

**Proficiency in the Use of Discourse Markers in English as A Second Language (ESL) Writing: The Case of Grade Twelve Pupils' Written Discourse in Selected Secondary Schools in Kitwe, Zambia**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistic Science**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Clara Mulenga Mumbi, declare that the work contained in this dissertation:

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## APPROVAL

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated proficiency in the use of discourse markers (DMs) in the written pieces of English composition produced by a sample of Grade Twelve (G12) learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) selected from three secondary schools in Kitwe district, Zambia in the 2014 academic year. The purpose of the exercise was to establish proficiency in the use of discourse markers by the participants in order to determine the extent to which such use enhanced discourse coherence. The investigation was motivated by concerns, raised annually by Chief examiners of ‘O’ level English composition regarding the quality of written pieces of composition produced by the G12 learners, which include inadequate and inappropriate use of DMs.

Two types of DMs were examined: propositional DMs which relate the propositions or messages conveyed by sentences and non-propositional DMs which show how information is organised and facilitate thematic progression by signalling aspects of discourse structure and management. The data were collected from 300 scripts comprising samples of written pieces of discourse produced by 150 G12 pupils learning and using English as Second Language (ESL). Of the 300 scripts, 150 were based on free style narrative composition while 150 on a comparative/contrastive guided composition exercise. The writing tasks were administered and written under ordinary classroom conditions as the learners reported for the English lesson.

A four-stage qualitative approach was applied in data analysis. The first involved marking and scoring out of 20 each of the 300 scripts. The scores were useful in assessing the link between use of DMs and discourse coherence and comprehensibility. The second comprised locating the DMs used in each of the 300 scripts and highlighting them by means of a highlighter. Thirdly, each of the DMs was classified according to its communicative function as either propositional or non-propositional. Finally, identification and cataloguing of instances of appropriate and inappropriate uses of DMs was done. Appropriate use, as evaluated by the researcher, constituted manifestation of proficiency in the utilisation of discourse markers while inappropriate use implied lack of proficiency. Enumeration of the occurrences of the various types of DMs was also conducted to determine the frequency with which each of the DMs was used.

The findings indicate participants’ awareness of the relevance of DMs in facilitating discourse coherence and comprehensibility. There is also evidence of insufficient proficiency in the use of DMs by the participants on account of both limited and inappropriate use. The findings also indicate that proficiency in the use of DMs, as reflected in their appropriate or correct use, contributes to discourse coherence and comprehensibility resulting in higher scores while lack of proficiency, indicated through inappropriate or limited use of DMs hampers discourse coherence and comprehensibility resulting in lower scores and, finally, that while use of DMs is necessary for discourse coherence and comprehensibility, it might not be sufficient as other aspects of writing such as vocabulary selection and grammar also play a significant role.

The major recommendations proposed by the study for pedagogy include: incorporation of all the propositional and non-propositional DMs in the Secondary School English Language Syllabus; progressive teaching of all the DMs from Grade 8 to Grade 12 and progressive engagement of learners into regularly practising the appropriate use of all the DMs from Grade 8 to Grade 12. With regard to further research, the study recommends longitudinal studies on the development of proficiency in the use of DMs in English composition writing by grade level; extent of inappropriate use of discourse markers arising from first language interference; functional roles of DMs used in positions other than initial and proficiency in the use of discourse markers in essays written by students in tertiary institutions of learning in Zambia.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved mother and my sister Brenda.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Copyright.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Approval .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ivi</b>
<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Overview.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Rationale.....	4
1.4 Aim.....	4
1.5 Objectives.....	4
1.6 Research Questions.....	4
1.7 Methodological Framework.....	5
1.8 Scope.....	5
1.9 Limitations.....	5
1.10 Structure of the Dissertation.....	6
1.11 Summary.....	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Overview.....	8
2.1 Theoretical Status of Discourse Markers.....	8
2.1.1 Coherence-Based Approach.....	8
2.1.2 The Relevance-Theoretic Account.....	9
2.2 Analytical Framework.....	10
2.2.1 Fraser’s (1999) Grammatical-Pragmatic Framework and Taxonomy of Discourse Markers.....	10
2.2.1.1 Propositional Discourse Markers.....	11
2.2.1.1.1 Contrastive Discourse Markers.....	11
2.2.1.1.2 Collateral or Elaborative Discourse Markers.....	12
2.2.1.1.3 Inferential Discourse Markers.....	12
2.2.1.1.4 Causative Discourse Markers.....	12
2.2.1.2 Non-Propositional Discourse Markers.....	13
2.2.1.2.1 Discourse Structure Markers.....	13
2.2.1.2.2 Topic Change Markers.....	14
2.2.1.2.3 Discourse Activity Markers.....	14
2.2.2 Definition of key concepts.....	15
2.2.2.1 Discourse.....	15
2.2.2.2 Written Discourse and Spoken Discourse.....	16
2.2.2.3 Text.....	16

2.2.2.4	Discourse Analysis.....	17
2.2.2.5	Writing Proficiency.....	17
2.2.2.6	Coherence.....	18
2.2.2.7	Cohesion.....	18
2.2.2.8	Discourse Markers.....	19
2.2.2.8.1	Conjunction as Discourse Marker.....	21
2.2.2.8.1.1	Additives.....	22
2.2.2.8.1.2	Adversative.....	22
2.2.2.8.1.3	Causal.....	23
2.2.2.8.1.4	Temporal.....	23
2.2.2.9	Types of Discourse Markers used in Composition Writing.....	24
2.2.2.9.1	Discourse Markers that Enhance Discourse Coherence.....	24
2.2.2.9.1.1	Elaborative/Collaborative (Additive) Discourse Markers.....	24
2.2.2.9.1.2	Contrastive (Adversative) Discourse Markers.....	25
2.2.2.9.1.3	Inferential Discourse Markers.....	25
2.2.2.9.1.4	Causal Discourse Markers.....	26
2.2.2.9.2	Inappropriate Use of Discourse markers.....	28
2.2.2.9.2.1	Non-equivalent Exchange.....	28
2.2.2.9.2.2	Overuse.....	29
2.2.2.9.2.3	Surface logicity.....	29
2.2.2.9.2.4	Wrong Relation.....	29
2.2.2.9.2.5	Semantic Incompletion.....	29
2.2.2.9.2.6	Distraction.....	29
2.2.2.9.2.7	Use of Speech-related Discourse Markers.....	30
2.3	Summary.....	30

### **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW.....31**

	Overview.....	31
3.1	Studies on use of English in Zambia.....	31
3.2	Studies on Discourse Markers.....	33
3.2.1	Studies on English as a Foreign Language.....	33
3.2.2	Studies on English as a Second Language.....	38
3.2.3	Studies Presenting Non-Conformist Conclusions.....	40
3.4	Summary.....	41

### **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY.....42**

	Overview.....	42
4.1	Research Design.....	42
4.2	Data Collection.....	43
4.2.1	Study Population.....	43
4.2.2	Sample Size.....	43
4.2.3	Data Collection Procedure.....	44
4.2.3.1	Data Collection Techniques and Instruments.....	44
4.2.3.2	Administration of Research Instruments.....	44
4.3	Data Analysis.....	45
4.3.1	Qualitative Data Analysis.....	45
4.3.2	Quantitative Data Analysis.....	46
4.4	Summary.....	47

## **CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....48**

	Overview.....	48
5.1	Discourse markers used by Grade 12 ESL learners.....	48
5.2	Categorisation of the discourse markers used by Grade 12 ESL learners.....	48
5.2.1	Appropriate use of propositional discourse markers.....	49
5.2.1.1	Contrastive Discourse Markers.....	49
5.2.1.2	Inferential Discourse Markers.....	51
5.2.1.3	Collateral (Elaborative) Discourse Markers.....	53
5.2.1.4	Causative Discourse Markers.....	54
5.2.2	Appropriate use of Non-Propositional discourse markers.....	55
5.2.2.1	Discourse Structure Markers.....	55
5.2.2.2	Discourse Activity Markers.....	56
5.3	Inappropriate use of Discourse Markers.....	58
5.3.1	Non-equivalent Exchange.....	58
5.3.2	Overuse.....	59
5.3.3	Surface Logicality.....	60
5.3.4	Wrong Relation.....	60
5.3.5	Semantic Incompletion.....	61
5.3.6	Distraction.....	62
5.3.7	Use of Speech-related Discourse Markers.....	62
5.4	Summary.....	63

## **CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....64**

	Overview.....	64
6.1	Discussion of findings.....	64
6.1.1	Propositional Discourse Markers.....	65
6.1.1.1	Inferential Discourse Markers.....	65
6.1.1.2	Contrastive Discourse Markers.....	66
6.1.1.3	Elaborative or Collateral Discourse Markers.....	68
6.1.1.4	Causative Discourse Markers.....	69
6.1.2	Non-Propositional Discourse Markers.....	69
6.1.2.1	Discourse Structure Markers.....	70
6.1.2.2	Discourse Activity Markers.....	70
6.1.2.3	Topic Change Markers or Topic Relating Markers.....	70
6.1.3	Inappropriate use of Discourse Markers.....	72
6.2	Implications of the Study.....	76
6.3	Conclusion.....	76
6.4	Recommendations.....	77
6.4.1	Recommendations for Pedagogy.....	77
6.4.2	Recommendations for Further Research.....	78

## **REFERENCES.....79**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Fraser's (1999) Categories of Discourse Markers.....	11
Table 2:	Types of Propositional Discourse Markers Based on Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy.....	12
Table 3:	Types of Non-Propositional Discourse Markers Based on Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy.....	14
Table 4:	Classification of Propositional Discourse Markers by Function.....	26
Table 5:	Pupils' Average Scores in the two Pieces of Composition.....	46
Table 6:	Frequency of use of Contrastive DMs in Pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	50
Table 7:	Frequency of use of Inferential DMs in pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	52
Table 8:	Frequency of use of Collateral/Elaborative DMs in pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	53
Table 9:	Frequency of use of Causative DMs in in pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	54
Table 10:	Frequency of use of Discourse Structure Markers in pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	55
Table 11:	Frequency of use of Discourse Activity Markers in in pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	56
Table 12:	Total Number of DMs Employed in the in Pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	57
Table 13:	Number of DMs Employed in Narrative and Discursive pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners.....	57

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study on proficiency in the use of discourse markers (DMs) to enhance discourse coherence in the written pieces of composition produced by Grade Twelve (G12) learners of English as Second Language (ESL) in Zambia. The Chapter commences with a brief outline on the role of discourse markers in discourse coherence after which it provides background information on the introduction of English as medium of instruction in Zambia. Thereafter, the chapter presents the statement of the problem, the rationale, the aim, the objectives, the research questions, the methodological framework applied, the scope as well as the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter sets out the outline of the dissertation and draws a summary of what it has achieved.

