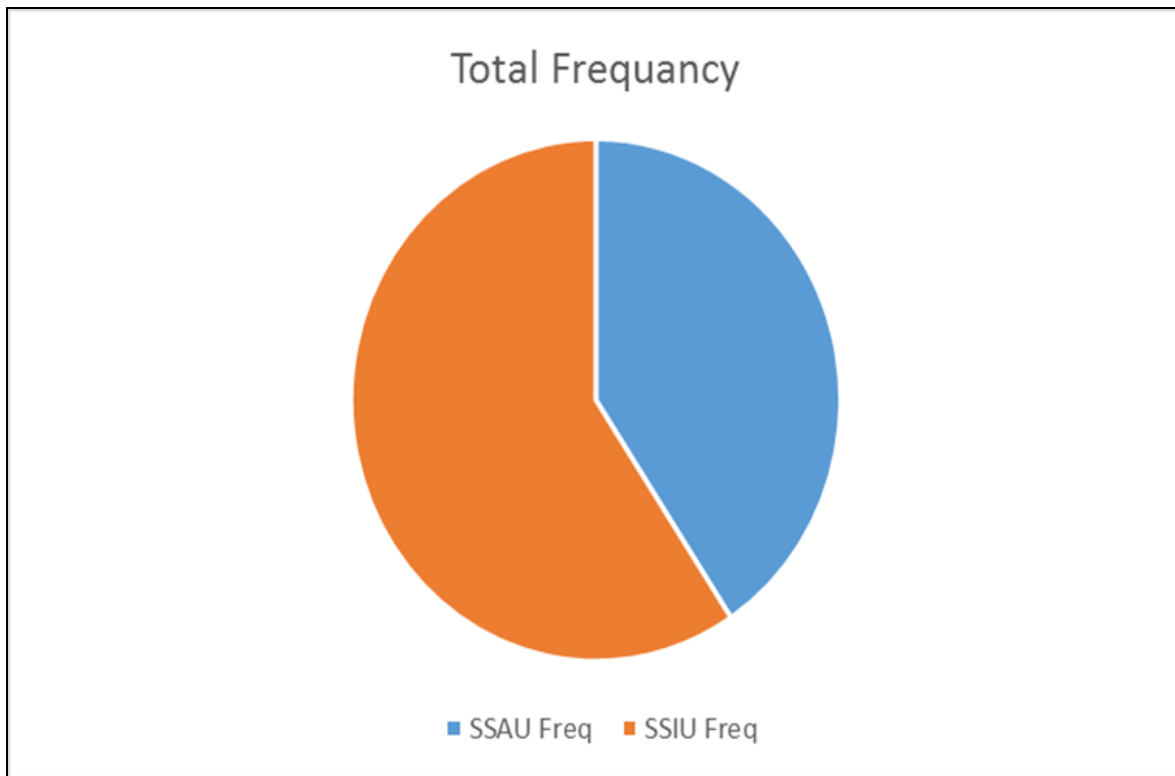


Figure (2) below demonstrate the frequency of cluster used by SSAU and SSIU respectively. The lowest use of cluster in the writing of both SSAU and SSAU was 0.

Both SSAU and SSIU did not use the discourse markers ‘culminate’, ‘hence-forth’, ‘paraphrase’, ‘Accord’, and ‘infrequently’.

**Figure (2) Total Frequency of Cluster used by SSAU and SSIU**

Looking at figure (2) above, one can note that the highest cluster frequency can be found in the writing of SSIU whereas the lowest one can be seen easily in the writing of SSAU.

However, to get a full picture of how SSAU and SSIU deal pragmatically with discourse markers as an aspect of the six selected aspects of English writing, I analyzed discourse markers in terms of 'Hits'.

According to Coca, 'Hits' refer to the number of occurrence of the cluster within the data under analysis. It is worth mentioning that the total frequency of discourse markers of SSIU is 5588 while the total frequency of discourse markers of SSAU is 3834.

Table (2) below provides information about the number of hits and the total words used by the two corpora under investigation.

