



## ANALYSIS OF CONNECTION TYPES AND THE USES OF DEBATES IN LEARNING

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### **Abstract:**

This paper explores the syntactic and semantic of discourse connectives typically produced in a competitive setting. The discourse was produced by 98 students comprising 12 secondary schools. Coherence in discourse can be achieved by different mechanisms at play: morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. Morphologically, tense, for instance, helps to mark temporal relations, guiding the reader in the interpretation of progressions or flashbacks in time. One syntactic mechanism is sentence mood (indicative, imperative and interrogative). Mood is a structural marker of pragmatic meaning. Semantically, verb meaning can point to certain relations, cause, trigger, provoke, or effect which can all indicate a cause relation. Pragmatically, phenomenon such implicature establishes propositions that are not explicitly present in the text, but are constructed in the minds of the speakers. The aim was to unveil through analysis whether discourse uttered under this environment could be disorienting. Contrary from the expectation, the result indicated connectives worked on different levels which provided tacit and coherent interactions.

**Keywords:** genre, discourse, mood, coherence, semantics, syntax

### **Introduction**

The word '*discourse*' first came from Latin, '*discursus*' which means, '*conversation*', or '*speech*'. Zelling Harris 1952 was the first person to use the term, '*discourse*', viewed from a hierarchical perspective which means discourse is seen as the largest unit of language, followed by clause, the phrase, the morpheme, and the phoneme. This claim is contrary to earlier argument put forward by Noam Chomsky in his book, *Syntactic Structure of*

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*Language* published in 1957 in which he perpetuated the tradition with the view of centrality of the sentence and the often stated aim of generative approach to linguistics which stated that a theory of a language should specify or predict all and only the sentence of the language. Failure of Chomsky's approach led to the emergence of new theories and schools. Experts in these new theories believe that any good linguistic theory should describe language beyond the sentence and argue that certain meanings and aspects of language could be found and understood beyond the domain of sentence analysis. Thus, in 20<sup>th</sup> century, the following disciplines emerged: *Functional Grammar*, *Cognitive Linguistics*, *Socio-linguistics*, *Text Linguistics*, *Discourse Analysis*. Experts in the aforementioned fields believe that these disciplines are interrelated so much that drawing a clear cut line between them is difficult if not impossible, because they have common denominators.

Bernardez (1999) summarizes the tenants of these fields are explained:

1. Language only exists in use and communication; it always fulfils certain functions in human interactions.
2. Language use is necessarily social.
3. Language is not autonomous; it shares some characteristics with other social and cognitive phenomena.
4. The description of language must account for the real facts of language; it should not postulate hidden entities motivated by the need of the formal system utilized.
5. Linguistics structures should be closely linked to the condition of language use.
6. Language is natural and necessarily vague and inaccurate; therefore, any prediction can only be problematic.

Based on the above assertion, any act of performing or carrying out discourse analysis is tantamount to engaging in Functional Grammar, Socio linguistics, etc. A close study of these fields explains the flexibility in which researchers' ideas overlap with one another. For instance, Van Dijk (1998) switches freely from Text Linguistics to Discourse Analysis. Van Dijk's earlier claim was to give a vivid exposition on the relationship between sentences, but later discovered that language could better accounted for if looked at beyond the sentence level.

In order to explain how texts are understood, Pragmatic concepts were introduced in Text Linguistics. TL emphasizes textuality and uses the '*text*' as a unit which is larger than the sentence that leads to discourse processing and analysis. Consequently, researchers now undertake different approaches to the phenomena of discourse. For instance, Schifrin (1994) proposed the incorporation of two approaches in which discourse is defined as '*utterances*' or '*unity*' of linguistic productions whether spoken or written is inherently contextualized.