### **1.1 Background**

The role of discourse markers in English text production and comprehension in Zambia, where English is used and taught as second language, has long been recognized. Consequently, these linguistic entities constitute specific teaching topics at both Junior and Senior Secondary School levels in the country. The expectation is that by the end of Senior Secondary School pupils are able to use these units proficiently resulting in the production of coherent pieces of discourse. This role of discourse markers has been aptly emphasized by Schiffrin, (1987: 67) who states that “Discourse markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties (e.g. semantic and pragmatic meanings, source, functions) of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of discourse markers are so broad, any and all analyses of discourse markers - even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion of their uses - can teach us something about their role in discourse”. For Halliday and Hassan (2005), discourse markers, which they refer to as conjunction, along with the other cohesive devices of reference, ellipsis, substitution and lexical cohesion, facilitate textual coherence. Discourse markers differ from reference, substitution, ellipsis and lexical cohesion because they do not instruct the reader to find missing information by looking for it in the text. Instead, they signal the way the writer wants the reader to relate what is about to be said to what has been said before. They

facilitate thematic progression in the development of discourse (Njobvu, 2010) by restricting the reader's interpretation process towards the intended context and contextual effects, thereby enhancing the reader's understanding of a given piece of discourse. It is the case, therefore, that DMs play a facilitative role in discourse coherence and, consequently, discourse comprehensibility. Since DMs facilitate communication, it is reasonable to suppose that lack of DMs in English L2 learners' pieces of discourse or their inappropriate use could compromise discourse coherence thereby hindering successful communication or leading to misunderstanding resulting in low or poor scores in the final examinations in English. Such lack of coherence in English L2 written pieces of discourse has also been evidenced at postsecondary education level, (Njobvu, 2010; Simwinga, 1992) as an off-shoot of lack of mastery at secondary school level.

In Zambia, English has remained the official language at national level since independence. In addition, until 2014, it was also the official language of classroom instruction from Grade One to the highest level of education following official proclamation by the Ministry of Education in 1965. However, since 2014 familiar local languages are being used for literacy, numeracy and as media of classroom instruction in all subjects until Grade Four. During this period, English is taught as one of the subjects. From Grade Five on, English is introduced as medium of instruction while, at the same time, both the familiar local languages and English continue being taught as subjects. There are also seven Zambian languages which enjoy official status at regional level. These are: Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga. They are used for certain official purposes such as literacy campaigns, broadcasting and the dissemination of official information. As officially stipulated, Bemba is required to be used in the Luapula, Northern, Muchinga, Copperbelt and Central Province: Kabwe, Mkushi and Serenje; Nyanja in Lusaka and Eastern Provinces; Tonga in Southern Province and part of the Central Province: Kabwe and Mumbwa; Lozi in the Western Province and Livingstone; Kaonde chiefly in the Solwezi and Kasempa districts; Lunda mainly in the Mwinilunga, Chizela, and parts of Kabompo districts and Luvale principally in Zambezi and parts of Kabompo districts. In the school curriculum, the seven regional official Zambian languages are taught only as school subjects in prescribed regions of the country.

As a result of Government decisions, English is required to be used as the only medium of instruction in all forms of post primary education in Zambia, in parliament, for the

administration of the country, for all national and international official communication and in the more important commercial and industrial sectors. Further, English is the only official language that is enshrined in the Zambian Constitution, and is perceived by many as a passport to upward socio-economic mobility (Sekeleti, 1983).

The factors which seem to favour the elevated position of English as *lingua franca* in Zambia include its: dominant position in the school system; use in public administration; use as a requirement in most cases for obtaining employment, and consequently its high status in the society. English is thus taught and learned as a compulsory subject in the secondary school curriculum and is considered for certification purposes both at Junior and secondary education level. To this end, English is considered to be an essential or indispensable language that learners should learn if their success in secondary and tertiary education is to be assured.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to the Junior Secondary School English Language Syllabus, by the end of Grade Nine, learners are expected to have mastered the use of DMs to enhance discourse coherence. The use of these elements is consolidated further from Grade Ten to Grade Twelve on the expectation that by the end of Grade Twelve the pupils should be able to write coherently with the aid of the appropriate discourse markers as they prepare themselves for entry into tertiary education institutions. However, this is not the case as every year Chief examiners of 'O' level English composition point out a number of concerns regarding the quality of written pieces of composition produced by the Grade Twelve learners. Most notable of these are limited vocabulary, inadequate rhetorical organisation and poor or inadequate use of discourse markers suggesting lack of or inadequate mastery of writing skills in English despite the learners having been exposed to its use and taught as subject for twelve years. Production of incoherent pieces of discourse has also been observed at tertiary level thereby further confirming non-internalisation of writing skills at Grade Twelve level by students entering tertiary institutions of learning. The poor quality of written work produced by tertiary education students has raised a lot of concern from lecturers, Boards of Examiners and Boards of Studies in institutions of higher learning (Simwinga, 1992; Njobvu, 2010). In view of the critical role of discourse markers in the production of coherent pieces of discourse, there is suspicion that inadequate or inappropriate use of discourse markers could be one of the major causes of incoherence in the English composition pieces of discourse

produced by Grade Twelve pupils. To date, there is inadequate information on proficiency in the use of discourse markers by Grade Twelve pupils to enhance discourse coherence. Stated as a question the problem under investigation is: how proficient are Grade Twelve pupils in the use of discourse markers in written discourse to enhance discourse coherence?

### **1.3 Rationale**

As an exercise in applied research, this study has both theoretical and practical justification. At theoretical level, it is expected to provide evidence from a qualitative dimension to support or refute findings by Kamalli and Noorii (2015) that appropriate use of discourse markers contributes to the enhancement of discourse coherence while inappropriate use obscures discourse coherence. At practical level, the findings might provide guidance to secondary school teachers and tertiary education lecturers on how to structure remedial English teaching for both secondary and tertiary education level learners in order to enhance the comprehensibility of their written pieces of discourse. Such initiative is necessary because the ability to convey meaning proficiently in written texts is a critical skill for academic and professional success. The findings might also be useful to English Language materials developers, syllabus designers and curriculum developers in the Ministry of General Education (MGE).

### **1.4 Aim**

The aim of the study was to establish proficiency in the use of discourse markers by Grade Twelve pupils to enhance discourse coherence.

### **1.5 Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- (i) to identify the discourse markers used in the written pieces of English composition produced by Grade Twelve ESL learners.
- (ii) to categorise the identified discourse markers according to their communicative functions as either propositional or non-propositional; and
- (iii) to establish how the discourse markers employed by Grade Twelve ESL learners enhance or obscure discourse coherence.

### **1.6 Research questions**

Arising from the above objectives, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- (i) what discourse markers do Grade Twelve ESL learners use in their written pieces of English composition?
- (ii) what communicative functions do the discourse markers used by Grade Twelve ESL learners in their written pieces of English composition serve?
- (iii) how do the discourse markers used by Grade Twelve ESL learners in their written pieces of English composition enhance or obscure discourse coherence?

### **1.7 Methodological Framework**

This study employed the qualitative approach to gather appropriate data to address the research questions in 1.6 above. This approach was found most suitable because the study sought to examine the use of the discourse markers and whether or not such use enhanced or obscured discourse coherence. It did not seek to establish relationships or causes and effects. Simple frequency count, an aspect of descriptive statistics, was used merely to gain some insight into how often the various types of discourse markers were used and not for statistical analysis purposes. A comprehensive description of the research procedures and techniques employed in the study is presented in Chapter Three.

### **1.8 Scope**

The scope of this study is confined to proficiency in the use of DMs in Grade Twelve ESL learners' pieces of written English composition to enhance discourse coherence. It is based on pieces of composition produced by Grade Twelve ESL learners in selected secondary schools in Kitwe, Copperbelt province of the Republic of Zambia. It is not the intention of the investigation to provide information on how learners use discourse markers in other subjects or domains in which English is used. Neither is it intended to relate the use of discourse markers by the participants to the use of the same by others in other schools in the Republic of Zambia or indeed anywhere else. Further, the study excludes other senior secondary grades such as Grade Ten and Grade Eleven because the focus of the study was to examine the written pieces of pupils who were at end level of secondary education and getting ready for tertiary education.

### **1.9 Limitations**

According to Best and Kahn (1993:40) limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and its application to other situations. The study focused on Grade Twelve ESL learners

written pieces of English composition in selected schools in Kitwe. The results of this study should be interpreted in the light of three dimensions. Firstly, that they are based on a limited sample of writing produced by Grade Twelve ESL learners from three schools. Secondly, some of the participants may have received more adequate learning thereby producing more fluent pieces of written discourse. Thirdly, it may also be the case that the participants found it easier to write on particular topics in Section 1 (free style) as opposed to Section 2 (guided composition). As a result of these limitations, the results of this study should be perceived as peculiarly representative of the texts that comprised the corpus and may not be generalised to all Grade Twelve ESL learners. The corpus is used merely to provide evidence, from a qualitative perspective, of the link between the use of DMs and discourse coherence in Grade Twelve ESL learners' pieces of written English composition and the extent to which the link enhances or obscures discourse coherence.

### **1.10 Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation has been presented in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by giving a brief outline on the role of discourse markers in discourse coherence after which it provides background information on the introduction of English as medium of instruction in Zambia. Thereafter, the chapter presents the statement of the problem, the aim, the objectives, the research questions, the rationale of the study, the methodological framework applied, the scope of the study as well as the limitations. Finally, the chapter sets out the outline of the dissertation and draws a summary of what it has achieved. Chapter Two presents both the theoretical and the conceptual framework applied in both data generation and analysis. The first section focusses on the theoretical framework which informed the study while the second presents, defines and exemplifies the linguistic concepts which formed the basis of data generation and data analysis. Chapter Three discusses some of the existing literature that is of direct relevance to the current study in order to situate the study in the context of similar studies as well as give justification for it. The review has been structured under the following sub-headings: Earliest Studies in Discourse Analysis Conducted in Zambia, Literature on Discourse Markers, Review of Related Literature and Conclusion. Chapter Four focuses on the methodology which comprises the research design employed in this study, data collection, study population, sample size, data generation instruments, administration of the instruments, data analysis and conclusion. Chapter Five presents the findings whereas Chapter Six discusses the findings, draws both conclusions and implications and makes recommendations.

### **1.11 Summary**

This chapter introduced the study on the use of DMs in written pieces of English composition produced by Grade Twelve ESL learners of English. It commenced with a brief outline on the role of discourse markers in discourse coherence after which it provided background information on the introduction of English as medium of instruction in Zambia. Thereafter, the chapter presented the statement of the problem, the aim, the objectives, the research questions, the rationale of the study, the methodological framework applied, the scope of the study as well as the limitations. Finally, the chapter set out the outline of the dissertation and drew a summary of what it has achieved. The next chapter presents both the theoretical and the conceptual framework within which the study was conducted. The first section focusses on the theoretical framework which informed the study while the second presents, defines and exemplifies the analytical framework in form of the linguistic concepts which formed the basis of data generation and analysis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter introduced the study on the use of DMs in written pieces of English composition produced by Grade Twelve ESL learners of English. It commenced with a brief outline on the role of discourse markers in discourse coherence after which it provided background information on the introduction of English as medium of instruction in Zambia. Thereafter, the chapter presented the statement of the problem, the aim, the objectives, the research questions, the rationale of the study, the methodological framework applied, the scope of the study as well as the limitations. Finally, the chapter set out the outline of the dissertation and drew a summary of what it had achieved. The present chapter articulates both the theoretical and the conceptual framework within which the study was conducted. The first section focusses on the theoretical framework which informed the study while the second presents, defines and exemplifies the analytical framework in form of the linguistic concepts which formed the basis of data generation and analysis.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Status of Discourse Markers**

Within the past fifteen years or so there has been an increasing interest in the theoretical status of Discourse Markers (DMs), focusing on what they are, what they mean and what functions they perform. In order to understand the function of DMs in language it is essential to refer to two theoretical approaches to DMs: the coherence-based approach and the relevance-theoretic account.

