The Analysis of Discourse Markers in Science Debate

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated discourse markers that occurred in the science debate by TJump and Nathan Thompson. This research aimed to determine the types of discourse markers that TJump and Nathan Thompson used and described their functions. The researcher used a descriptive-qualitative approach to answer research questions by using Schiffrin's theory (1987). The data was taken from utterances containing discourse markers from TJump and Nathan Thompson's debate that discusses globe vs. flat Earth. This research reveals that there were six types of discourse markers and 11 discourse markers, which have different functions, such as a marker of information management (oh); a marker of response (well); discourse connectives (and, but, or); markers of cause and result (so, because); markers of temporal adverbs (now, then); markers of information and participation (I know, I mean). The function of those discourse markers are a marker of information management to attract attention, a marker of response to create coherence, discourse connectives to connect more units, to mark contrasting units as option markers, a marker of cause and result as a complement, and subordinate ideas, markers of temporal adverbs are to show the relationship between time, markers of information and participation are as the transition of information state and indicate the speaker's orientation. The next researcher can use another theory to analyze discourse markers, especially discourse markers as fillers. This study focused only on the types and functions of discourse markers; the researcher can connect discourse markers to speech acts and use different theories.

Keywords: *Discourse Markers, Science Debate, Argument*

INTRODUCTION

Discourse markers have an essential role in human life communication. The listener often focuses on the discourse marker that the speaker uses as the main requirement for creating cohesion and coherence in discourse. In addition, using a discourse marker signals the listener to understand the information being said. "The production of coherent discourse is an interactive process that requires speakers to draw upon several different

types of communicative knowledge that complement grammatical knowledge of sound, form, and meaning per se" (Schiffrin, 1987). Discourse markers exist throughout the interactive conversation. However, they have little meaning. Even so, if there are no discourse markers, speech in a conversation will sound harsh and friendly. "Discourse markers seem to be needed to establish or confirm solidarity between the speaker and hearer or add to the text's coherence." (Aijmer, 2015).

Discourse markers are a series of words or phrases derived from syntax classes, such as adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositional phrases, that are used to connect units of idea so that they can organize a conversation. Therefore, discourse markers can help speakers convey messages to the listener in an interaction without adding or subtracting the significant meaning of the message. Furthermore, discourse markers are also used to express attitudes, open and close a conversation, and change the topic of conversation. Therefore, the speaker must pay attention to the use of discourse markers so the listener can understand the unit of ideas conveyed based on the type and function of the discourse markers. The examples of discourse markers are *and, or, but, because, then, so, well, you know, look, oh, now.*

Many scholars investigated discourse markers, for instance, discourse markers in English conversation (Huang, 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2020; Zheng, 2019; Arya, 2020; Farahani & Ghane, 2022). Some examine discourse markers in the movie (Hasniar, 2017; Ussolichah et al., 2021; Ruswina & Sari, 2022). Furthermore, some of them also investigated discourse markers in humor (Rofiq & Priyono, 2021) and political discourse markers (Amalia et al., 2021; Banguis-Bantawig, 2019; Laili, 2018; Damopolii, 2021). All those previous studies have similarities to this study, which aimed to describe the types and functions of discourse markers in a conversation and have differences in the theory used.

Furthermore, many researchers also have paid attention to the discourse markers in the debate, such as political debate (Sembiring, 2017; Vrieze, 2020; Wang & Guo, 2018). The researchers discussed the discourse markers contained in the presidential debate. These studies discussed the importance of discourse markers as a linguistic set in a debate. In addition, discourse markers help the speakers express their ideas logically and coherently so the audience can understand the message. The researchers focused on the types of discourse markers and their functions, which the candidates used in presenting their arguments in a debate. Meanwhile, (Esther, 2020) examined discourse markers in English student debate. The researcher explained that discourse markers are essential for organizing a text in communicative events such as debates. This study focused on the types and functions of discourse markers students used during debates.