Van Dijk (2001) remarks that: *'...for me discourse analysis is essentially multidisciplinary and involves linguistics, poetic, semantics, psychology, anthropology, history and communication research. What I find crucial is its multifaceted nature; this multidisciplinary research should be integrated. We should devise theories that are complex and account for the textual, cognitive, the social and the political and historical dimension of discourse.'*

In view of the multiple dimensions of the field of discourse, discourse analysts engage in language studies of diverse forms as indicated by Alba – Juez (2009):

- a) turn, taking in telephone conversation;
- b) the language of humour;
- c) power relationship in doctor- patient interview;
- d) dialogue in courtroom;
- e) the discourse of the archive records;
- f) the conversation at dinner table;
- g) the scripts of a given television programme;
- h) the discourse of politicians;
- i) the study of racism through the use of discourse;
- j) how power relationship and sexism are manifested in conversation between men and women;
- k) the characteristics of persuasive discourse;
- l) the structure of narrative;
- m) the use of linguistics politeness;
- n) the discourse of email messages;
- o) the legal discourse used in trials.

In spite of wide spread disciplines associated with discourse study, many scholars hold the discourse elements like conjunctions and conjunctives are not worth investigation. This paper focuses on two folds: first, contrary to researchers' predominant view, this paper argues that these words have significant contributions to discourse interpretations and their functions go beyond lexical structures. Second, the paper argues that speakers' choice of these items is essential. So, their knowledge and application are vital. In the quest to unveil the above, a brief historical focus on discourse becomes imperative.

Discourse analysis developed originally within the field of linguistics in which it is viewed as the scientific study of language and language comprises a set of structures and a variety of functions. Under this view, speakers have internalized the rules and constraints that the grammatical structures of their language. More so, they have learned various conventions that underlie situational and contextual functions of language.

In fulfilling these social and linguistic obligations, two key terms are worthy of definition: '*structures*' and '*function*'. A structure is a unit of language (sound, syllable, word, phrase, clause and sentence) which is a use of language for a particular purpose, whether that purpose is informative, expressive or social Belinda (2010). A critical issue in linguistic theory involves the complexities of the interaction of structure and function. These functions are crucial in language comprehension. Consequently, modern structural linguists have developed sociolinguistics and investigated language in a social perspective in a broad way, focusing on how speakers know how to make choices and follow practices of using language – appropriately in various socio-cultural contexts. This is referred to as genre analysis. Genre analysis therefore describes the structure of texts in the contexts of discourse community, especially academic disciplines; social settings etc. and focuses on the ways texts reflect the social nature of communication.

Above is an attempt to clear some doubt hold by some people that discourse is quite distinct from linguistics. The notion of genre analysis presented in this paper allows a clear description of functional varieties of language use. It includes linguistic analyses and descriptions taking into account both social and cultural conventions. In order to provide a clear picture of the objective of this paper, the paper consists of the internal structure of communicative genre which includes verbal and prosodic features such as lexico-syntactic devices such as conjunctions, or discourse markers, etc.

### **Rhetorical Relations and Discourse Markers**

The analysis of discourse markers is part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence – how speakers and listeners jointly integrate forms, meaning and actions to make overall sense out of what is said Belinda (2010).

Discourse markers are pervasive in language as they are difficult to define because different terms are associated with them which include: coherence markers, discourse markers, lexical markers, discourse operators, discourse connectives, pragmatic connectives, sentence connectives, cue phrases, cue words, discourse signalling devices, etc. Another possible cause for the pervasiveness comes from its identification in a text. For instance, in some cases, it can be argued that a relation is present, although not explicitly indicated. Some authors argue that the absence of signals does not mean that the relations are not present, just like zero anaphora does not mean that an anaphoric relation is not present. Having presented different terms associated with discourse relation, the terms are therefore used interchangeably in this research. The fact is, whichever name used, discourse markers have the following

characteristics: (a) optionality, (b) flexibility, (c) prosodic independence (d) connectivity and (e) multi-grammaticality.

Conjunctive adjuncts in discourse relations are conveyed where the interpretation of one element depends on another. Such relationships can be grammatical, lexical, or semantic so that a discourse producer may make a choice between several possibilities. Whichever is the choice made; the user is making a selection among three broad possibilities: elaboration, extension, and enhancement.