##### **2.1.1 Coherence-Based Approach**

Within coherence theory it is asserted that one of the characteristics of coherent texts is the presence of a definable set of coherence relations whose recovery or recognition is essential for comprehension. The function of DMs or ‘cue phrases’, as they are sometimes called, is to make such coherence relations explicit (Mann and Thompson,

1986; Fraser, 1990, 1999; Sanders, Spooren and Noordman, 1993; Knott and Dale, 1994; Hovy and Maier, 1994). The understanding is that the explicit presence of coherence relations in a piece of discourse requires equally the explicit presence of linguistic items through which such relations are realised. Consequently, knowledge and correct use of such linguistic units would enhance discourse coherence while lack of knowledge and incorrect use would obscure discourse coherence.

### **2.1.2 The Relevance-Theoretic Account**

Within relevance theory, the most influential perspective on DMs is presented by Blakemore (1987) in a series of articles, where she puts forward an account of connectives based on relevance theoretic assumptions about communication. The relevantist perspective states that hearers (and readers) interpret information by searching for relevance. According to Blakemore, connectives, also known as discourse markers, contribute essentially to the interpretation process. From this theoretical perspective, connectives are considered signals which, in spoken and written pieces of discourse, the speaker and the writer respectively use to guide cooperatively both the hearer's and the reader's interpretative process.

Usually the sender of a message has a specific interpretation of the message in mind and expects the receiver to arrive at that interpretation. To do so, the receiver must process the message in the appropriate and intended context. The selection of context is governed by considerations of optimal relevance. The sender may have reason to believe that the receiver will choose the appropriate contextual assumptions and draw the appropriate conclusions without extra help. Alternatively, the sender may decide to explicitly direct the receiver towards the intended interpretation by making a certain set of assumptions immediately accessible through the use of Discourse Markers. It is the case, therefore, that Discourse Markers constitute one of the linguistic devices the sender may use to unambiguously guide the receiver as to the intended interpretation of a given set of propositions. Blakemore (especially 1987, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1992 and 1993) deliberates that the essential function of elements (DMs) like *therefore*, *likewise* and *because*, is to guide the receiver's interpretation process through the specification of certain properties of the context and the contextual effects. More specifically, these elements constrain the relevant context for the interpretation of an utterance, reinforcing some inferences while eliminating others thereby facilitating appropriate processing of information.

Having looked at the two accounts above what is interesting to note is that there is a striking similarity in the way the two approaches analyse the role of DMs in message interpretation. On both accounts DMs have a constraining function. For coherence theorists DMs constrain the relational propositions which express the coherence relations the receiver needs to recover in order to interpret a given piece of discourse. For relevance theorists DMs constrain the interpretation process by guiding the receiver towards the intended context and contextual effects. On both the coherence-based approach and the relevance-theoretic account DMs play a facilitating role. Therefore, the present study applied both theories in interpreting the use of DMs by Grade 12 ESL learners under investigation.

Since DMs facilitate communication, it is logical to suppose that the lack of DMs in an ESL learner's written composition, or their inappropriate use, could hinder successful communication (coherence) or lead to misunderstanding (incomprehensibility). Therefore, ESL learners must learn to signal the relations of their propositions to those which precede and follow. Additionally, in terms of communicative competence, ESL learners must competently employ the appropriate DMs if they are to communicate effectively. It is plausible to suppose that those ESL learners who are competent or proficient in the use of the DMs of the L2 will be more successful in interaction (both oral and written) than those who are not.

## **2.2 Analytical Framework**

### **2.2.1 Fraser's (1999) Grammatical-Pragmatic Framework and Taxonomy of Discourse Markers**

Arising from the two theoretical approaches presented in 2.1 Fraser's (1999: 946-950) taxonomy was selected as framework for the identification and analysis of the DMs in Grade 12 ESL learners' pieces of written composition. The reason for this choice is that in this study, we agree with his characterization of DMs and his description of the role they play in discourse (both spoken and written). In his 1999 paper Fraser defines DMs as a pragmatic class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbials and prepositional phrases. With certain exceptions, they signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce (S2) and the prior segment (S1). They have a core meaning which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context, both linguistic and conceptual.

Fraser (1999) classifies discourse makers into two categories: propositional and non-propositional. Propositional discourse markers are used to relate the propositions or messages of the sentences while non-propositional discourse markers are used to signal aspects of discourse structure or topic like organization and management. The propositional discourse markers are sub-classified into contrastive, collateral, inferential and causal markers. The non-propositional discourse markers are identified as discourse structure markers, topic change markers and discourse activity markers. Table 1 below illustrates the two categories of DMs according to Fraser (1999).

**Table 1: Fraser's (1999) Categories of Discourse Markers**

<b>Discourse Markers</b>	
<b>Propositional Discourse Markers</b>	<b>Non-Propositional Discourse Markers</b>
1. Collateral (Elaborative) Discourse Markers	1. Discourse Structure Markers
2. Inferential Discourse Markers	2. Topic Change Markers
3. Contrastive Discourse Markers	3. Discourse Activity Markers
4. Causative Discourse Markers	

Table 1 above illustrates the two categories of discourse markers identified by Fraser (1999). Propositional discourse markers relate propositions at the sentence level while non-propositional discourse markers contribute to the organisation of discourse in terms of thematic progression. When used correctly, these two categories of discourse markers greatly enhance discourse cohesion and coherence resulting in discourse comprehensibility.

#### **2.2.1.1 Propositional Discourse Markers**

Propositional Discourse Markers relate propositions at the sentence level. Fraser (1999) identifies four types of DMs that operate as propositional discourse markers. They include the following: contrastive discourse markers, collateral discourse markers, inferential discourse markers and causative discourse markers.

##### **2.2.1.1.1 Contrastive Discourse Markers**

The first category of propositional DMs to be discussed in this study comprises contrastive discourse markers. These DMs, signal the contrast between one segment (S2) and another (S1) in some aspects of interpretation. The group includes the

following markers: *but; yet; however; (al)though; even though; even so; as though; and though; in contrast (with/to this/that); whereas; in comparison (with/to this/that); except for; on the contrary (to this/that); that said; well; conversely; all the same; indeed, in fact, in reality; alternatively; instead (of (doing) (this/that); on the other hand; despite (doing) (this/that); in spite of (doing) this/that; rather (than (doing) this/that); nevertheless; nonetheless; notwithstanding; regardless; still; in anyway, in any case.*

#### **2.2.1.1.2 Collateral or Elaborative Discourse Markers**

The second category of propositional DMs in this study is referred to as collateral or elaborative markers. These DMs functionally signal a quasi-parallel relationship between the explicit contents of the second segment (S2) and the first segment (S1). In other words, collateral DMs indicate a relationship in which the message of the second segment (S2) parallels and probably augments or refines the message of the first segment (S1) and perhaps the preceding discourse. The group includes the following items: *and; above all; also; besides; better; yet; and yet; for another thing; furthermore; moreover; in addition; or; aside from; more to the point; on top of it all; to cap it all off; what is more; in particular; namely; analogously; parenthetically; that is to say; by the same token; equally; correspondingly; likewise; similarly; that said.*

#### **2.2.1.1.3 Inferential Discourse Markers**

The third category which Fraser (1999: 948) labels inferential markers, is made up of DMs which signal that S2 is to be taken as a conclusion based on S1. Put differently, inferential DMs signal that segment 2 is to be taken as a conclusion based on the explicit proposition of segment 1. This group of markers includes the following items: *so; of course; accordingly; as a consequence; consequently; as a logical conclusion; on the whole; to sum up; basically; in all/ all in all; to conclude; as a result of; hence; it can be concluded that; thus; therefore; in this case; under these/those conditions; then; all things considered; in the light of the foregoing.*

#### **2.2.1.1.4 Causative Discourse Markers**

The last subcategory of propositional discourse markers is that of causative discourse markers. This group specifies that segment 2 provides a reason for the proposition presented in segment 1. The items of this group are: *because, because of and for this/that reason.* Table 2 below presents a summary of Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy of propositional discourse markers.

**Table 2: Types of Propositional Discourse Markers Based on Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy**

<b>Types of Propositional Discourse Markers</b>	<b>Examples of Discourse Markers</b>
<b>1. Contrastive Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Fraser, 1999)</b>  <b>Or</b>  <b>Adversative Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Halliday &amp; Hasan, 1976; 2005).</b>	but; yet; however; (al)though; even though; even as though; though; in contrast (with/to this/that); whereas; in comparison (with/to this/that); compared to; except for; on the contrary (to this/that); that said; well; conversely; all the same; indeed; in fact; in reality; alternatively; instead (of (doing) (this/that); on the other hand; despite (doing) (this/that); in spite of (doing) this/that; rather (than (doing) this/that); nevertheless; nonetheless; notwithstanding; regardless; still; in anyway; in any case; (Fraser, 1999), at any rate, as a matter of fact, (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; 2005).
<b>2. Collateral Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Fraser, 1999)</b>  <b>Or</b>  <b>Elaborative/Additive Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Halliday &amp; Hasan, 1976; 2005).</b>	and; above all; also; besides; better yet; and; for another thing; furthermore; moreover; in addition; additionally; or; aside from; more to the point; on top of it all; to cap it all off; what is more, in particular; namely; analogously; parenthetically; that is to say; by the same token; equally; correspondingly; likewise; similarly; otherwise; that said; that is (to say), (Fraser,1999); again (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; 2005).
<b>3. Inferential Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Fraser, 1999)</b>  <b>Or</b>  <b>Temporal Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Halliday &amp; Hasan, 1976; 2005).</b>	so; of course; accordingly; as a consequence; consequently; as a logical conclusion; on the whole; to sum up; basically; in all/ all in all; in conclusion; to conclude; as a result of; hence; it can be concluded that; thus; therefore; in this case; under these/ those conditions; after all; then; all things considered; in the light of the foregoing; (Fraser, 1999); under the circumstances; it follows (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).
<b>4. Causative Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Fraser, 1999)</b>  <b>Or</b>  <b>Causal Discourse Markers</b> <b>(Halliday &amp; Hasan, 1976; 2005;</b>	because; because of (this/that); for this/that reason

Table 2 above presents the four types of propositional discourse markers discussed in this study. These include: contrastive markers, collateral markers, inferential markers and causative markers. Propositional discourse markers relate propositions at the sentence level thereby creating cohesion and enhancing discourse comprehensibility.

#### **2.2.1.2 Non-Propositional Discourse Markers**

According to Fraser (1999), Non-propositional Discourse Markers signal an aspect of structure or topic such as organization and management. The discourse markers which fall under non-propositional markers include: discourse structure markers, topic change markers and discourse activity markers.

### 2.2.1.2.1 Discourse Structure Markers

The first category of non-propositional discourse markers relates to discourse structure markers which function as organizers for the components of the topic. They mark the beginning, middle or end of the text. This group includes the following makers: *once again, at the outset, finally, first/second, lastly, to start with, in the first place, next, moving right along.*

### 2.2.1.2.2 Topic Change Markers

The second non-propositional group of discourse markers is that of topic change markers. They function to signal the shift of handling topics. The items of this group include: *by the way, to return to my point, back to my original point, that reminds me, before I forget, incidentally, just to update you, speaking of x, to change the topic, on a different note, while I think of it, with regard to.*

### 2.2.1.2.3 Discourse Activity Markers

The third non-propositional discourse markers are the discourse activity markers. This group of markers functions to indicate that the current discourse is merely an activity that illustrates, exemplifies or explains a preceding one. The discourse activity markers include the following: *for example, for instance, to explain, to clarify, to illustrate, according to, to interrupt, in short.* Table 3 below illustrates the types of non-propositional discourse markers based on Fraser's (1999) taxonomy.