Based on previous studies, this study analyzed discourse markers in the scientific debate to fill the gap. The researcher was interested in choosing a science debate because, in this debate, speakers discuss the globe vs. flat Earth. The reason was that lately, on various social media platforms, there has been a lot of talk about flat Earth from various countries. Many people believe that the Earth is round, and even NASA mentions that the shape of the Earth is round due to gravitational forces. Even so, not a few people also believe in a flat earth and say that NASA has lied. The debate between the two beliefs made them try to find as much evidence as possible to prove their respective theories with scientific explanations. To prepare arguments thoughtfully, the speaker must also apply discourse markers properly and correctly so that the conversation is not dull and flows

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continuously. Discourse markers in the debate can also clarify the speaker's statement and strengthen their arguments.

Therefore, this study focused on the types of discourse markers by Tjump and Nathan Thompson and their functions. The researcher limited the topic debate to science because the researcher only chose one topic, "flat earth vs. globes." Moreover, the limitation of this study was that the researcher only analyzed one debate session, which lasted thirty minutes. This study mentioned and explained the use of discourse markers based on their types and functions using Schiffrin's theory. The discourse markers are, *oh, well, and, but, so, because, then, now, know, and I mean.* This study used the theory developed by Schiffrin because it discusses the types and functions of discourse markers in the scientific debate used by Tjump and Nathan Thompson. Schiffrin's theory is suitable because she suggests six types of discourse markers, each with a different function according to its use.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method to examine the utilization of discourse markers by Tjump and Nathan Thompson in their debate. The qualitative approach was chosen as no numerical or statistical analysis was involved in the data examination. The research primarily focused on interpreting and describing data derived from the speakers, Tjump and Nathan Thompson, using a descriptive method to portray a social phenomenon. This study aimed to describe the types and functions of discourse markers utilized in the debate by Tjump and Nathan Thompson.

Data for the study consisted of utterances or words containing discourse markers extracted from the YouTube Podcast debate between TJump and Nathan Thompson on globe vs. flat Earth. The occurrences of discourse markers, such as "oh," "so," "well," "but," "so," "you know," "and," "because," and "I mean," were explicitly examined based on Schiffrin's theory. The video, uploaded on June 19, 2021, was approximately 2 hours and 14 minutes long.

To gather the data, the researcher followed several steps. Initially, they downloaded the conversation transcript from YouTube's automatic subtitle service using https://downsub.com. Next, they carefully read through the converted text. They listened to the conversation between Tjump and Nathan Thompson, revising the downloaded transcription text to align it accurately with the spoken words. The researcher then identified and underlined words and phrases containing discourse markers using text highlight color.

Data analysis was conducted using three methods. Firstly, to address the first research question, the researcher identified words and phrases based on the types of discourse markers proposed by Schiffrin (1987). Secondly, they categorized and explained the data according to the functions of discourse markers as Schiffrin (1987) classified it. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions based on the findings discussed.

FINDINGS

The research results found 524 data consisting of discourse markers classified into six types of discourse markers using Schiffrin's (1987) theory. The data were obtained from the words and phrases spoken by Tjump and Nathan Thompson in their discussion of

globe vs. flat Earth. Data was collected based on the types and then the functions. In describing the data, discourse markers are written in bold.

Types and Functions of Discourse Markers

There were six types of discourse markers and 11 in the utterances of TJump and Nathan Thompson that have been analyzed in this study. The types of discourse markers and discourse markers in the scientific debate are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Types of Discourse Markers and Discourse Markers in the Scientific Debate

No.	Types of Discourse Markers	Discourse Markers	Amount
1	Marker of Information Management	Oh	4
2	Marker of Response	Well	13
3	Discourse Connectives	And	209
		But	26
		Or	33
4	Markers of Cause and Result	So	131
		Because	45
5	Markers of Temporal Adverbs	Now	25
		Then	33
6.	Markers of Information and Participation	Y'know	1
		I mean	4
	Total		**524**

Marker of Information Management

Oh, was a discourse marker found in this type? Information management has a role to pull from the flow of information in discourse.