**Table (2) Hits of Discourse Markers used by SSAU and SSIU**

Std. ID	Hits	Total words	Ratio	Std. ID	Hits	Total words	Ratio
SSAU-001	37	2382	1.55	SSIU-001	161	2303	6.99
SSAU-002	29	2248	1.29	SSIU-002	189	2531	7.47
SSAU-003	96	2593	3.70	SSIU-003	55	2454	2.24
SSAU-004	116	2322	5.00	SSIU-004	182	2228	8.17
SSAU-005	65	2174	2.99	SSIU-005	139	2550	5.45
SSAU-006	33	2521	1.31	SSIU-006	137	1997	6.86
SSAU-007	230	2193	10.49	SSIU-007	77	2295	3.36
SSAU-008	51	2279	2.24	SSIU-008	123	2405	5.11
SSAU-009	13	783	1.66	SSIU-009	108	2081	5.19
SSAU-010	34	1572	2.16	SSIU-010	149	2339	6.37
SSAU-011	78	2472	3.16	SSIU-011	215	2434	8.83
SSAU-012	134	2489	5.38	SSIU-012	103	2460	4.19
SSAU-013	40	1698	2.36	SSIU-013	55	1458	3.77
SSAU-014	46	1866	2.47	SSIU-014	240	1886	12.73
SSAU-015	64	2229	2.87	SSIU-015	172	2162	7.96
SSAU-016	64	2493	2.57	SSIU-016	202	2093	9.65
SSAU-017	16	691	2.32	SSIU-017	251	2185	11.49
SSAU-018	98	2159	4.54	SSIU-018	232	2393	9.69
SSAU-019	178	2498	7.13	SSIU-019	64	2283	2.80
SSAU-020	84	2159	3.89	SSIU-020	54	2106	2.56
SSAU-021	131	2376	5.51	SSIU-021	216	1843	11.72
SSAU-022	88	2438	3.61	SSIU-022	56	1381	4.06
SSAU-023	61	2198	2.78	SSIU-023	37	2440	1.52
SSAU-024	122	2377	5.13	SSIU-024	74	2309	3.20
SSAU-025	68	2245	3.03	SSIU-025	210	2253	9.32
SSAU-026	108	2385	4.53	SSIU-026	120	2295	5.23
SSAU-027	126	2399	5.25	SSIU-027	117	2346	4.99
SSAU-028	18	696	2.59	SSIU-028	52	2183	2.38
SSAU-029	61	2325	2.62	SSIU-029	181	2260	8.01
SSAU-030	131	2106	6.22	SSIU-030	316	2359	13.40
SSAU-031	85	2419	3.51	SSIU-031	360	2372	15.18
SSAU-032	131	2465	5.31	SSIU-032	107	2379	4.50
SSAU-033	616	1990	30.95	SSIU-033	28	1475	1.90
SSAU-034	70	2403	2.91	SSIU-034	204	2309	8.83
SSAU-035	73	2520	2.90	SSIU-035	59	2258	2.61
SSAU-036	130	2246	5.79	SSIU-036	191	2304	8.29
SSAU-037	51	2031	2.51	SSIU-037	45	1781	2.53
SSAU-038	164	2328	7.04	SSIU-038	119	2141	5.56
SSAU-039	46	2054	2.24	SSIU-039	11	1241	0.89
SSAU-040	48	2192	2.19	SSIU-040	177	1994	8.88
	total hits	Total count	Total ratio		Total hits	Total count	Total ratio
	3834	86014	4.46		5588	86566	6.46

The results of analyzing discourse markers in the writing of SSAU and SSIU can be best illustrated in the figures (3) and (4) respectively.

