

The Use of Discourse Markers in Spoken English by Iraqi EFL Learners at University Level

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Abstract

Discourse markers (DMs) play an important role in discourse whether written or spoken due to the coherence and cohesiveness they create in a text. Therefore, they attracted the attention of researchers and scholars in many fields, especially in Second Language Writing (SLW) and Discourse analysis (DA) in both EFL and ESL contexts. The aim of this study is to address DMs in the conversation of Iraqi senior EFL university students rather than their writing product since much research has extensively studied EFL students' writing. Data were collected via audio recordings of students' spoken discourse about a given topic. After transcribing the data orthographically, AntConc software was used to identify any frequency pattern(s) of DMs sequence. Then the hidden statistical tools in Word were used to analyze the data statistically to see the difference in using DMs between male and female participants. The findings indicated that the students used DMs in various rates in their spoken discourse: RDMs (70%), followed by IDMs (15%), SDMs (10%), and CDMs (5%). It has also been concluded that female participants used DMs more proficiently in their conversations than their male counterparts. Also, both genders overused some RDM terms, such as "and", "or", "and", and "but" and misused others due to L1 and L2 interference. The study comes out with several recommendations about improving Iraqi EFL students' ability to use DMs in their spoken production and provided suggestions for related future work.

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1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, research on DMs has considerably increased in both DA and SLW fields. However, DMs were distinguished before that in the 1980s when Levinson (1983) mentioned them indirectly as a class worthy of study due to its advantages, such as referring to the connection between an utterance and previous discourse.

After that in (1985), Quirk et al. emphasized the vital role of these words in developing an ongoing intimate relation with people by explaining that phrases like: “well”, “you know”, “as a result” are sharing devices and intimacy signals in everyday conversation.

However, DMs were officially distinguished and investigated in 1987 when Schiffrin suggested that “DMs belong to a functional class of verbal/ non-verbal instruments that provide contextual assortment for a conversation describing them as dependent components which support units of a conversation” (1987:41). Following a structural perspective, Schiffrin identified DMs as “a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs and prepositional phrases” (ibid: 31). By “dependent” Schiffrin meant that the meaning of a DM is understood according to the context in which it was used, and the DM’s meaning is mainly influenced by the reason of its use in a conversation or a text (Cowan, 2008).

Another viewpoint rose in 1999 by the linguist Fraser who investigated DMs semantically. Fraser points out that discourse markers are “a class of lexical expression drawn primarily from the syntactic class of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases” (1999:931). With certain exceptions, they signal a relation between the interpretation of the segment they introduce (S2), and the prior segment (S1). Both views will be presented in a separate section later due to their centrality to this study.

During later years, other linguists began to expand prior research and called for investigating DMs pragmatically, such as Aijmer (2002) who points out that “DMs are unique class of words with special structural, semantic functional and pragmatic

characteristics” (2). Given that fact, Lam (2009) indicated that DMs are so pivotal for English language learners (Ells) in order to communicate successfully in an interaction on the pragmatic sphere. In other words, DMs can assist learners to use English language, whether written or spoken, fluently which will make them feel comfortable while learning a foreign language. With the help of DMs in the spoken discourse, the naturalness of talk will be gained and as well as in written discourse as the text contains a higher level of coherence (Halliday and Hassan ,1976). Blakemore (1992) refers to DMs as “discourse connectives” as they refer to a connection or an implicature between two consequent sentences/utterances, which helps the hearer choose the intended meaning(s) of the speaker. On the other hand, Redeker (1991) mentions that DMs are “discourse operators” as they usually specify a relation between propositions to attract the attention of the hearer.

More recently, much research focused on DMs in learners'/students' writing, especially academic writing due to the difficulty and importance of this skill in various levels of education (Khudhair, 2020). For example, Ab Manan and Raslee (2016) who conducted a study about the use of English DMs and found that students used familiar English DMs in their writing and ignored or misused the ones that they do not know. Similar results were found by Al-Ahmed, Yahya and Kirmizi conducted two studies in (2020) and (2021) to explore the use of DMs by Iraqi students. The first study was conducted in Karabuk university in Turkey in 2020 on postgraduate students to explore students’ ability to use DMs appropriately. The results revealed that students still need to improve their skills in using DMs to reach the academic level in their writing. In the second study, Al-Ahmed (2021) used Iraqi undergraduate students as a sample as he was trying to investigate the use of DMs in their essay writing at Al-Qassim university in Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated that students need to develop deeper knowledge about DMs and how to use them in writing since unknown DMs were misused by the students in writing while others like “and” and “but” were overused.