**Table 3: Types of Non-Propositional Discourse Markers Based on Fraser's (1999) Taxonomy.**

Non-Propositional Discourse Markers	Example
1. Discourse Structure Markers	once again, at the outset, finally, first/second, lastly, to start with, in the first place, next, moving right along.
2. Topic Change Markers	by the way, to return to my point, back to my original point, that reminds me, before I forget, incidentally, just to update you, speaking of x, to change the topic, on a different note, while I think of it, with regard to.
3. Discourse Activity Markers	for example, for instance, to explain, to clarify, to illustrate, according to, to interrupt, in short.

Table 3 above presents the three types of non-propositional discourse markers mainly based on Fraser's taxonomy of DMs. These are discourse structure markers, topic change markers and discourse activity markers. Non-propositional markers contribute to coherence in composition writing.

From what has been discussed this far, there are basically two types of relation: those that relate aspects of the explicit message conveyed by S2 with aspects of a message at the sentence level, direct or indirect, associated with S1 (propositional DMS) and those that relate the topic of S2 to that of S1 (non-propositional DMS).

### **2.2.2 Definition of key concepts**

This section presents an account of the key concepts dealt with in the study. To understand discourse and its scope, it is necessary to identify different elements which contribute to the creation of discourse coherence. The concepts discussed in this section provide an understanding of the discussion of DMs in relation to discourse coherence. These concepts are: discourse, written discourse and spoken discourse, text, discourse analysis, coherence, cohesion and discourse markers.

#### **2.2.2.1 Discourse**

The word 'discourse' is widely used in linguistics with different scholars and researchers defining it differently. Brown and Yule (1983) define discourse as language in use and discourse analysis as "the analysis of language in use" or based on the functions of language as used in real life environments. Thus, discourse is understood as naturally occurring language or language in use (Stubbs, 1983; Cook, 1989). It is any instance of language use for communication by real human beings in a real-life setting in either spoken or written form. It is the case, therefore, that to qualify as an instance of discourse a stretch of language use should be meaningful and informative and not just a string of sentences. In this regard, discourse as a linguistic term embodies two aspects: linguistic form and communicative function. A characteristic feature of a piece of discourse is that it should communicate and should be recognised by both the sender and the receiver as being meaningful, unified and coherent.

From what has been discussed above it can be concluded that discourse is an instance of language use produced by human beings to communicate with each other or to debate. What makes a piece of discourse different from random sentences is that it has

coherence or is understood by both the sender and the receiver as being meaningful. Hence, the ultimate goal of discourse is to send a message from the speaker to the hearer or from the writer to the reader. So, the hearer or the reader receives the message and upon this message he/she behaves and reacts in a particular manner as intended by the sender of the message. A single word such as the imperative verb 'stop' can be considered as an occurrence of discourse. However, if the sender needs to use more than one sentence in conveying the message, it becomes necessary to link the two with a discourse marker in order to unambiguously show how the propositions in the two sentences are related. Discourse markers are "linguistic, paralinguistic, or nonverbal elements that signal relations between units of talk by virtue of their syntactic and semantic properties and by virtue of their sequential relations as initial or terminal brackets demarcating discourse units" (Schiffrin, 1987: 40). The same applies to written instances of discourse in which discourse markers signal relations between sentence propositions.

#### **2.2.2.2 Written Discourse and Spoken Discourse**

What differentiates a piece of discourse from random sentences is that the former has coherence while the latter does not. There are two types of discourse: spoken and written discourse. Brown and Yule (1998) state that in spoken discourse the speaker has at his or her disposal voice effects, facial expressions, postural and gestural systems which are called paralinguistic cues which can be used to provide guidance on how the hearer should interpret the speaker's utterances. In written pieces of discourse the writer has to use specific words or groups of words as signals of how a proposition in one sentence is related to another proposition in another sentence.

#### **2.2.2.3 Text**

In linguistics the term "text" is defined as "a sequence of paragraphs that represents an extended unit of speech" (GOLT). According to Matthews (2014: 405) the term text covers "... a coherent stretch of speech, including a conversation or other interchange between two or more participants, as well as stretches of writing". Crystal (1992:72) defines text as "a piece of naturally occurring spoken, written, or signed discourse identified for purposes of analysis. It is often a language unit with a definable communicative function, such as a conversation" to which Halliday and Hassan (1976: 291) state that a text is "not just a string of sentences. It is not simply a long grammatical unit, something of the same kind as a sentence, but differing from it in size

a sort of super sentence, a semantic unit.” Like a piece of discourse, a piece of text should be meaningful and informative.

Nunan (1990:6) states that “text refers to a written or taped record of a piece of communication, whereas “discourse’ refers to the piece of communication in context.” Additionally, Nunan explains that text refers to the original words of something written, printed, or spoken, in contrast to a summary or a paraphrase. According to Nunan (1990:6) text is “a written ... record of a piece of communication.” It is a stretch of language use which is coherent and makes sense and has texture, which is the quality of being a text rather than a jumble of unconnected sentences (Bloor and Bloor, 1995). It is a coherent stretch of language that may be regarded as an object of analysis. Text grammarians take the view that texts are “language elements strung together in relationship with one another.” They are concerned with “the principles of connectivity which bind a text together (Brown & Yule, 1983; McCarthy 1991). A text therefore, is a piece of language that is actually spoken or written for the purposes of communication and, therefore, constitutes a piece of discourse.

#### **2.2.2.4 Discourse Analysis**

Hatch (1992:1) defines discourse analysis as “the study of language communication, spoken and written.” Cook (1992) terms discourse as the use of language for communication, and the search for what makes discourse coherent as discourse analysis. This observation is affirmed by Aitchison (1992:97) who states that, “when we use language, we do not necessarily do so in a random and unconstructed way,” suggesting that there are specific guidelines applied in the construction of instances of discourse which discourse analysis attempts to uncover. According to Crystal (1992:106) discourse analysis is the study of “continuous stretches of language longer than a single sentence” while McCarthy (1994:5) states that “Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used.” Therefore, discourse analysis is involves investigating connected, naturally occurring spoken or written instances of language use in order to establish patterns or regularities for the purpose of having a better understanding of human communication. The present study is an exercise in discourse analysis focusing on pieces of written English composition produced by Grade 12 ESL learners in order to establish the learners’ proficiency in the use of discourse markers to enhance discourse comprehensibility.

#### **2.2.2.5 Writing Proficiency**

Prior to the late 70's writing proficiency was considered as consisting of grammatical and lexical competence and that these two elements alone were enough to enable communication. However, over the years, research has shown that while the two elements remain necessary they are not sufficient in the enhancement of proficiency. It has now become obvious that grammar, vocabulary as well as sociolinguistic, communicative and cognitive skills are required in order to achieve communication. While English writing proficiency tests tend to focus on learners' overall competence by assessing all the aspects of the language comprising Content, Communicative Achievement, Organisation and Language (Cambridge English Proficiency Handbook for Teachers: 28), this study focussed on discourse markers because, as articulate under 2.1 above, they play a special role in discourse coherence and comprehensibility. According to the Cambridge English Proficiency Handbook for Teachers, "Content focuses on how well the candidate has fulfilled the task, Communicative Achievement on how appropriate the writing is for the task and whether the candidate has used the appropriate register, Organization on the way the candidate *puts together* the piece of writing, in other words if it is *logical and ordered* (current author's italics) while Language focuses on vocabulary and grammar". The present study is concerned with the Organization aspect of proficiency, specifically the use of discourse markers.

#### **2.2.2.6 Coherence**

According to Cook (1989: 40) "coherence is the quality of being meaningful and unified" while Crystal (1992) is of the view that coherence is the underlying connectedness of a piece of language and McCarthy (1991) observes that coherence is the feeling that a text is connected, that it makes sense and is not just a jumble of sentences. Arising from the three projected positions, it can be said that coherence is the characteristic of a given piece of discourse which causes the receiver to interpret it as intended by the sender. It is the case, therefore, that a piece of discourse has coherence if its constituent sentences follow one from the other in a logically orderly fashion so that the reader can make sense of the entire text. To this effect, Ross and Murray, (1975), describe coherence as the underlying link between sentences as well as between paragraphs and the logical connection of a text. Such underlying link is achieved partly through the use of appropriate discourse markers, as is evidenced in some of the Grade Twelve ESL learners' pieces of written discourse presented in this study.

#### **2.2.2.7 Cohesion**

Tanskanen (2006:7) defines cohesion as “the grammatical and lexical elements on the surface of a text which can form connections between parts of the text.” Additionally, Beard (2000:25) defines cohesion as, “The way the text develops and holds together. It refers to the way we relate or tie together bits of discourse”. Further, Bussman (2001:199) states that “cohesion refers to various linguistic means by which sentences ‘stick together’ and are linked into larger units of paragraphs, or stanzas, or chapters”. Therefore, cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exist within a text and depends on the devices that are used to link or tie one part of a text to another. This might explain why Halliday and Hassan (1976) refer to cohesion as “the glue that sticks the elements and meaning of a text together,” in such a way that the interpretation of one item depends upon that of another. This position is held by Halliday and Hasan (1976:4) who maintain that where cohesion occurs “the interpretation of some parts of a text depends on the understanding of some other parts mentioned earlier or later in the body of the text or out of the text in the surrounding environment”. This perspective suggests that without cohesion, sentences in a given piece of discourse would be fragmented resulting in disjointedness and lack of coherence. Eggins, (2004:4) states that “The concept of cohesion is a semantic one because it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and define it as a text”. Therefore, the absence of semantic ties between elements prevents the text from hanging together internally as an instance of language in use. Cohesion is achieved through the use of cohesive ties which can manifest in different forms: reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion and conjunction (also known as discourse marker). In this study, among the various forms of cohesive ties stated above that tie a text together, conjunction is the focus of the investigation because it explicitly indicates how a proposition in one sentence is logically related to another in another sentence thereby enhancing discourse comprehensibility on the part of the reader. A distinction is drawn between conjunction as a cohesive tie (or discourse marker) and conjunction as a cohesive tie linking propositions.

#### **2.2.2.8 Discourse Markers**

Swan and Smith, (2005) define a discourse marker as “a word or expression which shows the connection between what is being said and the wider context.” For them, a discourse marker is a linguistic unit that either connects a sentence to what comes before or after, or indicates a speaker’s attitude to what he or she is saying thereby promoting textual cohesion and enhancing discourse coherence. Thus, one way to

cohesively join or relate clauses, sentences and paragraphs with one another is through the appropriate use of discourse markers.

Kopple (1985) points out that discourse markers are a kind of linguistic items which appear both in spoken and written language and are those items which can help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the information. According to him, we work on two different levels when we speak or write. On one level, we convey information about our subject matter and on the other, we show listeners or readers how to listen to or read, react to, and evaluate what was spoken or written about the subject matter. As Kopple explains, the first level is the primary discourse level and the second is the metadiscourse level. Building on Kopple's perspective, Blakemore (1992: 177) states that "every speaker must make some decision about what to make explicit and what to leave implicit, and that every speaker must make a decision about the extent to which he should use the linguistic form of his utterance to guide the interpretation process." The observation made by Blackmore is as applicable to spoken discourse as it is to written discourse. For that reason, it can be said that the research on discourse markers in writing is research on style in writing to enhance discourse coherence. Gerard (2010) states that "discourse markers are 'linking words' and 'linking phrases,' or 'sentence connectors that may be described as the 'glue' that binds together a piece of writing, making the different parts of the text 'stick together,'" that are available to writers to organise and present their written discourse in a cohesive and coherent manner.