Figure (3) Analysis of Hits of Discourse Markers in the Writings of SSIU

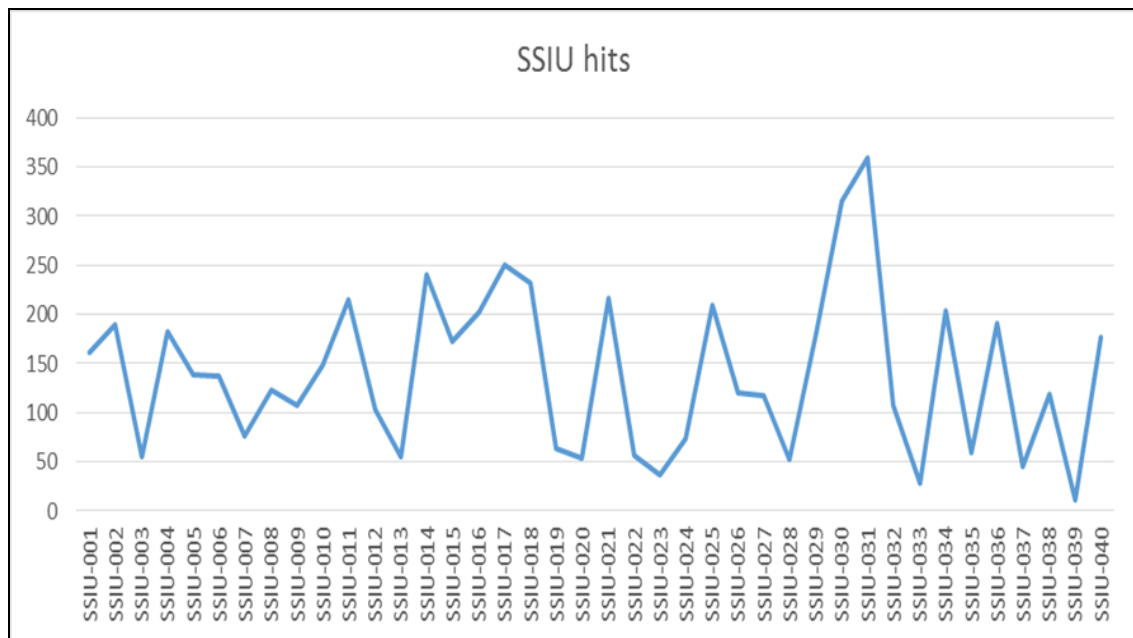
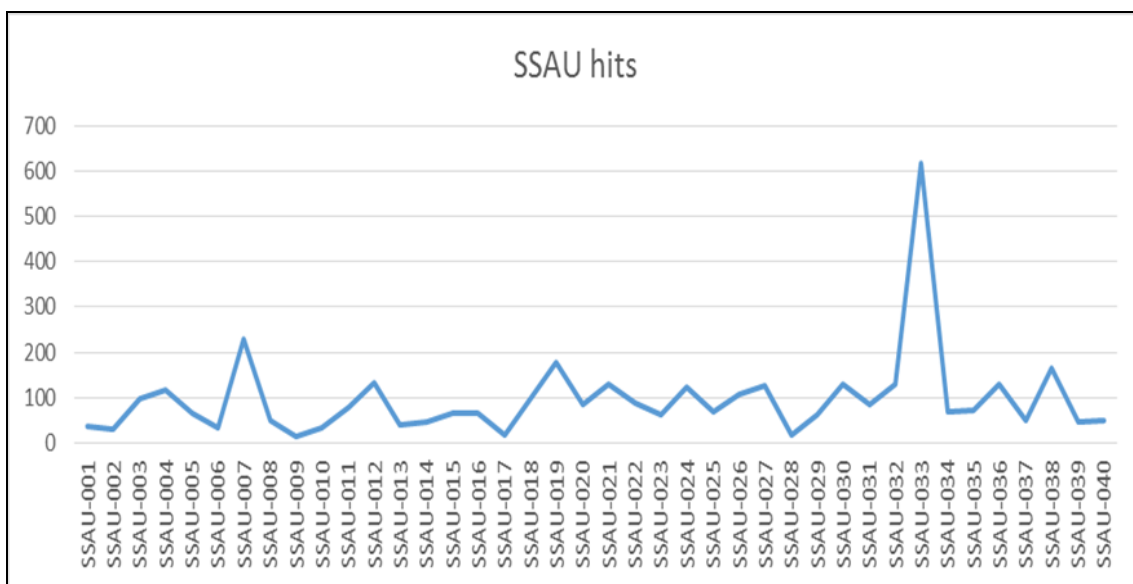
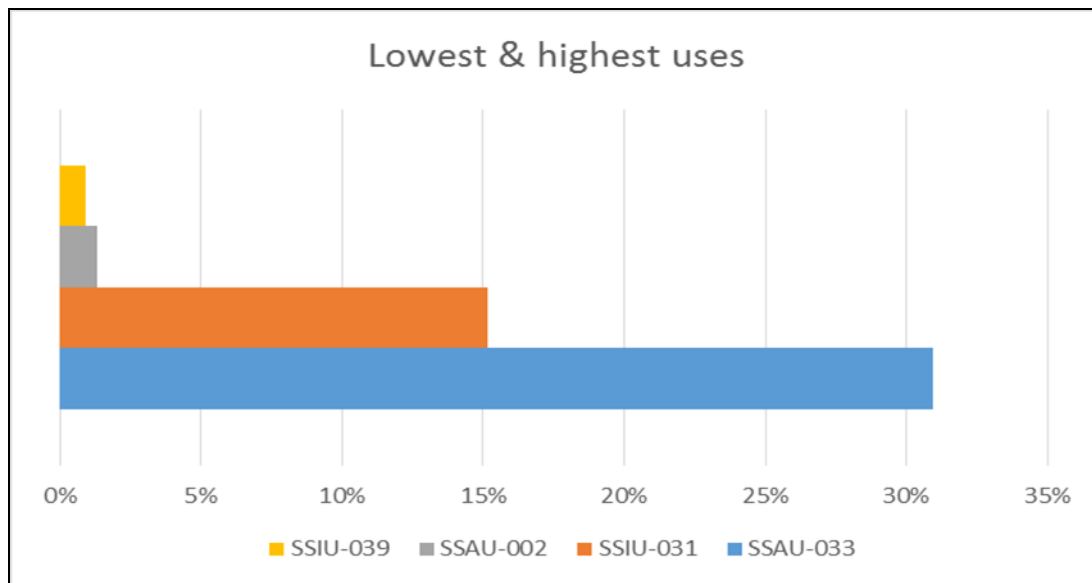