Although intensive research has been conducted to investigate the use of DMs in written discourse, as shown above, their use in

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spoken discourse, has been on the other hand, rarely explored. Therefore, the current study is to fill that gap by investigating the Iraqi EFL university students' ability to use DMs in the spoken discourse. The findings of this study are important for both theory and practice as it adds more information to the literature about this aspect, and it highlights how students use them in their speech and if they are using them appropriately. Also, the study aims at giving a detailed description of the various types of DMs as well as the importance of their use in spoken discourse.

To achieve these aims, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What are commonly used DMs by Iraqi EFL students in spoken English?
2. Does gender affect the frequency of using DMs?
3. Are DMs misused/overused by Iraqi EFL students in spoken English?

In the light of the above questions, it is hypothesized:

1. Not all DMs are used by Iraqi EFL students in spoken English.
2. Gender affects the frequency of using DMs.
3. Many students misused/overused DMs in spoken English.

2. Different Terminologies of DMs

Apart from the various fields that addressed DMs, linguists and scholars used different terms to refer to DMs based on their use. For example, in 1970s, Lackoff (1971) named them "hedges", while Labov and Fanshel (1977) called them "discourse markers". Later in the 1980s, Svartvik (1980) referred to them as "particles"; Ostman (1982a) named them "pragmatic particles"; Chalker (1984) called them "connectives"; Schourup (1985) called them "discourse particles", while Schiffrin (1987) described them as dependent components that cohere written or spoken discourse to make it more understandable to the audience". In the 1990s, the structural view was more prevalent as linguists and grammarians identified DMs as either "phatic connection" (Bazanella,1990) or as "linking words and phrases" (Eastwood,1999). On the other hand, Jalilifar (2008)

mentioned that DMs play a significance role in improving the writing and speaking rate when used appropriately or else one cannot construct the written or the spoken discourse coherently.

Due to the confusion and inconsistency in the naming of these words/phrases and for the purposes of this study, the researchers prefer to use Discourse Markers abbreviated as: DMs, throughout this study and defined DMs as words or phrases used to organize the structure of discourse written/spoken or to express attitudes.

3. Schiffrin vs. Fraser's Views about DMs

Among various definitions presented about DMs, Schiffrin and Fraser's views intrigued the researchers due to their deep understanding but contradictory perspective. To be noted, the two scholars adopted two different approaches to studying DMs. The former syntactically approached DMs whereas the latter approached them semantically. Table 1 below points out both viewpoints about DMs.

Schiffrin's View	Fraser's View
Schiffrin (1987) claims that DMs link adjacent units of talk. This is known as "a local coherence."	Fraser (1999) argues that DMs do not necessarily link two adjacent units of talk. They can relate the segment they introduce in S2 to any previous segment in discourse. This is known as "global coherence."
Schiffrin argues that a DM can occur initially	Fraser argues that a DM can occur in a medial as well as final position in discourse.
As to the structural, semantic and pragmatic status of DMs. Schiffrin gives three types of DMs. A- DMs that have referential meaning such as: "and," "but". B- DMs with referential meaning like: "oh" and "well." C- DMs have referential meaning but are independent of the sentential structure such as: "I mean," "you know".	As to the structural, semantic and pragmatic status of DMs, Fraser concentrates on the cognitive role that DMs play in building text/discourse coherence. Also, he argues that DMs have semantic "core" meaning which is not conceptual but procedural.