> *Datum 1*
> *TJump: Uh... well, actually, I have built one of these, so I have done it personally, which debunks all of what Nathan said, yeah... yeah... I go to a college... where we always do this stuff.*
> *Nathan: **Oh**! Do you go to college? Okay, so the college did it? You did not do it in your backyard?*
> *TJump: No, who do you think builds them? They give us money, and we then use the money to buy parts and put the parts together like Lego pieces. We build them....*

If **oh** stands alone without syntactic support, **oh** could be used as an exclamation or interjection to indicate an emotional state, such as pain, fear, or surprise. Nathan used Oh to indicate his emotional state, where he was surprised by TJump's statement. In addition, **oh** was also used as a request for clarification. TJump's statement began when he talked about proving that the Earth was round, i.e., by using a ham radio, and he did it in a college. However, Nathan did not understand it, so he used **oh** as a request for clarification so that TJump could provide a further response.

Based on the analysis above, the marker of **oh** as information management marks the shift in the speaker's orientation to information when the speaker and the listener manage the information given and received during the conversation. It means that the role of **oh** is to mark the focus of the speaker's attention and the listener's future attention.

Marker of Response

The other marker which TJump used and Nathan was **well**. **Well** was called a marker of response because it involved the speaker in interaction when what was being said was considered inappropriate.

> *Datum 2*
> *TJump: Yes. So, the sunset is the leave. The shadow of the sun, where it stops emitting light, is the entire point of the horizon, so obviously, where you are standing could affect the shape of the sunset, like if you are standing on the horizon. You could watch it move like the shadow could come and pass you so so, but it would if you were standing perpendicular to it; yes, it would light up the whole horizon.*
> *Nathan: Okay. Well, we observe something else. Anyone can observe that its local light illumination is similar to Vegas off in the distance when the sun sets. It does not illuminate the entire horizon.....*

The marker of the **well** may express both approval and disapproval. The discourse marker that Nathan used was to show disagreement with TJump's opinion. Nathan refuted TJump's argument by giving his opinion on the solar theory. The function of **well** within the framework discourse participation where its used has interrelationships in conversational exchanges to create coherence in discourse. **Well** places the speaker as a respondent at one level of discourse.

Discourse Connectives

There were three markers in discourse connectives; they were **and, but, or**. Although these markers were in one set, they have differences in the analysis.

> *Datum 3*
> *TJump: ----Radar is this magical technology that we have invented that can tell distances and speeds and locations and sizes of things that are far away. Moreover, the way it does that is it bounces radio waves, it emits them from an emitter, and it hits something, and then it bounces back, and we count the time. It takes to go from the object it bounces off of to the receiver and back. Moreover, we know how far away it is and what shape it is based on how the radio waves bounce off the thing.*

In the text above, **and** was a structural coordinator as a marker of speaker continuation. The existence of **and** can tell the listener an idea unit and an interactional unit. That can be seen in datum 3, a large number of used of **and** was to explain information that strengthens the argument in a debate.

The function of **and** marks the speaker's definition of what was being said as a continuation of the previous utterance. The function of **and** was to connect two or more units of ideas.

> *Datum 4*
> *TJump: We know the world is a globe because we have been to space and can see it. However, that does not convince the flat earthers because they want something they can confirm, which we can provide. After all, there is this thing called radar.*

However, it came because it indicated a contrasting unit and was limited in use. TJump's utterance contained **but** because it contrasted with the previous unit. In this case, TJump said that the world was a globe because humans could prove it by going to space,

but despite this evidence, there were still flat earthers. That was what made the utterances a contrast. However, it has the function of marking contrasting units. For this reason, **it** was limited in its use because it has a role in coordinating functional units if there was contrasting ideational or interactional content.

> *Datum 5*
> *TJump: And so we can measure many different things using these radio waves that you can build in your backyard to communicate with people on the other side of the planet, and you can know where they are located because they can tell you. Alternatively, you could build one for your friends and your house.*

Or was a discourse marker used to offer options to the listener. Schiffrin (1987) describes how **or** could provide an option of ideas in arguments. In the discourse above, TJump made an offer to conduct a round earth-proving experiment with radio waves that could be built behind the house or could also be built for a friend's house. For this reason, **or** has a function as an inclusive option marker in discourse. The function of **or** was to mark the option. **Alter**natively, inclusively made the speaker provide an evidential choice of statement so that it involved the hearer choosing to accept the first disjunction, the second disjunction, or even both. The existence of the evidence made it possible to strengthen the position.