Figure (4) Analysis of Hits of Discourse Markers in the Writings of SSAU



Based on the analysis showed in table (2) and supported by the figures (3) and (4), it is clear that the highest percentage of hits is in the corpora of SSAU. This can be clearly seen in the writing of SSAU-033. Out of 1990 total words, SSAU-033 used 616 hits of discourse markers. Accordingly, his percentage is 30.95. Within SSIU corpora, the highest percentage of using hits of discourse markers is 15.18. It is obtained by SSIU-031 who used 360 hits out of 2372 total words. Figure (5) below demonstrates the highest and the lowest uses of discourse markers as an aspect of academic writing in the writing of SSAU and SSIU.

Figure (5) Lowest and Highest Uses of Discourse Markers in the Writing of



As showed in figure (5) above, the lowest use of hits of discourse markers can be seen in the writing of SSIU-039 and SSAU-002 respectively. SSIU-039 used 11 hits out of 1241) and his percentage is 0.89 while SSAU-002 used 29 hits of discourse markers out of 2248 and his percentage is 1.29.

## 7. Discussion

Discourse markers can show the quality of a text. Texts can run without dis-course markers but with difficulty. The importance of this aspect lies within the smoothness of the presentation of information. They, reasonably, connect the sentences into one body of ideas. The use of this technique is important in certain texts. They are especially important in academic writing, to be more precise, in the writings of graduate students. They are very important guide for the reader. Its importance lies within the identification of the relationship between the ideas, as well as to make the reader to connect the ideas between the current sentence and the approaching one.

The results of the given data showed that the highest use was the use of ‘however’. ‘However’ is a contrastive marker that belongs to the basic form and formal use. The ratio of this marker within the COCA is 1.0 per million. Meanwhile, ‘nevertheless’ which is more formal, as categorized in table 3 mentioned above, took a ratio of 1.7 per million in the COCA corpus. Nevertheless, it was used only 20 times by SSAU and 28 times by the SSIU, in comparison with ‘however’ which was used 333 times by the SSAU and 234 by the SSIU. This shows that though the uses of the discourse markers were high, these uses were different from the common uses of the COCA and of less formality which indicates less awareness of these uses.