4. Functions of DMs

There are several main functions of DMs that differ according to the field in which they are used. The following are the most prominent functions of DMs:

1. In a conversation, the central function of a DM is to show the relevance or relation of an utterance to the preceding one or to the whole context.
2. Syntactically speaking, DMs add coherence and cohesiveness to a conversation or a text as they create smoothness to the conversation or a text. In conversation, this function helps interactors to understand the implicit interpretations of an utterance and prepare an answer accordingly (Lenk, 1998).
3. Pragmatic function of conversations: This function is presented in both ‘interpersonal and textual functions.’ Interpersonal function includes inherent features of indirectness, politeness, and face saving (Bazzanella, 1990; Alami, 2015). The textual function of DMs, on the other hand, is accomplished when they fulfill two conditions: a) marking different types of boundaries (initiating or ending a discourse or shifting in a topic, b) assisting in turn-taking in a conversation or dividing a written discourse (Brinton, 1996).
4. They reflect the speaker and/or the hearer’s beliefs and intentions about the structure of the discourse.
5. Chronological order: without sufficient DMs, a piece of spoken or written discourse will not be logically constructed and the relationship between various sentences or utterances will not be clear.

5. Types of DMs

The current study followed the syntactic perspective of Maschler and Schiffrin (2015) rather than the pragmatic one of Fraser (2004) in the classifying of the DMs due to the relatedness of the former approach to this study’s aims more than the latter. As such, DMs are classified into the following four categories:

5.1. Referential DMs (RDMs)

These DMs indicate relations between previous and coming discourse. This category of DM comprises conjunctions that are used to show:

A. *Sequence*: (as a sequence, to explain, for example, on the contrary, conversely, instead of, above all, what is more, moreover, as a result, in this case, next to, in any event, therefore, finally, furthermore, though, although, besides, yet).

B. *Causality*: (since, because)

C. *Coordination*: (or, but, and)

5.2. Interpersonal DMs (IDMs)

This type shows relations between the speaker and the audience, for example threatening, hastening, enthusiasm. Interpersonal DMs may also signal relations of a speaker towards the text/discourse, called stance/epistemic or modal discourse markers, such as: “I don’t know,” “to my sorrow”, “well”, “I meant”, “of course”, “by the way”, “back to my original point”, “before I forget”, “with regard to” “regretfully” (Maschler, 2012). Different DMs are used for various attitudes intended by the speaker. For instance:

A. *Perception*: “look “, “believe me” and “you know”.

B. *Agreement/ disagreement*: “exactly”, “absolutely”, “certainly”, “definitely”, “okay”, “I see”, “I’m not sure”, “mind you”, “I don’t think so”, “I beg to differ” and “not necessarily”.

C. *Amazement*: “wow”, “wonderful” and “yay”.

5.3. Cognitive DMs (CDMs)

These markers reveal the cognitive processes of the speaker’s that take place during turn taking. Those processes are usually verbalized in conversations using various interjections, such as: “oh!”, “really?” and “oh no! “, “I mean”, “in other words” (Chafe, 1994).

5.4. Structural DMs (SDM)

These DMs signal connections among conversational interactions in terms of hierarchy and order, such as:

A. *Organization*: “first of all”, “secondly”, “for a start”, “next”, “last of all”.

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B. *Introduction*: “so”, “to begin with”, “to start with”.

C. *Summarization*: “to end”, “to sum up with”, “to conclude”.

6. Sample and Data Collection

6.1. Research Design

Since this study follows an experimental quantitative design, a quantitative approach was adopted in the current study to explore the use of DMs in L2 English oral discourse by Iraqi 4th year students. The current study followed the syntactic perspective of Maschler and Schiffrrin (2015) in classifying DMs and the same classification was used in analyzing the data in terms of the most frequent type used by the students. As such, DMs have been classified into the four categories 1) Referential Discourse Markers (RDMs); 2) Interpersonal Discourse Markers (IDMs); 3) Cognitive Discourse Markers (CDMs) and 4) Structural Discourse Markers (SMDs).

6.2. Sample

The sample of this study included forty fourth year EFL college students, males and females, whose age ranged between 22-25 and their first language is Arabic. The students participated voluntarily and anonymously in the study. The researchers chose an argumentative topic rather than a descriptive or narrative to motivate the conversation and each student was required to talk about the given topic for about 10 to 15 minutes.