### **Theoretical framework**

Discourse community model is chosen for this paper. Harris (1972a) refers to discourse community as actual people who recognize their language use. Members of a discourse community have common goals which are achieved through communication and classify it into local and global. Local DC simply refers to the place where writers/speakers ordinarily work – the classroom, the company, the department, or the office where writers/ speakers mingle. Global communities on the other hand help to determine writers/speakers' identities but are not restricted by physical sites; they are identified by like-minded, political, intellectual affiliations. Other links such as special interests are maintained by widely dispersed discourse practices. From the on-going, the theory of DC helps people to see that it is through community being part of some on-going discourse that people can as individuals write/speak and make /have purposes to achieve. Furthermore, discourse community determines what writers/speakers can do and will do.

Harris (ibid) said that, *'we write not as isolated individuals, but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns and practices both instigate and constrain at least in part the sort of things people say'*, (p.11). Writers/speakers of a particular DC are subject to *'cultural'*, *'institutional'*, *'generic'* and *'situational'* norms that govern the production of DC. Additionally, members of a particular/professional community do not only possess adequate knowledge of their communicative goals of the community to which they belong but also use many genre structures in which its members participate daily during the course of discharging their responsibilities and the result of the experience/training gained, gives conventionalized structures.

### **Significance of the Study**

Given the significance of DC theory to this paper, analysing genres within their real contexts reveals to students and teachers the material strengths of their communities and their power to use language appropriately. For students and novice members, DC

genres serve as crucial instruments that open the door of understanding so as to participate in an action of a given community as communicative genre fulfils important functions with respect to transmission of knowledge guiding students about what to say and what not to utter.

### **Significance of Debate in the Society**

An argumentative communication involves the study of reasons, giving people justification for acts, beliefs, attitudes, etc. The long vintage point school debate occupies in the academia and the civil society is found in its functional purposes. A well-organized debate offers a distinct experience which can be equated with other academic programmes in view of the fact that it enhances humanistic research capability, evaluation of claims and a good value judgment. Furthermore, debate introduces an intellectual excitement and rigor of research into school programmes in a manner which is characterized by both its intensity and interdisciplinary nature.

Additionally, debate is a uniquely beneficial educational tool in that it concretizes arguments required of an arguer. As students engage in debates, they mingle freely with one another, and these interactions foster relationships. Furthermore, the methodology offered by debate provides critical thinking, problem solving, moral development as well as enhancing tolerance. Critical thinking is defined by Proulx (2004) as a process of identifying an idea, analysing, evaluating sources of information and evidence in order to evaluate and reject; suspend the judgment about claim. This explains that individuals should be able to not only assess their own and other people's arguments but also construct good arguments. The ability to analyse information is constantly needed for all students if they must succeed in life endeavour.

As the world thrives towards democracy, information plays a crucial role as argued by Shroeder & Shroeder (1995:13): *Every institution of learning has a part of its mission, preparation of articulate and critical thinking individuals who are able to speak intelligently about the issues of the day. Forensics or competitive speech activates, clearly fits within this mission with the educational mission than any other activities.*

A healthy ability to think critically is not limited to business profession or institutions but is a prized skill which lawyers, legislators, doctors, scientists and other professional bodies need to possess in order to communicate meaningful things to their audience.

The notion of structuring argument is crucial to every student in that it helps in structuring the question-answer learning process which is a good strategy of communication skills because oral communication has been a vital aspect of humanistic education and democratic citizenship. This is because forensic programme plays an

important function in the total education of a student as it offers a variety of practical values. When a student is adequately coached, debate can provide a significant intellectual social and moral growth. Semblak & Shield (1996:7) said, *in speculating what role forensic activity plays in oral communication success in legislative halls, some positive conclusion can be inferred. For instance, the correlation ran high in this survey that the very top debates and floor speakers in the Florida House of Representatives were those who had previous experience in debate or public speaking type – activity*'.

It is a truism that in every society, people who are efficient in oral communication are highly regarded by their colleagues and partners whenever there is a public discussion. Specifically, legislators value interpersonal communication as a requisite qualification for speakership because solid foundation for argument is built on a quick and effective manner of speaking.