Argumentation development and production can be refined by the use of the-se discourse markers in their best manner. Consider this example:

The decision to adopt Fraser's segmental approach to analyzing discourse was **primarily** based on three reasons. **First**, although H&H maintain the position throughout Cohesion in English that cohesion is, **strictly speaking**, important mainly at the intersentential level, they are compelled to make some exceptions (see, e.g., pp. 232-233, for a discussion of conjunctive adjuncts occurring "in written English following a colon or semicolon"). **The second** reason for my decision to adopt Fraser's discourse segment-level approach relates to the fact that developmental L1 and L2 writers often struggle with appropriate punctuation. This often results in problems such as "run-on sentences," which shouldn't be conflated with an analysis of cohesive devices. **Finally**, as will be shown in the review of Fraser's work on DMs, a DM might signal the same cohesive relationship between two segments of discourse punctuated, **for example**, by a period, a comma, or a semicolon, with little or no difference in meaning or cohesive force. In all cases the same cohesive relationship would exist between the discourse segments. **To say, then**, that only segments separated by a period (full stop) are cohesive seems arbitrary. **Therefore**, both (1:13a) below, which is an example of cohesion created by (in H&H's terms) non-structural (i.e. intersentential) means, and (1:13b), which is an example of cohesion created by structural (i.e. syntactic) means, will be considered cohesive for the purposes of the present study (examples from H&H, p. 9, their numbering).

#### SSAU-033-CH2

This paragraph shows the arrangement of the information sequence is organized through discourse markers. Although, some of them are not mentioned within the selected markers list, their use is noticeable. The writer organized the text into steps by using 'first' 'second' and 'finally' to present three groups of information. As well, the writer used 'strictly speaking', 'for example', 'To say, then', to direct the reader. Finally, the writer used 'Therefore' to conclude these ideas. This awareness of connecting and distributing the ideas is very much required to produce a high quality text. This text could have been formed without these discourse markers, as many students in the analyzed data did, yet, the text would be of different quality and of different argumentation evaluation.

As a quantitative analysis of this aspect of argumentation, examples would be, in this case, less easily to find and exemplified qualitatively. Nevertheless, students' writings, as a whole text, were widely different. The 30% of the whole text use of discourse markers by SSAU-033 is no match with the 1.29% use of SSAU-002.

Meanwhile, the 15.18% of the whole text use of discourse markers by SSIU-031 is way different from the 0.89% use of SSIU-039. Such results indicate that, on one hand, there are students that heavily depending on discourse markers to build a clear argumentation and on the other hand, there are students that almost do not know anything about it.

As a conclusion, some points were identified. The first is that more practice does not necessarily mean fewer errors. Error ratios of the last paragraph for some students are equal or even more than the first paragraph. This indicates that the student did not develop his writing through the course of writing. The second is that the ad-visor's role of feedback and observation was not as required in many cases.

The advisor's role is to observe and review every single argumentation in relation with the topic. Therefore, relevance, coherence, and topicality are within this level. The third is that the student's ability to produce comprehensive argumentation is bound to his ability to develop himself throughout the course of writing his dissertation. Certain elements are required to achieve this goal.

As a comparison between the students' levels of ability of production, SSAU were able to perform better in some aspects and less in other aspects. SSIU were less capable of producing such quality of results. This could be due to the differences in the settings which are conducted in this study. The overall argumentative level reflected the pragmatic awareness and capability to produce a high quality academic work.

## 8. Conclusions

This study has reached a point with which a conclusion can be hypothesized and conducted. The reviewed literature with the analyzed and discussed data made this at hand. The full observation of these conclusions made the researcher able to suggest recommendations for such studies. These conclusions are the concern of this section.

Constructing a good argument requires many aspects in consideration such as topicality, length, structure, and vocabulary. Yet, the flow of information in a text can be controlled and directed by the use of the discourse markers as discussed earlier in this study. The importance of this discourse markers lies within the smoothness of the presentation of information. They, reasonably, connect the sentences into one body of ideas. The results varied and one can note that the highest cluster frequency can be found in the writing of SSIU whereas the lowest one can be seen easily in the writing of SSAU. Such results indicate that, on one hand, there are students that heavily depend on discourse markers to build a clear argumentation and on the other hand, there are students that almost do not know anything about it.

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