6.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data were collected in the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. Each participant was met alone and asked to talk about the topic of “the role of Iraqi women in society”. There are two reasons for choosing this topic; first it is a real-life topic that attracts and encourages students to talk, and second DMs are supposed to be frequently used in such a subject. Zoom application was used to collect and record the data. The conversations of the students were audio recorded, transcribed

orthographically, and then analyzed statistically to identify and measure DMs used by the participants.

In this study, AntConc software was used to analyze the spoken discourse of the participants. AntConc is a multi-purpose corpus analysis freeware, designed specifically for analyzing spoken and written corpus. According to Anthony (2004), “it hosts many important analysis tools including a powerful concordancer, word and keyword frequency generators, tools for cluster and lexical bundle analysis, and a word distribution plot” (7). In this paper, we used the ‘keyword frequency generator’ option to identify the frequency of DMs used by the students. The statistical tools, hidden in the Word system, were also used to analyze the data and get the percentages pie chart presented in the analysis section.

7. Discussion and Findings

Maschler and Schiffrin’s (2015) classification of DMs was used as a backbone for the data analysis. In other words, the frequencies in tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 below reflect various types of DMs used by the participants, which are the same four DM categories of Maschler and Schiffrin (2015) and these are: Referential DMs (RDMs), Interpersonal DMs (IDMs), Cognitive DMs (CDMs), and Structural DMs (SMDs).

The main findings and discussion are divided into two parts: part one includes the findings related to research questions one and two about the frequency of using DMs by the participants and the gender influence on using them in spoken discourse, while part two includes the results that are pertinent to the misuse/overuse of DMs by the participants.

7.1. Discussion and Findings of Research Questions One and Two

To understand the results presented in this section, research questions one and two should be re-mentioned here:

Research Question one: What are commonly used DMs by Iraqi EFL students in spoken English?

Research Question two: Does gender affect the frequency of using DMs?

The findings are presented in four tables and a pie chart. Each table explains the use frequencies of one main type of DMs along with its

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subdivisions according to the gender of the participants, whether males or females.

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the main types and subtypes of *Referential DMs (RDMs)* used by the Iraqi 4th year students. Also, it indicates how male and female participants used this type differently. For instance, females used this kind of DMs more frequently than males. It also shows that some RDMs are never used by the students such as “yet” and “to explain”.

Table 2. Frequency of Referential DMs used by Iraqi 4th year students according to gender

	Subtypes	RDMs used by Males	Frequency	RDMs used by Females	Frequency
1. Referential DMs	A.	As a result	11	As a result	13
	Sequence:	Moreover	9	Moreover	14
	“As a result,”	Furthermore	7	Furthermore	11
	“moreover”	Moreover	0	Moreover	0
	,	Yet	8	Yet	9
	“furthermore”	Yet	4	Yet	6
	“e”,	instead of	12	instead of	15
	“yet”,	finally	3	finally	5
	“instead of”,	therefore	7	therefore	7
	“finally”,	though	6	though	9
	“therefore”,	although	11	although	10
	“though”,	what is more	2	what is more	5
	“although”,	for	0	for	0
	“what is more”,	for	9	for	11
	“for example”,	example	3	example	5
	“on the contrary”,	on the contrary	1	on the contrary	0
		contrary to explain	8	contrary to explain	10
	in this case	5	in this case	5	
	besides		besides		
	conversel		conversel		

	“to explain”, “in this case”, “besides”, “conversely”, “above all”, “as a sequence”, “next to”, “in any event.”	y above all as a sequence		y above all as a sequence	
	Number of the used DMs	18	106	18	135
	<u>B.Causality:</u> “Since”, “because”	Since Because	9 6	Since Because	11 8
	Number of the used DMs	2	15	2	19
	<u>C.Coordination:</u> “Or”, “but”, “and”	Or But And	1 9 50	Or But And	1 11 56
	Number of the used DMs	3	50	3	68

In table 3, *Interpersonal DMs (IDMs)* used by the Iraqi 4th year students are presented in addition to the types and subtypes of each DM. Also, it presents the difference in using IDMs between male

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and female students. For example, the numbers in table 3 shows that female students use *Stance/epistemic DMs* IDMs more than males do, such as ‘well, of course, I meant and with regard to,’ The same thing was noticed in using *Perception* IDMs as in ‘you know’, and Agreement/Disagreement IDMs such as “exactly, absolutely’, and ‘I see’. However, it noticed that *Amazement* IDMs were rarely used both male and female participants which might be attributed to their unfamiliarity with this kind of IDMs. See Table 3 for further information.