Data confirms that there is a relationship between leadership and debates. *Here is a sample of positive currently or once held competitive debates: cabinet members, congress persons, Presidents, Bar Association, College and University leaders, Ambassadors, Commanding Officers in the military, numerous state and federal government elected and appointed positions, publishers, bankers corporate board members, Chairpersons, and judicial positions at all levels including law school Deans, and Attorneys – general Ewbank & Auer (1995:15).*

Above indicates that there is a synergy between debate and leadership probably because good debaters are likely to be rational and rational people have high propensity of being less corrupt and considerate as most debaters are mindful of other people's opinion. Walker & Warhurst (2004: 40) said, *when you went to the debate, you listened to both sides of the argument, which I thought was the main strength of the debate that you do see both sides, rather than just seeing it from one point. Lecturers tend to have their own opinions, so in this way, we heard both sides of the argument.* This explains that the whole debate exercise requires fairness, logic and reasoning rather than mere expression of opinion. In line with the above assertion, Warner & Brushke (2001) said that participating in debates gets students into the mental habit of questioning claims of others, thinking through possible objections and developing questions about. Above statement implies that the ability to engage in arguments indicates one's position in a debate does not mean that s/he cannot embrace a different position in other contexts. Equally implied in the above assertion is that debate is beneficial for teaching respect for different opinions. Also, students who debate become confident and courageous to speak on any matter so long as they have evidence to support their argument. *I have learnt to debate against other people who are just as me...I have also gained confidence. When debating, if you stand and are not sure about argument, or yourself, your opponent will pick up*

*on it and use it against you. So, you have to be able to stand up and present yourself with confidence, which I learnt to do at the London Challenge, Jerome & Algara (2006: 32).*

## **Methodology**

In order to meet the requirements and study the interactive nature of students in socio – cultural context in which the live debates occurred, linguistic data typically obtained through audio tape recorder were crucial. Tape recorder provided the researcher with dense linguistic information, because audio tape recorders have been used by journalists, folklorists, documentarians and social researchers across the globe.

For the sake of the research, the current researcher had to transcribe the debates into written forms. Although the process of transcription created new texts whose relations to the original data were problematic due to losses, changes, etc., the essence of this method was achieved.

Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection have been good methods of ethnography strategies. In order to make generalization, frequencies of lexical items were provided because they served as necessary empirical evidence claims.

The researcher was not a member of the discourse community yet, the main role was to collect data and the discourse community members were aware of his presence. This membership role enabled the researcher to observe and interact closely enough with the members of the discourse community so as to establish an insider identity without participating actively in the talks

The data were obtained from the following schools in Ceylon: Ananda College, Anula Vidyalaya, Nalanda College, D.S.Sennayake, Methodist College, Ladies College, St. Lawrence Convent, Elizabeth Moir College, Lyceum International School, Muslim Ladies College, Zahira College, and Colombo International School.

As a requirement, the researcher entered an oral agreement with the official of the DC to protect the identities of all the participants with whom their interactions were recorded. Maintaining confidentiality in this regard means assuring that the particular individuals could not be revealed or linked to the data they provided.

## **Result and discussion**

### **Elaboration**

Elaboration means saying the same thing over again either by direct repetition or by rewording, clarifying, or giving an example. Typical markers of expressions of elaboration include: *'in other words', 'that is to say', 'or, rather,' 'for example,' 'for instance,'*



in particular,' *'in fact'*, *'at least'*, *'as a matter of fact'*, *'to be precise'* etc. as demonstrated in the following excerpts.

Excerpt (1). We don't think every time someone insults some one's religion that will always lead to sort of harm that we are talking about and it always depends on the reflection of individuals, of specific individuals to the specific speech. But let's take further recent gut where the state comes in. We say the state doesn't have the duty to prohibit discourse in society but it does have duty to prohibit harm. *Now about 'Innocent of Muslims'*.

Excerpt (2). We also ladies and gentlemen spoke to you about the social media being a vital platform for alternative discourse. Let's consider *the Saudi-Arabian cleric that the only reason I know of these clerics and the sort of these things, they released is because of Facebook*. Apparently, Saudi-Arabian women can't drive.

In (1 & 2) above, semantic requirement is apparent through conceptual relations of the clarifications of examples.

### **Extension**

Extension means adding something new, giving an exception to it, or offering an alternative. According to Halliday (1994), two clauses in a clause complex are linked by means of extension if one clause extends the meaning to another by adding something new to it. Basically, there are two categories: addition (one clause adding to the meaning of another).