Most of the discourse markers signal the listener or reader of continuity in text or the relationship between the preceding and following text. They guide the reader to predict the direction of the flow of discourse, linking the various text elements. Brown and Levinson (1987) cited in Barnabas & Adamu (2012) state that skilful use of discourse markers often indicates a higher level of fluency and an ability to produce and understand authentic language. Similarly, Litman (1996) cited by Barnabas & Adamu (2012) states that discourse markers are linguistic devices available for a writer to structure a discourse. They serve as means of signalling to the reader the relationship between the current and preceding discourse. Unlike content words, discourse markers do not convey meaning on their own nor change the meaning of a sentence. By grammatical category, there are three types of discourse markers: conjunctions (such as *and*, *yet*), adverbs (such as *however*, *consequently* and *moreover*) and prepositional phrases (such as '*in contrast*', '*in any case*', '*in spite of*', '*in addition*' and '*on the other hand*').

Blakemore (1987, 1992, 2002) and Sperber and Wilson (1995) state that discourse markers impose constraints on the implicatures the hearer can draw from the discourse and that discourse without discourse markers is open to more than one type of implicature. Additionally, Lowers and Mitchell (2003) consider discourse markers as cohesive devices that cue coherence relations, marking transition points within a sentence, between sentences, or between turns at the levels of discourse and conversation. Their consideration of discourse markers as cohesive devices is in line with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) account of cohesion, by which discourse markers signal cohesiveness by means of additive, adversative, causal and temporal relations (see also Martin, 1992 for a detailed account of conjunctive relations). DMs not only give cohesion to a text, they also cohere two sentences together. According to Fraser (1998: 302) "a discourse marker is a lexical expression which signals the relation of either contrast (James is fat *but* Mary is thin), implication (John is here, *so* we can start the party), or elaboration (John went home. *Furthermore*, he took his toys) between the interpretation of segment two and segment one." In composition writing DMs are linking words that may be described as the 'glue' that binds together a piece of writing, making the different parts of the text 'stick together' (Gerard (2010). Appropriate utilization of DMs should enable writers to organise and present their written pieces of discourse in a cohesive and coherent manner by giving guidance to an audience (reader) as to what the writer's intentions and attitudes are regarding the text. Discourse markers are employed by writers to ease the interpretation of utterances by providing contextual information easy to decode which can be used by the reader to enrich sentence meaning. Therefore, failure to or inappropriate use of DMs leads to discourse incomprehensibility.

#### **2.2.2.8.1 Conjunctions as Discourse Markers**

Trask (1992:232) defines the term 'conjunction' as "a closed lexical category, or a lexical item whose members serve to co-ordinate structures. Items used as conjunctions include 'and,' 'or' and 'but' in English". Crystal (2006:96) presents a slightly different definition of 'conjunction' as "a term used in the grammatical classification of words to refer to an item or a process whose primary function is to connect words or other constructions". Beard (2000:18) states that "conjunction is a term that describes words which link linguistic units such as clauses". As such, the main function of conjunction is to link parts of the text in order to expand it. Additionally, it is important to emphasise that conjunctive elements create cohesion indirectly because the cohesion is embodied

in their specific meaning. Conjunctions express specific meanings that serve as items of presupposition to explain the presence of the other elements in the text.

The difference between conjunction and the other cohesive devices (reference, substitution, or ellipsis) is that it does not instruct the reader to find missing information by looking for it in the text. Instead, conjunction as a cohesive tie signals the way the writer wants the reader to relate what is about to be said to what has been said before thereby creating coherence. The flow of the ideas is clearly recognized and comprehended when the signals of the connection among sentences (DMs) are provided by the writers. Halliday and Hasan (2005:226) and Feng (2010), have summarised and divided these conjunctive relations into four categories as: additive, adversative, causal and temporal or continuatives. Fraser (1999) in his types of discourse markers refers to additive relations as elaborative discourse markers, adversative relations as contrastive discourse markers and causal relations as inferential discourse markers. In the present study, all the terms used by Halliday and Hasan (2005), Feng (2010) and Frazer in classifying discourse markers have been adopted and used interchangeably.

#### **2.2.2.8.1.1 Additives**

Additives also called the ‘and’ relation imply that there is something more to be said. The additive discourse markers are expressed by the following conjunctions and phrases: ‘that is’, ‘for instance’, ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘also’, ‘in addition’, ‘furthermore’, ‘moreover’, ‘besides’, ‘similarly’ and ‘likewise’ among many others as illustrated in Table 1 above. Additives such as ‘*similarly*’, ‘*in the same way*’, ‘*likewise*’ show similarity, whereas the additive ‘*or*’ introduces alternatives. Sentences 1 to 3 below illustrate the use of additives:

1. Mr. R. Semi was born in Gambia, he was the only son of his parents. ***And*** he was very intelligent at school.
2. ***Furthermore***, Mr. Semi worked hard on his own after the death of his father.
3. R. Semi had a vision. ***Additionally***, he was not content with the life he was living on the farm.

In examples 1, 2 and 3 above, ‘***and***’, ‘***furthermore***’ and ‘***in addition***’ are used as additive or elaborative discourse markers because they provide more information on the proposition of the preceding sentence.

#### **2.2.2.8.1.2 Adversative**

Adversative refers to the main meaning of relation described as contrary to expectation. In a text it is expressed by the following DMs: *'but', 'yet', 'however', 'on the contrary', 'although', 'instead', 'at any rate', 'as a matter of fact', 'in fact', 'nevertheless.'* Adversative relation may indicate affirmation, in which case the conjunctions *'actually'* or *'in fact'* are used. Adversative may also indicate dismissive where the conjunctions *'in any case'* or *'in any way,'* among others, are used. Additionally, *'by contrast', 'on the other hand', 'as opposed to'* indicate dissimilarity. Examples 4, 5, and 6 below illustrate the use of the adversative conjunctions.

4. In 1945 his father passed away. It was hard. **But** he focused on his future.
5. Due to Mr. Semi's hard work, during the fourth Five Year Plan which was from 1976 to 1980, the Ministry of Agriculture recorded an estimated total of 220 tons of rice, coffee, sugarcane, and spices as exports. ***On the other hand,*** only oil and machinery were imported.
6. The people from rural areas are paid very little by their employees due to lack of qualifications. **Actually** this leads them to committing crimes as they cannot sustain their families.

In example 4 above, ***'but'*** is used as an adversative contrastive marker to indicate contrary to expectation, whereas ***'on the other hand'*** in example 5 is used as an adversative contrastive marker expressing dissimilarity. Further, in example 6 above, ***'actually'*** is used as an adversative contrastive marker to indicate affirmation and is only applicable in spoken discourse.

### 2.2.2.8.1.3 Causal

Causal relation refers to a form of conjunction which may be of the reason or the result type. The reason type is introduced by conjunctions such as, *'so', 'thus', 'hence', 'because of' 'for this/that reason', 'under the circumstances.'* The result type is indicated by conjunctions such as *'as a result', 'consequently', 'it follows' 'therefore.'* Examples 7 and 8 below illustrates the use of causal conjunction as cohesive ties.

7. There are no employment opportunities in rural areas. **So** people flock to the cities in search of employment.
8. Joy did not work hard enough at school. **Consequently** she did not pass her exams

In example 7 above ***'so'*** is used as a causal marker inferring of the reason type while in 8 ***'consequently'*** is used as a causal marker of the result type.

### 2.2.2.8.1.4 Temporal

Temporal or continuatives refers to the relation which is established between consecutive sentences by the usage of certain expressions such as, ‘now’, ‘then’, ‘next’, ‘afterwards’ ‘of course’, ‘well’, ‘anyway’, ‘surely’, ‘after all’, ‘that is’, and ‘subsequently.’ According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) temporal conjunctions can be classified into resumptives indicated by cohesive conjunctions such as ‘to resume’, ‘any way’ and correlatives marked by ‘finally’, ‘to sum up’, among others. Example 9 below illustrates the use of temporal conjunctions as cohesive ties.

9. **Finally**, in 1970 Mr. R. Semi was appointed Minister of Agriculture.

In example 9 above, ‘finally’ is used as a temporal-correlative expressing causal result type.

### **2.2.2.9 Types of Discourse Markers used in Composition Writing**

This section presents two categories of discourse markers: those that enhance discourse coherence in composition writing and those which obscure it. As advanced by Halliday and Hasan (1976; 2005) and Fraser (1999) elaborative discourse markers, contrastive discourse markers and inferential markers are the three types of discourse markers that contribute to enhancing discourse coherence in composition writing. On the other hand, inappropriate use of discourse markers would result in the following seven misuse patterns of discourse markers: *Non-equivalent exchange, over-use, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incompleteness, distraction and use of spoken discourse markers.*

#### **2.2.2.9.1 Discourse Markers that Enhance Discourse Coherence**

There are four types of discourse markers that enhance discourse coherence in composition writing as outlined by Halliday and Hasan (1976; 2005) and Fraser (1999). These include the following: elaborative or additive discourse markers, contrastive or adversative discourse markers and inferential or causal discourse markers. These discourse markers are discussed here below.

##### **2.2.2.9.1.1 Elaborative/Collaborative (Additive) Discourse Markers**

Elaborative discourse markers also called the ‘and’ relation imply that there is something more to be said. In all cases, elaborative discourse markers indicate a relationship in which the message of S2 parallels and possibly expands or refines the message of S1. The additive discourse markers are expressed by the following conjunctions and phrases: ‘that is’, ‘for instance’, ‘and’, ‘or’, ‘also’, ‘in addition’,

*'furthermore', 'moreover', 'besides', 'similarly', 'likewise', 'for instance'* among many others as illustrated in Table 1 above. Additives such as *'similarly', 'in the same way', 'likewise'* show similarity, whereas the additive *'or'* introduces alternatives as illustrated in 10 and 11 below.

10. The average area cultivated during the first five year plan was 120,000 acres. **Furthermore**, the average farmers' income was K520.
11. Honourable Semi was hardworking. **In addition**, he was focused.

In example, 10 above, **furthermore**, signals that the content of sentence 2 is to be taken as adding yet one more item to a list of conditions specified by the preceding discourse, while **in addition**, in example 11 signals that there is a similarity along some unspecified dimension between the content of sentence 2 and the content of sentence 1.

#### 2.2.2.9.1.2 Contrastive (Adversative) Discourse Markers

Contrastive discourse markers indicate adversative which refers to the main meaning of relation described as contrary to expectation. In other words, contrastive discourse markers signal that the explicit interpretation of sentence 2 contrasts with the interpretation of sentence 1. Among the discourse markers in this type are; *'but', 'yet', 'however' 'nevertheless', 'in comparison to'* Adversative relation may indicate affirmation, in which case the DM *'in fact'* is used. Adversation may also indicate dismissive where the conjunctions *in 'any case'* or *'in any way,'* among others are used. As an illustration of the appropriate use of contrastive discourse markers consider the examples below from Grade 12 ESL learners' written discourse.

12. **Compared to** the 432 tons of rice that were imported during the Second Five Year Plan, only 27 tons of rice were imported during the Third Five Year Plan when Mr. R. Semi was Minister of Agriculture.
13. They are paid very little. **Nevertheless**, they continue working for their employers.