Table 3. Frequency of Interpersonal DMs used by Iraqi 4th year students according to gender

	Subtypes	IDMs used by Males	Frequency	IDMs used by Females	Frequency
2. Interpersonal DMs	A. Stance/epistemic DMs “I do not know”, “to my sorrow”, “well”, “I meant”, “of course”, “by the way”, “back to my original point”, “before I forget”, “with regard to” “regretfully”.	I do not know	30	I do not know	50
		to my sorrow	73	to my sorrow	118
		well	123	well	158
		I meant	23	I meant	33
		of course	73	of course	83
		by the way	113	by the way	103
		back to my original point	73	back to my original point	93
		before I forget	33	before I forget	43
		with regard to		with regard to	
		regretfully		regretfully	

		ully		regretf ully	
	Number of the used DMs	10	55	10	73
	B. Perception: “look”, “believe me” and “you know”.	look believe me you know	1 2 12	look believe me you know	1 2 14
	Number of the used DMs	3	15	3	17
	C. Agreement/ disagreement: “exactly”, “absolutely”, “certainly”, “definitely”, “okay”, “I see”, “I’m not sure”, “mind you”, “I don’t think so”, “I beg to differ” and “not necessarily”	Exactly Absolut ely Certainl y Definit ely Okay I see I’m not sure mind you I don’t think so	4 3 3 1 0 7 2 0 4	Exactly Absolut ely Certainl y Definit ely Okay I see I’m not sure mind you I don’t think so	7 5 3 4 0 9 4 0 4
	Number of the used DMs	9	24	9	36

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	D. A mazemen t: "wow", "wonderful" and "yay".	Wow wonder ful yay	0 1 0	wow wonder ful yay	0 0 0
	Number of the used DMs	3	1	3	0

The use of the third main type of DMs, that is CDMs, is explained in Table 4 below. The results show that Iraqi EFL students are not familiar with using this type as neither males nor females used 'oh, really', and 'oh no.' However, both genders used 'I mean' and 'in other words' although female students used them more than male students.

Table 4. Frequency of Cognitive DMs used by Iraqi 4th year students according to gender

	Types	DMs used by Males	Frequency	DMs used by Females	Frequency
3.Cognitive DMs	Interjections: "oh!", "really?", "oh no!", "I mean", "in other words"	Oh Really y oh no I mean in other word s	0 0 0 7 11	Oh Really oh no I mean in other words	0 0 0 9 12
Number of the used DMs		5	18	5	21

Table 5 presents the use of the types and subtypes of the last type of DMs, by Iraqi 4th year students, that is *Structural* DMs (SDMs). The table shows how the male and female students used various kinds of SDMs and the different occurrences of this type in their conversations. The results show that Iraqi EFL students are familiar with *Organization* SDMs more than *Introduction* and *Summarization* SDMs. In addition, female participants used various types SDMs more than their male counterparts in their conversation. Yet, both genders never used ‘to end’ as a Summarization SDM, which might be attributed to their unacquaintance with this term neither in writing nor speaking.

Table 5. Frequency of Structural DMs used by Iraqi 4th year students according to gender

4. Structu ral DMs	Types	DMs used by Males	Frequen cy	DMs used by Femal es	Frequen cy
	A. Organizati on: “first of all”, “secondly”, “for a start”, “next”, “last of all”	first of all second ly for a start next last of all	13 9 4 5 12	15 14 6 8 15	
Number of the used DMs	5	43	5	58	
B. Introducti on: “so”, “to begin with”, “to start with”	so to begin with to	5 14 3	7 15 2		

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		start with		start with	
	Number of the used DMs	3	22	3	24
	C. Summarization: “to end”, “to sum up with”, “to conclude”	to end to sum up with to conclude	0 1 13	to end to sum up with to conclude	0 2 14
	Number of the used DMs	3	14	3	16