Extension might be paratactic or hypotactic. In a paratactic extension, the clauses are linked together by the following conjunctions: *'and'*, *'or'*, *'nor'*, *'but'*. Thus, Bucciarelli (2010) remarked that, paratactic extension covers most of what is traditionally called, *'coordination'*, and the extending elements may be joined by relation which can be through the use of *'and'*, denoting positive assertion; *'nor'* implying negative addition, or *'but'* signifying adversative addition. Clause relation realized by extension may also take the form of variation in which one clause is presented as being in total or partial replacement of another, Halliday (1994). See the analysis in which *'and'* is used to connect conjuncts:

Excerpt (1). We know that we are about to take a rational decision and the government should consider...

Excerpt (2). We believe this is a deliberate slowing of that case, and will create more problems.

In both (1 & 2) above, the linking device, '*and*' introduces the second clause which has a consequential effect on the first clause. Stylistically, discourse producers of clauses in (1 & 2) above may be at the liberty of substituting '*and*' with '*therefore*' which has a similar semantic value based on the context of use.

Excerpt (3). If a woman stands up and say, 'ok, I have freedom of choice from now on, I choose not to go.'

Excerpt (4). We the feminists should stand up and recognize the right of these people ladies and gentlemen, and draw a new, a new framework, and a new idea of what feminism is going in two folds.

In (3 & 4), the event of each clause has a chronological sequence with the action in the preceding clause, but without obvious implying any cause-effects relationship. Alternatively, the speaker chooses to use, '*then*' which can signify temporal succession of activities.

Excerpt (5). We have just passed a law that says that it is illegal to download, make sure nobody downloads, and make sure you pay.

Excerpt (6). The government has the obligation to protect, and the government is doing nothing beyond passing license, telling the police or corps that makes sure that the law is enforced, and the technology is inadequate to protect that obligation.

In (5 & 6), the second clause in each is introduced by, '*and*' which provides a piece of information that stands in contrast with the meaning of the clause that follows in each of the clauses. In this case, the contrastive '*and*' could be replaced with '*but*'.

Excerpt (7). ...we say, 'look even the people who support you to say, 'no for you' and will monopolize the power within themselves to give you and now supporting different types of people.

In (7), the second clause, which is introduced by, '*and*' presents an element of surprise in the first clause.

Excerpt (8). Now, we say that feminists should be able to a certain extent extremist if it is going to be patriarch, ladies and gentlemen, and we say that similar observation can be made regarding the civil movement.

Excerpt (9). We recognize that these artistes must come up and we also recognize that because of these problems.

In (8 & 9), the second clause is introduced by '*and*' serves the function of explaining something in the first part of the clauses.

Excerpt (10). We have free and fair access to education and is good for the future.

In (10), the second clause is introduced by '*and*' which performs the function of commenting.

Excerpt (11). So, it is not something like, it is something like they are, 'you know', elementary school children who are attempting to go to school.

Excerpt (12). You see', they make a big change in health talk that stopped rape cases.

Excerpt (13). First and foremost, we learn about how to resolve conflict in a healthy manner because it teaches both the parties about good communication skills. 'I mean', if you are demanding from your husband...

Excerpt (14). We say, 'you see', if you reduce the amount of information and the different kinds of contents on the internet, then you are inherently...

Excerpt (15). And also, er - em - the same speaker stated that she is calling Eisha an idiot, *but* they are in a conflict. It is just between the two individuals and they can make a resolution for it.

Excerpt (16). Like the first proposition said, insulting is subjective and we say that it tells about the roles in progression and in development and we say it may be considered an insult at this point in time, '*but*' it helps development.

Both occurrences of '*but*' in (15 & 16), involve relation of a simple contrast.

Excerpt (17). They, secondly, er - told us er - er - that they don't think see that form of exploitation in terms of objectifying women. Then in their - in my following argument, '*but*' let me move to my first argument and the objectification of women and right to birth.

A sequential discourse application of '*but*' is demonstrated in (17) which signals a sort, '*return to the main topic*'.