Markers of Cause and Result

The marker **so** and **because** our cause and result markers mark units of ideas, information states, and actions.

> *Datum 6*
> *TJump: ---Um... so we know, it is 280,000 miles away or whatever the number is. So we can measure the size of the moon, shape, and distance of the moon; we know it is in space. So we can know that the moon is in space. We know it is up there; we know the distances and what NASA says are correct. We can bounce radio waves off of it; not a problem. So we know all of these facts that we as individuals can confirm that what NASA says is correct---*

So was used to convey the conclusion of a statement. In the data above, TJump describes his argument about measuring the moon's distance using the reflection of radio waves by adding the discourse marker. Thus, *so* was used in the explanation of an argument. The function **so** was to mark the 'result' of the explanation.

> *Datum 7*
> *TJump: We know the world is a globe because we have been to space and can see it. But that, of course, does not convince the flat earthers because they want something that they can confirm, which we can also provide because there is this thing called radar---*

Because it conveyed a meaning of cause, it could be used for one reason (narrow scope) or several reasons (broad scope). In the utterance, TJump explained that the Earth was round, but not a few people also believed the Earth was flat, and then he provided evidence to confirm that the Earth was round. **Because** it was used three times in Tjump's utterance, in its explanation, it marks a reason with an outside scope in subordinate units. **Because** it marked the subordinate unit of discourse that conveyed the meaning of 'cause.'

> *Datum 8*
> *TJump: Nathan, listen, listen to the words! So. I said we can confirm many of the things NASA says. We can only confirm some things because we do not have a Hubble telescope, so we can prove that many things they say are true. It does not mean the other things are false, Nathan.*

If *so*, it was together **because** they became the primary and subordinate clauses. In datum 4, TJump includes **because** to explain that only some things said by NASA could be confirmed due to the limitations of the Hubble telescope and added a result to make it clear that he could do the proof in another way **so** and **because** they fulfilled the functions of 'effect' and 'cause,' which could be realized as fact-based, knowledge-based, and action-based relationships between units of conversation.

Markers of Temporal Adverbs

Markers of temporal consist of two markers, namely **now** and **then**. Both were time deictics because their meaning depended on the time spoken.

> *Datum 9*
> *Nathan: ---They told me the Earth was spinning; turns out they lied on top of that, ladies and gentlemen, cannot have gas pressure without a container. High-pressure systems move towards low-pressure systems. It is called the second law of thermodynamics. It would only be a law if it happened all the time. Now, if you put your hand on a hot stove, it will burn you a hundred out of a hundred times---*

The marker of **now** has a connection with its deictic meaning. As a discourse marker, the use of **now** indicated a proposition to the temporal world, not a world in which the proposition was related to the time of the speech, but to the utterances in the speech that appear: ideas, the orientation of the speaker, and the footing of the speaker and listener. In the utterance above, Nathan described gas pressure.
Nathan now produced an exchange of orientation to his utterances. **He has now** served to mark the speaker's progress through discourse time by showing attention to what will happen next.

> *Datum 10*
> *Nathan: So I never wanted to be a flat earther, ladies and gentlemen; I laughed at the idea of the Earth being flat when it was introduced to me, and uh... then a mentor of mine, someone who is intelligent, was looking into it for seven months and I almost dropped the phone when he told me that because he was so intelligent. I thought there was no way this guy could be looking into flat Earth for seven months, and here I am five years later.*

They could be used as a temporal relationship between two events presented in a discourse that marks an anaphoric relationship: marking the next time of events. In datum three above, anaphoric refers to the time specified in Nathan's talk. Nathan compared his understanding of the round Earth before getting to know someone who studied the flat earth theory for seven months, and five years later, he became a flat earther. The function **then** served as a time bridge to the previous discourse, which could be derived from the speaker's speech or another.

Markers of Information and Participation

The type of this discourse marker has two items, namely **y'know**, and **I mean**, whose literal meaning directly influenced their discourse.