The findings of this study agree with those of Martinez’s (2004) study who found out that students tend to use some DMs, such as: “and”, “because,” “for example” and ‘also’, and never use others, such as ‘to end, oh no.’ Also, the findings showed that the preferability of using some DM types depends on the gender of the speaker. That is, female students tend to use certain types of DMs which are sometimes different from those used by male students. Based on tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, it can be noted that the participants had used (65) different DMs which involved (23) RDMs, (11) SDMs, (26) IDMs, and (5) CMDs. These numbers are verified in Figure 1 below, which shows the DMs used by Iraqi 4th year students according to the four main categories of Maschler and Schiffrin (2015). The figure’s percentages indicate that the students used RDMs (70%), followed by IDMs (15%), CMDs (5%), and SDMs (10%).

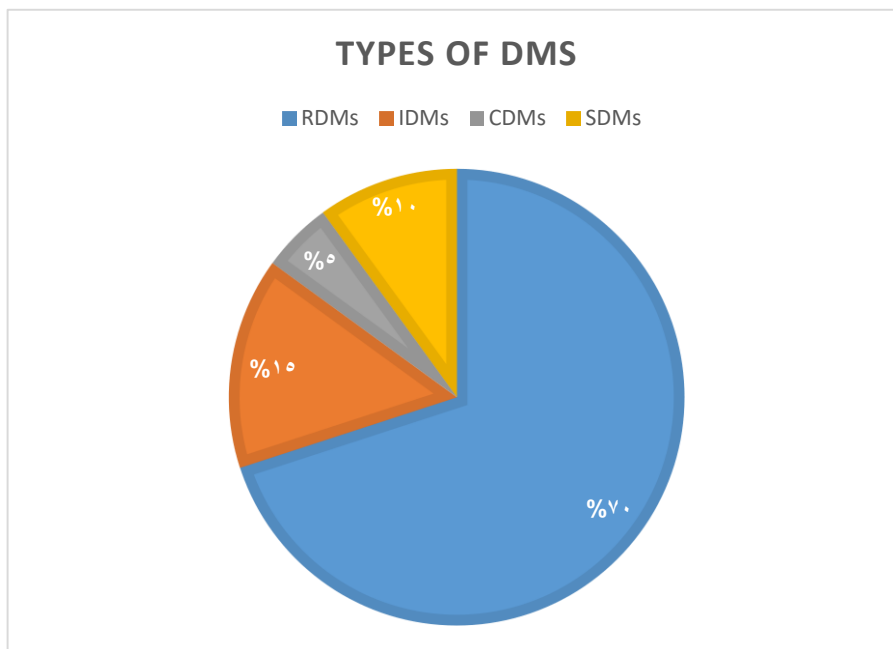


Figure 1. DMs Used by Iraqi Students according to the four Categories

7.2. Findings of Research Question Three:

The second part of the findings addresses the 3rd question, which is: Are DMs misused/overused by Iraqi EFL students in spoken English?

The answer is YES; Iraqi students misused and overused DMs a lot in their conversation. Consider the following two examples that were extracted from two separate student conversations about the given topic, and orthographically transcribed here to explain research question three:

Examples of Misused DMs by Iraqi EFL 4th Year Students

P # 8: "Although the cars are very useful in life, **but** little children drive with them."

P # 10: "He strongly recommend **to sum up with** the woman must be a doctor."

The above two utterances represent excellent instances of misusing DMs by Iraqi EFL students. In the first utterance, participant # 8 misused the RDM "but" as he/she used it with a conjunction that

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holds the same meaning, that is ‘contradictory.’ In the second utterance, we can see that participant # 10 misused the summarization IDM “to sum up with” semantically and syntactically as he/she used it instead of using the SDM “that.” Demirci and Kleiner (1997) maintained that such mistakes are familiar in the spoken and written forms of non-native speakers of English and attributed them to the interference that occurs between EFL learners’ L1 and L2 they are learning. In other words, Iraqi students’ L1, Arabic language, influences negatively their English spoken discourse, L2.

Another issue noticed in the conversation of the participants is the overuse of DMs. Consider these two quotations:

Examples of Overused DMs by Iraqi EFL 4th Year Students

P # 09: “Cars are very important **and** we must buy them **and** we must develop the factories **and** find new ways to make good streets **and** we must build new subways **and** we must know the rules of driving.”