Excerpt (18). ...we say, ok, 'where can we empower these people?' But you have such an ability enough to change the forces of life.

In (18), the use of '*but*' neither contradicts nor implies a negation of the second conjunct. Rather, it provides a kind of correction for the assumption in the first conjunct. One of the most notable characteristics of corrective '*but*' is that the first conjunct necessarily contains negation. It is used whenever a denial of the proposition expressed in the first conjunct becomes inevitable. The second conjunct expresses a closely related true proposition. So, it is the combination of the denial of the first conjunct plus the assertion of the second that establish the corrective clause.

### **Enhancement**

Enhancement adds circumstantial or conditional embellishment to the main clause. Enhancement paints a large picture within which the dominant clause plays out and circumstantial enhancement gives the listener added context to further clarify the main clause Halliday (1994). More so, enhancement extends the meaning in five primary ways: manner, spatial, temporal, causal and condition. Manner enhances the textual meaning by adding information about how a process takes place and it has the following as markers: '*like*', '*as if*', '*as though*,' etc.

Spatial relation basically describes the location where the presented information occurs. Integrationally, the locale is presented in both syntax and semantics of the discourse where the speaker displays the location to give the listener a clear representation of the setting.

Temporal relation can be signalled by markers such as '*then*', '*first*', '*at the same time*', '*now*', '*meanwhile*', '*before*', '*since*', '*until*', '*when*', etc.

Causal-condition relation can be introduced by conjunction such as '*so*', '*therefore*', '*for*', '*yet*', '*if*', '*as long as*', '*provided*', '*unless*', '*even though*', '*although*', '*because*,' etc. See the analysis below.

Excerpt (1). Our second argument is the meaning of education or the current status quo in Nigeria. Nigerian government is trying to invest in education. *So*, this means that what is happening with the project, they are trying to encourage Nigerian students to actually experience the best type of learning. '*So*', '*therefore*' they are trying to put this kind of a thing. And also, our third, we will also show this House how, how if, if one educational company makes academic journal restricted, all the project earning basically propaganda, and also make it restricted, it creates havoc and restrict the right to information

Excerpt (2). They, they don't have private teachers. Students don't have books. *So*, if journals are made unlimited, students can access. *So*, basically, when you use a book, you are limited. Your brain can be limited.

Excerpt (3). Online academic journals do not take us to the need of academic qualification. *So*, what the government is trying to do is to improve the quality of education and we believe that is right move we are taking. *Therefore*, we believe there is no other basic need opposing this motion.

Excerpt (4). I will handle the first argument and my second speaker will handle the next argument. *Now*, before I move onto our three arguments, let me give a re-battle to some issues that the side opposition brought. *Now*, they brought the issue of choice Mr. Speaker.

Excerpt (5). I will *first* speak to you about the battle from side proposition. *First*, I will like to point out that, er - er- very interesting to note that opposite opposition believes that identity of a woman is identified sexually.

Excerpt (6). ...*now* our first opposition told us that emotional state is anything. We will like to extend that it is an extortion to say that em - only two things drawn in emotional state *because* ladies and gentlemen, I can say female circumcision is a very dangerous thing to do.

Excerpt (7). People who have different opinions and, em - enhancing the market place of ideas have high propensity to lead to violence *because* it leads to bottle up emotions.

Excerpt (8). ...so, we see that anything, any slight thing that they think could be misconstrued as an insult. They remove and this leads them to a whole *because*, for example, when I see things on Facebook that is 'share if you love Jesus'.

Excerpt (9). Now they spoke about Beyoncé. We say why exactly do Beyoncé and Rihanna objectify themselves on stage? They don't do that because they want it ladies and gentlemen. They do it because they are in the industry. And they recognize that men are going to pay a lot of money to view this on television ladies and gentlemen. And that is the kind of objectification that Feminist Movement themselves because they know men will like it.