> *Datum 11*
> *TJump: In the edge, the atmosphere contains different layers. You know, like if you pour smoke like heavy water, smoke out it falls and the heavier gases they sit in the bottom and then the lighter gases sit on the top--*

The meaning of **y'know** was to mark the transition of the status of the information. It helped create an exchange structure that focused the listener's attention on a particular bit of information the speaker gave. TJump was Produced, **y'know**, to illustrate the substantiation of atmospheric layers using smoke. It was done to focus attention on the listener. So **now** has a function to mark the transition to meta-knowledge about shared knowledge.

> *Datum 12*
> *TJump: Jupiter is not emitting light.*
> *Nathan: Jupiter is not emitting light. When I look at it with my p1000, it sure looks like a light is an ISS emitting light because the ISS does not twinkle. The sun emits light because it does not twinkle, TJump.*

The meaning of **I mean** in the framework of participation was to mark the upcoming modifications by the speaker to the meaning of his previous talk.
In addition, **I** include an expansion of the explanatory idea of the talk.
Nathan explains Jupiter, which did not emit light, in the data above. Nathan used the **I mean** as an extension of his idea by describing that with p1000 that Jupiter looked like light. **I**t functions within the framework of speaker participation, where the marker is related to the resulting speech unit.

DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher discussed the findings of the study. Using Schiffrin's theory (1987), the researcher found six types of discourse markers, with 11 markers used by Tjump and Nathan Thompson. They were markers of information management (oh), markers of response (well), markers of connectives (and, but, or), markers of cause and result (so, because), markers of temporal adverbs (now, then), and markers of information and participation (I knew, I mean)

The first type of marker was a marker of information management oh. Oh was used four times by the speaker. According to Schiffrin (1987), the use of oh was for speakers to exchange information to redistribute knowledge about entities, events, circumstances, and situations during debates. Oh they had a function to set the state of information because it marks the focus of attention of the speaker and listener. To that end, oh played a role in the transition of information status. It was in line with research conducted by Tree and Schrock (1999) that oh could help integrate discourse with how the speaker directs the listener about the knowledge they knew.

The second type of marker was a marker of response such as well. In this study, 13 markers of the well were used to mark response hooking the speaker in interaction when the utterances were inappropriate with previous coherence. Well, it functioned within the

framework of discourse participation because it involved the speaker as a respondent at one level of discourse. It could be seen in the 3rd-6th datum when the speaker used it well; it proved that their previous utterances had no coherence, or it could also be to express his disapproval of the arguments being said.

The third type of marker was markers of connectives consisting of and, but, or. The marker was the most frequently used by TJump and Nathan Thompson, with 209 items. Moreover, it correlated the units of ideas and continued the conversation. In scientific debate, the speakers used and provided explanations and strengthened their arguments. The next marker was but which appeared 26 times. However, it had a narrower range of use because the marker only expressed a contrasting statement. In addition, but could also be used to indicate disapproval.

Furthermore, the last item had a marker or many 33. Alternatively, it could mark the speaker option to the listener. Many uses of or on the datum gave the listener choices of ideas in the argument. In addition, or indicated additional support as double evidence in a discourse.

The fourth was the cause and result *marker, so and because*. The researcher found 131 talks using such a marker by TJump and Nathan Thompson. This marker was most widely used after the *and* because of its function to convey the result of the meaning of the transition. It indicated that the speaker had delivered an argument and was accompanied by a conclusion to the information provided so that it was possible to move on to a new topic of conversation. While *because* was found 45 times whose function clarified reason. *"Because"* could be used for one reason or various reasons depending on the context. Meanwhile, at datum 16, *so* and *because* could be used together. "Because" was a subordinate idea unit marker, while so was a complement to the unit's main idea.

The fifth type of marker was markers of temporal adverbs which included *now, then*. *Now* marked the speaker's progress through discourse time, indicating the upcoming unit of ideas. It *now* appeared 25 times during the debate. It was because the speaker connected the development of the units to sort the discourse time to the conversation. In addition, it was now also used to compare units of ideas. While *then* found as many as 33 that served to mark succession in discourse from one topic to another. On the other hand, this marker also emphasized how the conversation followed the previous utterances.