P #13: “The woman has very important role **and** she has good qualities **and** she is very clever **and** strong. The woman must be a doctor **and** be an astronaut **and** she must prove herself. **And**, she should take her rights.”

In both instances, participants used “and” in their speech many times which weakened the conversation and diverted the hearer’s attention to other things. According to Al-Ahmed, Mohammed & Kırmızı (2020), students’ limited vocabularies in L2 is the main reason behind overusing DMs.

Conclusion

The main aim of the current study is to explore the use of DMs by Iraqi 4th year students at Mosul University. The current study concluded that although the participants in the study are seniors, they still have to develop their spoken skills to achieve the academic level in the spoken discourse. The DMs used in the students’ spoken discourse did not achieve perfect cohesion and coherence because they had either misused the DMs or overused them. Consequently, this linguistic issue impacted their conversation and made it weak.

In addition, the results showed that the participants used a very high rate of RDMs instead of using another type of DMs to make effective and high-quality utterances. They used specific RDMs terms, such as “and”, “in addition”, “for example” and “also” and this may be attributed to the common use of these markers in everyday talks. The findings showed that students have overused and misused some DMs. In addition, it has been found that female students have higher speaking proficiency of using DMs than their male counterparts. The results also indicated that specific DMs are not widely used by the students. Therefore, Iraqi EFL students need more guidance in their use of DMs in the spoken discourse. To enhance students’ fluency in English spoken discourse, the authors of this article recommend designing and teaching courses in academic spoken discourse to EFL students in English Departments in various levels. In the light of the findings of this study, a future national study could address a syllabus design of a spoken discourse for Iraqi EFL English Department students.

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**استعمال إشارات الخطاب في اللغة الإنكليزية المحكية لدى الطلبة
العراقيين الجامعيين الدارسين للغة الإنكليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية**

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المستخلص

تؤدي إشارات الخطاب (DMS) دوراً مهماً في الخطاب سواء كان مكتوباً أم منطوقاً بسبب التماسك والتماسك الذي تخلقه في النص؛ لذلك فقد جذبوا انتباه الباحثين والعلماء في العديد من المجالات، ولا سيما في كتابة اللغة الثانية (SLW) وتحليل الخطاب (DA) في كل من سياقات اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية (EFL) والكلمة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة ثانية (ESL)، والهدف من هذه الدراسة هو مخاطبة إشارات الخطاب في محادثة طلاب الجامعات العراقية الكبار في اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية بدلاً من منتجهم الكتابي حيث أن الكثير من الأبحاث قد درست كتابة طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية على نطاق واسع، وتم جمع البيانات عبر التسجيلات الصوتية لخطاب الطلاب المنطوق حول موضوع معين، وبعد نسخ البيانات إملائياً، تم استخدام برنامج AntConc لتحديد أي نمط (أنماط) تردد أدوات الخطاب ثم تم استخدام الأدوات الإحصائية المخفية في Word لتحليل البيانات إحصائياً لمعرفة الفرق في استخدام أدوات الخطاب بين المشاركين الذكور والإناث، وأشارت النتائج إلى أن الطلاب استخدموا إشارات الخطاب بمعدلات مختلفة في خطابهم المنطوق: (70% RDMS)، تليها (15% IDMS، 10% SDMS)، و(5% CDMs). كما تم استنتاج أن المشاركات الإناث يستخدمن الرسائل المباشرة بشكل أكثر كفاءة في محادثتهن من نظرائهن الذكور، أيضاً، أفرط كلا الجنسين في استخدام بعض مصطلحات RDM، مثل "و" و"أو" و"و" و"لكن" وأساء استخدام مصطلحات أخرى بسبب تداخل L1 و L2. أوصت الدراسة بتقديم العديد من التوصيات حول تحسين قدرة الطلاب العراقيين على استخدام البرامج المباشرة في إنتاجهم المنطوق وقدمت اقتراحات للعمل المستقبلي ذي الصلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أدوات الخطاب، أدوات الخطاب، اللغة الإنكليزية المحكية، المستوى

الجامعي.

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