In the examples presented above, the discourse markers signal that the explicit interpretation of the second sentences contrasts with the interpretation of first sentences. For example, **in compared to** signals that the sentence 2 content of example 12 is in contrast with the explicit sentence 2 content along a dimension which lies on a continuum, in this case rice. In example 13, **nevertheless** signals that the explicit sentence 2 message is in contrast with an unexpected implied message associated with sentence 1.

#### 2.2.2.9.1.3 Inferential Discourse Markers

Inferential discourse markers refer to forms of discourse markers which are of the result type. The result type is indicated by conjunctions such as *‘as a result’*, *‘consequently’*, *‘under these conditions’*, *‘it can be concluded that’*, *‘in conclusion’*, *‘to sum up’*, *‘therefore’*. This sub-category of discourse markers signal that the second segment (S2) is to be taken as a conclusion following from the first segment (S1). Below are illustrations of the appropriate use of inferential discourse markers.

14. Most people migrating to urban areas are illiterate and so they do not have qualifications to get them jobs that they came seeking. **Thus**, there are a lot of unemployed people who end up stealing and committing other crimes to survive.
15. Over-crowding, hunger, diseases and poverty force people from rural areas to indulge in crime. **Under these conditions** any one can break the law to survive.
16. In my opinion, rural-urban migration has contributed greatly to the problems we are facing in towns such as, ritual murders, robbery, prostitution and many others.  
**So**, the police should constantly patrol shanty compounds where these perpetrators of crime reside.
17. In his final year as a student, his father died in 1945. **Consequently**, he was left alone to work on the farm.

In the examples above, the inferential discourse markers signal that sentence 2 is to be taken as a conclusion based on sentence 1. For instance, in example 14, *‘thus’* signals that the segment following is to be taken as expressing a conclusion for which the content of sentence 1 (and perhaps additional segments) provides justification. In example 15, *‘under these conditions’* signals that sentence 2 should be interpreted as a conclusion, if the facts stated in sentence 1 are found to hold, while in example 16, *‘so’* signals that the advice following is based on S1. **Consequently’** in example 17 infers the causal marker of the result type.

#### 2.2.2.9.1.4 Causal Discourse Markers

As the names suggests, causal DMs refer to forms of discourse markers which are of the reason type. This type is introduced by the discourse markers *because*, *because of*, *for this/that reason*.

18. Farmers were smiling and filled with so much joy **because** they were receiving an income of K1 620.
19. R. Semi is remembered by his people **because of** the many achievements
20. Family ties have broken down in our society, **for this reason**, we have street kids who turn out to be criminals.

In examples 18, 19 and 20 the DMs *because*, *because of* and *for this reason* are to be taken as expressing reason for which the content of the first segments (S1) of each sentence provide a justification. Table 4 below presents the classification of the four types of propositional DMs that enhance discourse comprehensibility according to function.

**Table 4: Classification of Propositional Discourse Markers by Function**

Function	Types of Propositional Discourse Markers			
	Elaborative	Contrastive	Inferential	Causal
<b>To Compare</b>		in comparison (with/to this/that), whereas, on the other hand, on the one hand		
<b>Making Differences Between Two Different Things, People or Ideas</b>		but, yet, however, (al)though, in contrast (with/to this/that), on the contrary (to this/that), conversely, instead (of (doing) (this/that), despite (doing) (this/that), in spite of (doing) this/that, nevertheless nonetheless, still		
<b>Cause</b>				because, because of, for this/that reason,
<b>Effect</b>			as a result, consequently, as a consequence, accordingly, hence, under these/ those conditions, so	
<b>To Illustrate</b>	more to the point, in particular, parenthetically, analogously, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, similarly, likewise, otherwise, for instance, for example, moreover			

<b>Adding Something or Information</b>	and, namely, also, in addition, additionally, above all, besides, for another thing, furthermore, or, not only (that/this)			
<b>State Reason Why Something Happened</b>			because, because of, therefore, in this case	
<b>Drawing a Conclusion</b>			as a logical conclusion, in conclusion, it can be concluded that, on the whole, to sum up, in all/ all in all, to conclude, thus	

Table 4 above shows the classification of propositional DMs by function that ESL learners can employ in their composition writing in order to produce cohesive and coherent texts through the appropriate application of DMs. The learners can effectively employ these DMs when they know the functions that different types of DMs perform. From the information presented in Table 2 above it is clear that contrastive markers perform the functions of comparing and making differences between two things, people or ideas. Elaborative discourse markers function to illustrate something as well as adding something or information, inferential discourse markers perform the functions of expressing effect and drawing the conclusion. Lastly, causal discourse markers state reasons why something happened

#### **2.2.2.9.2 Inappropriate Use of Discourse markers**

As has already been stated above, discourse markers are not elements of the clause structure; they work from outside the clause, which is frequently marked by the use of commas in writing or by a pause after them in speaking. Care must also be taken however, to avoid over-use of discourse markers. Using too many of them, or using them unnecessarily and inappropriately can make a piece of writing sound too heavy and ‘artificial.’ Discourse Markers are important, but must only be used when necessary. The inappropriate use of discourse markers would result in the following seven misuse patterns; non-equivalent exchange, over-use, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incomplection, distraction and use of spoken discourse markers. Below are examples of each of these misuse patterns.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.1 Non-equivalent Exchange

This refers to the use of discourse markers conveying the same textual relation in an interchangeable manner when they are not. Below are examples of the use of non-equivalent exchange.

21. Rural urban Migration is the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas. They *furthermore* come to urban areas to seek opportunities that can make their lives better.
22. After Mr. Semi stopped school in 1937, he started working on his father's farm. It *consequently*, contributed to some of the knowledge he obtained.

Examples 21 and 22 above show misuse patterns of the non-equivalent exchange type. *They* in example 21 and *it* in example 22 do not clearly refer to specific antecedents hence the use of *furthermore* and *consequently* in the above examples is illogical.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.2 Overuse

Over-use refers to the high density of the occurrence of discourse markers. Below are examples of overuse.

23. Street kids have increased in urban areas *because* of lack of accommodation *and also as a result* they are committing crimes like stealing and murder.
24. Ignorance has increased in urban areas *because of* rural urban migration. *As a result* there is *also* rapid increase in crime.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.3 Surface logicity

Surface logicity refers to the use of discourse markers to impose logicity or bridge the gap among propositions when actually their existence does not. The excerpts below illustrate surface logicity.

25. Rural-urban Migration is the movement of people from rural areas to urban area. That is people leave rural areas to go into towns. *However*, when they reach urban areas they have a lot of problems, *however*, when faced with these problems they find means and ways of survival.
26. Mr. Semi was appointed Minister of Agriculture in 1970. *Nevertheless*, during this time period only spices were exported. Furthermore, he worked very hard to improve the Ministry through his contributions.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.4 Wrong Relation

The failure of using particular discourse markers to express a certain textual relation.

27. Mr. Semi worked hard after the death of his father. *Nevertheless*, he did not neglect the work at the farm.
28. Mr. Semi was born in 1921. *However*, he started school in 1930.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.5 Semantic Incompletion

Semantic Incompletion involves lack of elaboration in the use of a given discourse marker thereby making it less functional as in:

29. Based on his achievements, Mr. Semi has lived a successful and fulfilled life. *Therefore*, he is a happy man.
30. Most people that come to urban areas have no qualifications. *As such* they steal.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.6 Distraction

Distraction involves the insertion of discourse markers where they are not required as in:

31. Mr. Semi remained focused after the death of his father in 1945. *Furthermore*, he worked harder to maintain the farm and expanded it greatly.
32. Being a hardworking person, Mr. Semi was offered a scholarship of three years to study in the USA. *Therefore*, he studied in the USA for three years. *Moreover*, when he returned to Gambia in 1954 he was offered a job as lecturer at Yabo Agricultural College.

#### 2.2.2.9.2.7 Use of Speech-related Discourse Markers

There are instances where discourse markers typical of spoken discourse are used in written pieces of discourse as in:

33. Some people leave rural areas these days. *Actually*, people leave rural areas to change their way of life.

In example 33 above, the DM *actually* is speech-related because it is more appropriate in spoken than it is in written discourse. It does not in any way enhance the development of the proposition presented in the first sentence.

### 2.3 Summary

This chapter has presented both the theoretical and the analytical framework within which the study was conducted. The first section focussed on the theoretical framework which informed the study while the second presented, defined and exemplified the linguistic concepts within which discourse markers were identified and analysed. The next chapter discusses some of the existing literature that is of direct relevance to the current study in order to situate the study in

the perspective of similar studies as well as give justification for it. The review has been structured under the following sub-headings: Earliest Studies in Discourse Analysis Conducted in Zambia, Literature on Discourse Markers, Review of Related Literature and Conclusion.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter presented both the conceptual and the theoretical framework within which the study was conducted. The first section focussed on the theoretical framework which informed the study while the second presented, defined and exemplified the linguistic concepts within which discourse markers were identified and analysed. The present chapter discusses some of the existing literature that is of direct relevance to the current study in order to situate the study in the perspective of similar studies as well as give justification for it. The review has

been structured under the following sub-headings: Earliest Studies in Discourse Analysis Conducted in Zambia, Literature on Discourse Markers and Conclusion.

### **3.1 Studies on use of English in Zambia**

Preliminary studies carried out on use of English in Zambia focussed on the existence or non-existence of a non-native variety of English. These include Simukoko (1977, 1981); Africa (1980, 1983); Lawrence and Sarvan (1983); Moody (1983, 1984) and Chisanga (1987). Others such as Chishimba (1979) dealt with English language in education. Earliest studies on English discourse analysis in Zambia include Moody (1982) who dealt with the application of discourse analysis to the teaching of reading; Mukuni (1984); Musakabantu (1985); Kapena (1985) and Tambulukani (1985) who applied discourse analysis to institutionalised domains of use of English in Zambia such as business reports, law reports and civil service letters respectively. Their knowledge gap was to find out if there were any recognisable linguistic structures in these registers so that such structures could be taught to those training to write civil service letters, law reports and business letters. The studies did not deal with pieces of discourse produced by ESL learners in general and discourse markers employed by Grade Twelve ESL learners in composition writing to enhance comprehensibility or coherence in particular.

Kashina (1988) also applied discourse analysis to the study of pieces of writing produced by Zambian users of English. This study examined the distribution of patterns of the noun phrase in the English clause as reflected in the pieces of written prose texts produced by selected Zambian users of English. The corpus for the study was drawn from a randomly selected sample of University of Zambia first year undergraduate students' written texts. The study revealed that there was a correlation in the noun phrase distribution patterns between the written texts of first year undergraduate students using English as a second language and those produced by people using English as a first language. This study did not focus on discourse markers but on the noun phrase. In addition, data were collected from University undergraduate students and not from secondary school level, hence the need for the current study on Discourse Markers in the written pieces of discourse produced by Grade Twelve ESL learners.

Simwinga (1992) carried out a study on the relationship between cohesion and coherence in the written English texts produced by selected University of Zambia students. The study investigated whether or not there was any association between cohesive density scores and cohesive harmony index scores in the examined scripts. The

findings of this study revealed the existence of a weak and non-causal relationship between cohesion and coherence in English as indicated by Hasan (1968); Halliday and Hasan (1976); Lyons (1977) and Van Dijk (1977). One of the major implications of the findings was that any incoherence in the written pieces of discourse produced by University of Zambia undergraduate students was due to factors other than the students' failure or inability to use appropriate cohesive ties. The study recommended that scholars interested in English as a second language in general and in English in Zambia in particular could carry out further research in discourse analysis and incorporate all the likely sources of incoherence into the English syllabus in Zambian schools so as to minimise incoherence in the discourse produced by learners after school. The study by Simwinga is relevant to the present one because it provides the premise that the search for sources of incoherence in students' pieces of written discourse in an ESL environment remains unresolved. It is hoped that this study would resolve some of the issues surrounding sources of incoherence.