In (1, 2, 3 & 8), the conjunctions provided by 'so' and 'therefore' presuppose the presence of certain other elements which make pragmatic contributions to the on-going interactions between the speakers and the audience, since they appear to introduce clauses with equivalent presuppositions. In (8), It is expected that the '*because – clause*' would provide a justification for cause–effect, rather, the speaker gave an illustration to indicate a further elaboration of misconstruing the concept. In other words, the speaker use '*because*' in a way to link utterances that are not logically cause – effects, or even assertions of reasons. Such discourse marking with '*because*' is typical of communicative genre especially those produced under disorienting situation. However in excerpts (6, & 7), '*because*' is used to support speakers' assertions by presenting the knowledge on which the assertions are based. As such, '*because – clause*' especially as used in this study helps the speakers – audience manage information flow, often adding background or serving as motivating agents. In (8), '*because*' is used to introduce multiple clause structures which are linked with prior variety of clause structures. Note how '*because*' performs a broad scope in linking the three segments of the explanations, as it does not introduce sequences but provides broader links in the discourse.

In (4, 5 & 6), the use of '*now*', and '*first*' indicate a series of temporal relations which explain one event succeeding the other. Furthermore, they are used in that conversation not only to link propositions in time sequence, but also to resist turn-taking so that members of the opposing team are not permitted to interrupt the conversation.

Furthermore, '*comment clauses*' as demonstrated above, possess the following semantic functions:

- 1) They function as *hedges* which mean that they express the speakers' tentativeness over the truth of the contents of the clause. The subject is usually *I* in

conversations, and *we* in political and school debates, while the verb has always been in the simple present.

- 2) They can express speakers' certainty. Again, the subject is in singular and the verb as explained in (1) is in the present tense, depending on the number of participants, and the type of speech: interview, parliamentary debates, academic debates, conversations, etc.
- 3) They express speakers' emotional attitude towards the contents of the clause as in,

Excerpt (14). ...*we* members of the Opposition strongly *believe* that we restrict access to online academic journals.

Subject and verb again are determined by factors explained in functions (1 & 2) above.

- 4) They are used to draw the audience's attention. In this regard, it is called listeners' agreement and at the same time expresses the speakers' informality and warmth towards the listeners. Contrastively, the subject is usually, '*you*' and the verb is in the simple present.

Leech and Svartvik (1994) argued that comment clauses as seen above, are not very much related to the rest of the main clauses; rather, they function as sentence adverbials which are usually marked off from the other clauses by commas in written English and separate tone units in spontaneous talk. Position wise, comment clauses may occur in either initial, medial or final position of the main clauses.

Generally, (although sometimes style may override grammar), '*I mean*' is often used in specific discourse environment which could include: to conclude an argument, to introduce a story preface, and to evoke a new referent, because they do not only connect linguistic properties, but also express social and textual competence of those who use them as inappropriate discourse markers.

Another crucial discourse element analysed in this research is '*like*'. One of the meanings of *like* as a preposition is exemplification.

Excerpt (15). A computer is not something in the world today '*like*' something *like* phone and TV.

Excerpt (16). We are specifically dealing with - er, education- is not '*like*' sensing something bad.

Excerpt (17). '*Like*' the first Proposition said, insulting is subjective and we say that it tells about the roles in

progression and in development and we say it may be considered an insult.

In (15 &17), an exemplification is preceded by a general term or description, whereas in (16), the speaker is definite, hence the term, 'education'. On the other hand, 'like' can co-occur in a context where explanation is provided as explained in the analysis below:

Excerpt (18). First I will like to point out that er- is very interesting to note that identity of a woman is identified sexually.

*Like* can co-occur with a hesitation – pause as in,

Excerpt (19). Then, er- I will like to say er- Sir, compensation should not be interpreted in a limited concept.

Although it is very difficult to draw up a conclusion about cognition process of an utterance, the evidence provided in (18) is arguable that 'like' co-occurs with hesitation makers, because the speaker is searching for context information or appropriate lexical expressions.

Also, *like* co-occurs with expression of certainty as in,

Excerpt (21). Female circumcision is very dangerous thing to do.

In this illustration, the speaker is quite sure about his/her assertion considering the use of an emphatic lexis, *very* which signals the degree of certainty.

Furthermore, *like* co-occurs with expression of uncertainty using phrases such as, 'I don't know', 'I guess', 'I suppose', 'probably', 'may be', 'sort of' etc. as in,

Excerpt (22). We think *like* this will lead to one way to which we can lead to *sort of discourse*..