The last type of marker was information and participation involving *know*; The researcher found that TJump and Nathan Thompson used one marker of *y'know*. The function of *y'know* was to mark the speaker's orientation towards his speaker. Meanwhile, the researcher found four uses of *I mean*, whose function was to focus the speaker's orientation attention on his speech. In short, it could correct his speech.

Based on the findings above, TJump and Nathan Thompson frequently used discourse markers in their debate. The speaker used a discourse marker to correlate the units of ideas and continue the conversation. In addition, in debates, the speaker attempted to explain his arguments as much as possible by adding clear information to strengthen his arguments. Therefore, a discourse marker was a marker that could help the speaker make good communication. Contrary to the previous marker, *y'know* was a marker rarely used by TJump and Nathan Thompson. *Y'know* was a marker of meta-knowledge about knowledge in which previous pieces of information were less prominent so that the information was redistributed. The speaker spoke *Y'know* to the listener because he gave a general description and then included a detailed description. In this study, the speaker used *y'know*

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to describe this knowledge by providing a conditional sentence from the previous statement. However, using this marker was the last dominant data of all data.

Based on the findings above, this study had similarities to previous studies such as Esther (2020), which examined discourse markers in student debate at Makueni County Secondary School; Wang and Guo (2018), which examined discourse markers in debates in the first 2016 U.S. presidential debate and Vrieze (2020), which examined coherence markers in political debates in U.S. presidential elections from 2004, 2012, and 2016. The similarities were that these studies analyzed discourse markers in debate and analyzed their types and functions. Furthermore, the results showed that the most frequently used marker was *and*. It was because *and* had many functions in conversation: to add detailed information, correlate the units of discourse ideas, and mark a logical continuation of the ideas. Furthermore, *and* was to initiate a contrasting statement and to mark emphatic purposes.

However, these studies also had differences. The differences were evident in the subject and theory used. The researcher focused on the science debate in this study and used Schiffrin's (1987) theory. In addition, in the previous studies, the most commonly used marker after and was *but*. The reason was that *but* was used to express contrasting statements during the debate and could also be used to express disagreement with the information provided by the interlocutor. However, according to this study, the second most commonly used marker was *so*. *So* was used to indicate that the speaker had reached a point in conveying an argument to show the result of the previous argument. In addition, the speaker used *so* to start the argument and mark the central idea unit.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

From the findings, the researcher found all kinds of discourse markers proposed by Schiffrin(1987). The types of discourse markers were markers of information management, markers of response, discourse connectives, markers of cause and result, markers of cause and temporal, and markers of information and participation. In the marker of information management, there were *oh* found four uses. *Well*, classified as a response-type marker, it was found 13 times. In discourse connectives, namely *and* had 209 uses, *but* was 26 times or 33 times. Then, markers of cause and result, namely *so*, found 131 utterances and *because* of 45 utterances. While markers of cause and temporal, the use of now 25 times and then had 33 uses. Moreover, finally, the marker of information and participation in the form of the use of *y'know* was found once, and *I mean* it was found four times.

Based on the result of the research, the researcher described the function of the discourse markers. *Oh* had a function to set the state of information because it marked the focus of attention of the speaker and listener. *Well*, it functioned within the framework of discourse participation because it involved the speaker as a respondent at one level of discourse. Moreover, it served to provide a correlation between the units of ideas. *However*, *it* had a narrower range of use because the marker only expressed a contrasting statement. Alternatively, it could mark the speaker option to the listener. The marker conveyed the result of the transition's meaning by clarifying the reason. The next mark of the speaker's progress through discourse time indicated the upcoming unit of ideas and then marked succession in discourse from one topic to another. The last function of *y'know* was to mark the speaker's orientation towards his speaker and to focus the speaker's orientation on his speech. So, discourse markers had various types and functions in their use. The use of

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discourse markers correctly and adequately could make communication coherent. So, the listener could understand the information being said without misunderstanding.

After finishing this study, the researcher gave suggestions to the next researchers for research on the same topic. The researcher could use the same topic with this study. However, the next researcher could use another theory to analyze discourse markers, especially those as fillers such as *hmm*. In addition, many previous studies analyzed only the types and functions of discourse markers. For this reason, further researchers could connect discourse markers to speech acts that could complete this study.

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