Another related study was carried out by Njobvu (2010) who investigated the relationship between thematic progression and English discourse coherence. The corpus for the study was obtained from pieces of discourse produced by selected University of Zambia undergraduate students. The study was guided by the theory of Thematic Progression which is derived from systemic functional linguistics as espoused by Halliday and Hassan (1976). The outcome of this study re-affirms assertions by Halliday (1968, 1985) and Downing (2001) that thematic progression is important in achieving discourse coherence and by Danes (1974) that adherence to certain theme-rheme patterns enhances discourse coherence while non-adherence obscures it. The study shows evidence of discourse coherence in the scripts which adhered to the application of the coherence-enhancing thematic progression patterns and lack of coherence in those which had applied other patterns.

The studies by Simwinga (1992) and Njobvu (2010) are particularly significant to the current study because they informed the current study in that they both, like the current study, analysed authentic pieces of discourse. However, while Simwinga (1992) investigated the relationship between cohesion and coherence and whether or not there was association between cohesive density scores and cohesive harmony index scores in the written English of the University of Zambia undergraduate students, the study did not investigate the role of use of appropriate and inappropriate discourse markers in Grade Twelve ESL learners' pieces of written composition in order to enhance discourse comprehensibility or coherence. Similarly, although Njobvu (2010)

investigated the relationship between thematic progression and discourse coherence, this study too did not investigate the use of discourse markers in Grade Twelve ESL learners' pieces of composition in order to enhance discourse comprehensibility or coherence. The present study sought to fill these gaps.

### **3.2. Studies on Discourse Markers**

Various studies have been conducted on discourse markers under English as Foreign Language (EFL), English as Second Language (ESL) and English as First Language (L1) settings. Some of these have provided evidence that there is a strong relationship between use of discourse markers and coherence while others have indicated that overall there is no statistically significant relationship. It is not the intention of the present study to undertake an exhaustive review of all such studies but to sample only those which are of direct relevance to the present task. This section of the dissertation begins by reviewing studies on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) followed by those under English as Second Language. The last section reviews those which suggest absence of a statistically significant relation between use of DMs and discourse quality.

#### **3.2.1 Studies on English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

Martinez (2004) conducted a study on the use of discourse markers in expository composition writing produced by 78 Spanish EFL undergraduate students. Fraser's (1999) taxonomy of DMs was employed in the analysis of DMs in the participants' written pieces of discourse. The findings revealed that there was a variation in the use of DMs with elaborative as the most commonly employed DMs followed by contrastive DMs. The other finding in this study is that, there were significant differences between the highly rated and the poorly rated compositions in the frequency of use of contrastive, elaborative and topic relating markers. The highly rated pieces of composition displayed more use of the discourse markers. The study by Martinez was found relevant to the present study on three counts: firstly, because it employed the same theoretical orientation and analytical categorisation of DMs proposed by Fraser (1999), secondly because it seemed to suggest that use of more discourse markers contributed to higher rating of pieces of composition, which the present study sought to establish and thirdly because it was conducted in a non-English L1 setting, just like the present study. In this regard, it was considered important to establish the extent to which findings from the current study would relate to those of Martinez.

Feng (2010) investigated the use of DMs in Chinese students' written pieces of English discourse with particular focus on their role in enhancing discourse coherence. Data were obtained from 38 articles written by the participants as a classroom task. The study analysed the misuse or inappropriate use of DMs in their writing. The study revealed that students' writing displayed the use of DMs. The study also revealed that due to misuse or inappropriate use of discourse markers, students' articles became less cohesive and coherent. This study was found relevant to the present one due to its revelation that misuse of discourse markers resulted in the production of less coherent texts. In this regard it was felt important to determine whether or not findings from the present study would vary from those of Feng.

Kalajahi et. al; (2012) investigated how five Iranian post-graduate students viewed DMs and if there was any distinction between what was articulated in the interviews and their written texts. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized in this study. The results revealed that all the participants were fully aware of utilising DMs in their writing but did not have sufficient knowledge for the proper use and choice of appropriate ones. The quantitative method, revealed that a variety of discourse markers were employed with some types used more frequently than others. Additionally, the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between the scores of the compositions and the number of DMs utilized. The findings revealed that the more DMs were employed, the higher the score the written scripts attained. Kalajahi's study was regarded relevant because it seemed to provide evidence that use of discourse markers in an EFL setting contributed to discourse coherence. In relation to the present study, it was perceived significant to determine the comparability of the findings from the two studies.

Narita, *et. al* (2004) conducted a corpus-based study to investigate the use of logical connectors in essays written by advanced Japanese EFL learners. The study compared the use of logical connectors of Japanese EFL learners with native speakers of English. The study presented a brief comparison of Japanese learners' usage with that of advanced French, Swedish and Chinese learners of English. Twenty-five conjunctions were selected, based on the list of logical connectors in Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (1999) and Quirk et al. (1985). The findings of the study revealed that the overuse of *in addition*, *of course*, *moreover*, and *first*, was prominent, while there was an apparent underuse of the logical connectors such as *and*, *instead*, *then* and *yet*. The findings also revealed that certain similarities and differences among the four

learner groups in the use of connectors were evident. The study concluded that the influence of L1 transfer on the learners' use of conjunctions remained indefinite. The study by Narita *et. al* (2004), was relevant to the present as one of the suspicions which the present study sought to confirm involved the role of learners' L1 interference in the acquisition and use of DMs by G12 ESL learners, to a certain extent.

Lai (2008) carried out a study to investigate the use of discourse connectors in the writing of Taiwanese EFL undergraduate students. Both quantitative and qualitative were employed in the collection and analysis of data. One hundred and two (102) essays were analysed based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesive devices. The study employed a mode of comparison and contrast involving both skilled and unskilled Taiwanese undergraduate writers. The quantitative results revealed that the unskilled learners used conjunctions more frequently than the skilled ones, while the qualitative results indicated that even though both groups used conjunctions appropriately, they committed errors in utilising some conjunctions (*therefore, furthermore, in other words, besides, nevertheless, by contrast, on the contrary, because*) in their writing. The study by Lai was significant for the present study because it provided pointers which could serve as guide in the identification and analysis of some of the most inappropriately used DMs.

Jalilifar (2008) investigated discourse markers in descriptive compositions of 90 students from two Iranian universities: Islamic Azad University of Masjid Soleyman and Ahvaz Centre for Science and Research. Participants in the study included 30 Bachelor of Arts students who had already passed three writing courses in basic writing, and grammar and writing; 30 Bachelor of Arts students with more writing experience and had passed advanced writing courses; and 30 Master of Arts students who had passed National Master of Arts Entrance Examinations in language teaching theories and proficiency. Two other raters were engaged to rate the compositions to ensure objectivity in analysing of the scripts. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in the analysis of data. The findings of the study revealed that the informants utilized a variety of DMs, with elaborative markers being the most favoured sub-category compared to any other discourse marker sub-category. This was followed by inferential, contrastive, causative, and topic-relating markers. The study, further, revealed that participants used a great deal of discourse markers in their written discourses and that there was a positive relationship between writing experience and appropriate use of discourse markers. The study by Jallifar was relevant because, though

it dealt with discourse markers, the data were collected from an English as Foreign Language (EFL) setting and not an English as Second Language (ESL) setting thereby providing the opportunity, through the present study, for comparison in the use of DMs in the two settings. The study was also considered important because it ranked the frequency with which the various categories of DMs were used.

Djigunovic and Vickov (2010) investigated the use of English DMs by Croatian primary and secondary school EFL learners in their written pieces of discourse. 200 participants were considered for this study. The results of the study revealed that Croatian EFL learners have a relatively poor command of English DMs at both proficiency levels. The study observed that the learners tended to use a relatively small range of English DMs and that identified L1 interference and inadequate input, as possible causes of low acquisition of English DMs. In addition to being based on data collected from an English as Foreign Language (EFL) setting for comparison purposes, this study raised two critical aspects which were also of concern to the present study: the identification of L1 interference and inadequate input as possible causes of low acquisition of English DMs.

Simci (2012) investigated the use of spoken features in learner academic writing with particular reference to the use of informal or semi-formal DMs in learners' academic writing. Data were collected from language corpora. Lithuanian sub-corpus of International Corpus of Learner English (LICLE) consisted of two types of essay writing: argumentative essays and literature examination papers written by advanced Lithuanian learners of the English language. The native speakers' data were from the British, and American segments of Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the collection and analysis of the data. Quantitative analysis involved frequency counts of discourse markers whereas qualitative analysis involved discussing types of discourse markers and comparative analysis among three corpora (LICLE, LOCNESS-BR and LOCNESS-US). The results of the investigation indicated that Lithuanian learners and the native learners used stylistically inappropriate [spoken] discourse markers in their academic essays. It was concluded that spoken DMs and other lexical items more typical of speech than academic writing contributed to the excessively oral tone exhibited in learners' writing. The study by Simci was considered relevant to the present one on account of its reference to use of stylistically inappropriate speech-related discourse markers which was one of the suspicions the current study sought to establish.

Daif-Allah and Albeshar (2013) carried out a study whose purpose was to identify the discourse markers used by Saudi EFL learners in their paragraph writing. Data were collected from one hundred (100) paragraphs written by fifty (50) students of the Preparatory Year Program at Qassim University. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized by three raters in the analysis of the paragraphs in terms of the number of discourse markers used and their preferred sub-categories. The findings of the study revealed that the students overused the additive connectors followed by the causative, the contrastive and the illustrative ones. The findings also revealed that students' use of DMs was too limited and the ones that were most frequently used were *and*, *in addition* and *for example*. The findings further showed a positive and direct relationship between test scores and the use of discourse markers. The study by Daif-Allah and Albeshar provided evidence of the existence of a link between discourse comprehensibility reflected through high test scores and use of discourse markers. The current study was also pursued in order to establish the role of the use of DMs in enhancing discourse coherence and discourse comprehensibility.

A study by Hamed (2014) investigated the use of conjunctions in argumentative essays written by EFL fourth-year undergraduate Libyan students majoring in English at Omar Al-Mukhtar University in Libya. A sample of 32 argumentative essays collected from a sample of 16 students was analysed based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of conjunctions. The findings of the study revealed that the informants employed the conjunctions inappropriately and that adversative conjunctions posed the most difficulty for the learners followed by additives and causals. These findings confirmed previous studies that EFL learners have difficulty in employing conjunctions in their writing. The study by Hamed was considered relevant to the current one for the purpose of facilitating comparison of the findings with those from the current study which is based on data from ESL learners at secondary school level.

A review of studies on discourse markers as used by English Language learners in EFL settings as presented above was necessary for the present study for a number of reasons. Firstly, none of the studies was conducted in an ESL setting indicating knowledge gap in this respect. Secondly none of the studies was based on data from a secondary school environment thereby indicating another knowledge gap. Finally, none of the studies was based on the Zambian context, which was another knowledge gap.