This type of co-occurrence seems to indicate that both 'like' and 'sort of' can be interpreted as hedging devices which the speaker uses to express uncertainty. Semantically, when 'like' collocates to the right hand side, it is a verb as in,

Excerpt (23). So, ladies and gentlemen, we 'like' to say, we need unrestricted access to online academic journals.



'Like' in the linguistic environment above suggests that it is a verb. However, there is an instance in which right hand 'like' collocates which suggests a preposition as in, Excerpt (23). A computer is not like something-like phone and TV.

Most occurrences of 'like' in the corpora are used as a verb while those that imply preposition, adverb, or adjective are quite few. One reason may be responsible for that: all the conversation topics are descriptive, describing people and events which offer the speakers more opportunities to use 'like' as a verb.

Another class of discourse marker which plays important function in an interactive communication is 'well'. Semantically, 'well' has multiple functions and belongs to varied word classes such as adverb, adjective, noun or verb depending on the context of usage. As an adverb for instance, 'well' modifies a verb and it is placed before it which means, 'something is done completely', 'thoroughly', 'to a high standard' or 'to a great extent'. 'Well' as an adverb can be used before an adjective or a prepositional phrase to emphasize a statement. As an adjective, 'well' is used to describe someone as 'healthy', Zarei (2016).

From syntactic viewpoint, 'well' follows no specific syntactic rules since discourse markers are not word classes. For this reason, they are placed anywhere in a discourse. However, there are some syntactic restrictions. For instance, 'well' as a DM cannot split a compound expression as in, 'the gold ring was found in the swimming well pool'. Also, 'well' cannot be placed before a coordinated pronoun such as, 'John and I well have an interview to attend.'

Furthermore, 'well' can be described as a 'qualifier' and a 'frame'. When used as a 'qualifier', it serves as a connector between the preceding and the following contexts. 'Well' as a frame is primarily placed on a non-initially for (a), making the closing of the discourse, (b) introducing explanation and clarification, (c) introducing quotations, and (d) functioning as editing marker for self-repair.

See the analysis below:

Excerpt (24). *Well*, let me tell you this, if you watch - if the TV shows are uneducating things, ... If you ask me whether watching TV can turn into a criminal or to make him not so good, *well*, I would say... 'why?'

Excerpt (25). *Well*, the third speaker accused co - education schools of being of low quality and for being a distraction for the girls and boys. *Well*, it is more distraction if girls and boys are in single-sex education.

In excerpts (24 & 25), and indeed all other occurrences of *'well'* in the corpora reveal that they are pragmatically used as a sharing device for maintaining social relationship. As such, it is context-dependent. Schiffrin (1989) proposes that *'well'* acts as a signal to interlocutors when the coming utterance lacks disagreement and insufficient or unexpected answers. As indicated in (23 and 24), *'well'* is a marker of response, prefacing a response to a *wh-* question.

## Conclusion

The finding presents a myriad of perspectives with which the students speak, exhibiting an excellent knowledge of elaboration, extension, and enhancement. This discourse strategy has increased the effectiveness of the communication. For instance, clause markers such as *'you know'*, *'you see,'* and *'I mean'*, as used above, make explicit appeals for confirmation or seeking for collaboration. Additionally, they are used as turn-yielding. Therefore, they can be considered as interpersonally oriented. For instance, in (11), *'you know'* presupposes that the audience knows what is being communicated.

However, it may not necessarily presuppose previous knowledge on the part of the audience, but may pretend to do so for the sake of politeness. Also, *'I mean'* as used in (13), refers back to a previous proposition and points forward to an upcoming arguments. In this case, *'I mean'* plays dual functions of anaphora (backward pointing) and cataphora (forward pointing). Additionally, *'I mean'* ends to communicate the fact that *'I am trying to communicate'*. Therefore, it precedes performance of acts.

Structurally, communicative genres exhibit a certain degree of obligation that constrains with respect to social relationship and situations. So, analysing a communicative genre, one has to take into account such patterns because each DC disposes a large repertoire of communicative pattern as guides.

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