### **3.2.2 Studies on English as Second Language (ESL)**

Kamali and Noori (2015) carried out a study that focused on the instruction of discourse markers and its effects on learners' writing ability. Two groups: a control group and an experimental one were considered from two classes of Pezhak English Language Institute in Bojnoured, Iran. The researchers analysed the use of DMs occurring in the participants' writing. The findings of this study revealed that teaching DMs to students enhances their awareness and sensitivity of discourse and subsequently sharpens their writing skills. The study recommended that more attention should be paid to the teaching of DMs to learners. The study by Kamali and Noori served as motivation for the current study by providing evidence of the role of DMs in enhancing discourse coherence and comprehensibility from a quantitative perspective. In the quest to establish ESL learners' proficiency in the use of DMs, the current study was motivated by the finding from Kamali and Noori that use of DMs enhanced discourse coherence and comprehensibility.

Alghamdi (2014) investigated the use of DMs in personal narratives and argumentative papers by 30 undergraduate students comprising 15 native speakers and 15 non-native speakers of English. The aim of the study was to ascertain whether or not the frequency and the incorrect use of DMs play a role in determining the quality of ESL writing. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in the collection and analysis of data. Fraser's (1999) classification DMs was used in this study. The qualitative analysis of non-native speakers' written discourse revealed an overuse of DMs at sentence-initial position and an unnecessary use of semantically similar DMs within the boundary of a single sentence. The study also showed that correct use and frequency of discourse markers were key indicators of the quality of ESL writing. The study by Alghamdi was of relevance to the present one as both sought to determine the extent to which frequency and use of DMs impacted on the quality of (or writers' proficiency in) ESL writing. In this regard, it was considered important to determine the comparability of the findings from the two studies.

Haris and Yunus (2014) investigated the use of DMs in essay writing among Form Four English as Second Language (ESL) learners in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Hulu Kelang School, in Malaysia. The aim of the study was to establish how Form Four ESL students used discourse markers in their writing and to investigate the teachers' perception about the usage of DMs among students. A qualitative approach was employed in the collection of data from observation and interviews. The findings of the

study revealed that a number of students misused DMs, with some informants overusing certain DMs, while others still, used some advanced DMs in their essays. The findings of the study further demonstrated that misuse and overuse of DMs really affected the flow of informants' written pieces of discourse and made them less coherent. The study recommended that DMs be emphasized in the teaching and learning processes because they are overtly an important resource in written discourse. The study by Haris and Yunus was considered significant to the present study on two grounds: firstly, both sought to investigate the use of DMs in an ESL setting, and secondly because the study by Haris and Yunus identified misuse and overuse of DMs as causes of discourse incoherence. These factors were part of what the current study pursued.

Chen (2015) conducted a study of a sample of 200 essays from forty (40) undergraduate Taiwanese students who enrolled in an English reading course. The study aimed at investigating whether or not English learners in Taiwan used spoken discourse markers in academic writing. The findings of the study revealed that the learners under investigation tended to initiate propositions with, *in my opinion* as a commitment to an important idea, with *I think* while expressing an attitude toward the topic in question, and *so* as an explanation or conclusion to the issue under discussion. The researcher attributed this scenario to students' lack of knowledge about rhetorical structures and conventions associated with English academic writing and as a result of L1 interference. The researcher, recommended explicit instruction on rhetorical structures and conventions of academic writing to L2 learners. The study by Chen was relevant to the current one because it recognized learners' lack of familiarity with L2 rhetorical structures and conventions as well as L1 interference as explanation for inappropriate use of DMs resulting in incoherent pieces of discourse. These were also the concerns of the present study.

Studies on discourse markers as used by English Language learners in ESL settings were also considered important for the investigation because they were based on data collected from post-secondary education users of English outside Zambia.

### **3.2.3 Studies presenting nonconformist conclusions**

Kookhaei (2014) carried out a study to investigate the use of DMs by Iranian EFL learners based on their writing proficiency. A sample of 29 students from Arak State University, Department of English Language and Literature were considered for this study. They were subjected to writing an essay on an argumentative topic. A

quantitative approach in the analysis of data was employed based on Fraser's (2004) taxonomy of discourse markers. Unlike other studies presented in this chapter the findings of this study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the use of DMs and writing proficiency. The study by Kookhaei is relevant to the present one for comparative purposes as the findings seem to suggest that while the use of DMs might be necessary, it might not be sufficient to guarantee discourse coherence and, consequently, writing proficiency. The indication is that there might be factors other than use of DMs which influence writing proficiency.

Modhish (2012) investigated the use of discourse markers by Yemeni EFL learners in their composition writing. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in analysing 50 pieces of composition written by level three undergraduate students. Fraser's (1999) taxonomy of DMs was employed in this study. The findings of this study revealed that the most frequently employed DMs were the elaborative markers, followed by the inferential, contrastive, causative, and topic relating markers. The findings also indicated that there was no strong positive correlation between participants' total number of discourse markers employed and the writing quality. On the contrary, the study demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between the topic relating markers and the writing quality of the participants.

The studies by Kookhaei (2014) and Moddish (2012) were considered relevant to the present one on account of the revelation that there was no statistically strong positive correlation between participants' total number of discourse markers employed and writing quality. The two studies seemed to provide evidence which was contrary to that provided by other studies reviewed. It was therefore considered necessary to include them in the literature review in order to be able to compare the findings with those from the present study.

### **3.4 Summary**

This chapter has discussed some of the existing literature that is of direct relevance to the current study in order to situate the study in the perspective of similar studies as well as give justification for it. The review has been structured under the following sub-headings: Earliest Studies in Discourse Analysis Conducted in Zambia, Literature on Discourse Markers and, finally, a summary of the chapter. The next Chapter presents the methodology employed in the collection and analysis of the data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter provided a review of some of the available literature that was considered relevant to this study in order to situate this study in the perspective of similar studies as well as provide a justification for the study. In this regard, the chapter discussed studies on the use of English in Zambia as well as studies on discourse markers.

Thereafter a summary of the chapter was done. The current chapter presents the research methodology that was applied in the study. It commences by presenting the research design, that was used, followed by the study population investigated, the sample size, data collection procedure, the instrument employed in the collection of data, the administration of the instrument, data analysis and closes with a summary of the chapter.

#### **4.1 Research Design**

Kumar (1996) defines research design as a procedural plan that is adopted by a researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. Arising from this definition, a research design provides the basis for the selection of appropriate research methods to be used in investigating a given phenomenon. In the present study the researcher employed descriptive research design with text analysis as specific research approach based on the perspective of written discourse as rule-structured object or product of a completed activity (Hyland, 2016).

Triangulation was applied in both data collection and analysis. This approach involves use of two or more theories, methods, data sources, or investigators in the study of a given phenomenon. As Mukonde (2009:45) indicates, “using triangulation can capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal and reveal varied dimensions of a given phenomenon.” Of the many types of triangulation given above, this study employed data triangulation and methodological triangulation. For data triangulation which involves collecting data at different sites and from different participants, the researcher collected Grade Twelve ESL learners’ written pieces of composition scripts from Mpelembe Secondary School, Helen Kaunda Secondary School and Mukuba Secondary School. Methodological triangulation involved the application of primarily qualitative methods with limited aspects of the quantitative approach, particularly descriptive statistics, to show the frequencies with which the discourse markers occurred in the Grade Twelve ESL learners’ written pieces of composition. The qualitative approach was useful in identifying and classifying the discourse markers employed by the research participants as well as in assessing the extent to which the linguistic units were used either appropriately or inappropriately to enhance or obscure discourse coherence.

#### **4.2 Data Collection**

##### **4.2.1 Study Population**

According to Lock *et al* (1987:58) a population is “the entire aggregate of cases that meet a designated set of criteria.” The researcher considered all the 2014 Grade Twelve ESL learners in the study sites as constituting the study population. These sites were: Mpelelmbe Secondary School, Helen Kaunda Girls’ Secondary School and Mukuba Boys’ Secondary School. The selection of the three schools was purposively done. As advised by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) purposive sampling is used when the researcher solicits informants with specific characteristics to participate in a study. In the case of the present study, purposive sampling of the schools was based on the fact that the selected schools had adequate numbers of classes in terms of male and female ESL learners as the schools comprised one co-education and two single sex schools. The Grade level of the participants was also purposively sampled because the researcher sought to make inferences on whether or not the discourse markers Grade Twelve ESL learners had mastered at this stage in their education were adequate to enable them produce coherent pieces of discourse.

#### **4.2.2 Sample Size**

Lock *et al* (1987:64) define sampling as “the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population,” that is, selecting a few from a bigger group. The importance of sampling lies in the fact that it facilitates the representation of the population from a few participants in the study. It is cardinal to sample because studying the entire population would be very costly and time consuming. From the total population of the 2014 Grade 12 ESL learners at Mpelembe Secondary School, Helen Kaunda Girls’ Secondary School and Mukuba Boys’ Secondary school, a sample of one hundred and fifty (150) learners participated in the study, 50 drawn from each of the three schools. the three schools were purposively selected while simple random sampling was used to select the classes from which the pupils were drawn.

#### **4.2.3 Data Collection Procedure**

##### **4.2.3.1 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

Each of the 150 learners was asked to write two pieces of composition in English: one being the *free style* narrative type and the other being the *guided* comparative/contrastive type. The two tasks were prescribed in accordance with the requirements of the school curriculum in that ESL learners at senior level are required to write two pieces of composition in Paper 1, one from Section 1 and the other from

Section 2, respectively. The questions that were included required the participants to express themselves in naturally-occurring language. Thus, the questions at the centre of investigation required them to discuss issues in depth as expected in a classroom environment based on the format of the final Grade Twelve English Composition examination which the pupils were scheduled to write later in the year.

Data were generated through the analysis of 300 composition scripts produced by the 150 Grade Twelve ESL learners in the English Language Paper 1 End of Term 1 Test in the research areas. The test was prepared and administered by the researcher with the permission of subject teachers from the three schools. This was done to ensure uniformity in content. The 300 scripts were analysed to find out the discourse markers the learners employed in composition writing and whether or not the application of these features enhanced or obscured discourse coherence.

#### **4.2.3.2 Administration of Research Instruments**

The End of Term test was managed by subject teachers in all the three study areas. The test was written under a controlled environment in order to ensure none of the 2014 Grade 12 ESL learner from study areas had prior access to the task or extra time. The candidates were given one hour forty-five minutes to answer the questions as required of them in the final Grade 12 examination setting.

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Seliger and Shohamy (1989) define data analysis as “the sifting, organizing, summarizing and synthesizing of the data so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research.” There are a variety of techniques of analysing data. Although distinctions are made between qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis, Johnson (1992) states that a research may be oriented towards a qualitative paradigm, but may also involve some aspects of the quantitative paradigm. This was the case in the present study because, although it is primarily a qualitative study, it includes numerical data in form of descriptive statistics as well.

#### **4.3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative researchers use inductive analysis which means that critical themes emerge out of data (Patton, 1990). These themes are constructs which the investigator identified before, during and after data collection (Maxwell, 1996 and Strauss and Corbin, 1990). For this study, therefore, emerging themes were identified by sorting the texts into piles of similar meanings (Brown, 1988). In other words, in line with Bogdan and Biklen (1982), data was analysed following the criteria that involve working with data,

organizing it into manageable chunks, synthesizing it, searching for patterns and discovering what is important in line with the research objectives and questions.

A four-stage qualitative approach was applied in data analysis. The first involved marking and scoring out of 20 each of the 300 scripts. The scores were useful in assessing the link between use of DMs and discourse coherence and comprehensibility. The average performance of the pupils in the two tasks is indicated in Table 5 below. The second comprised locating the DMs used in each of the 300 scripts and highlighting them by means of a highlighter. Thirdly, each of the DMs was classified according to its communicative function as either propositional or non-propositional. The categorisation was based on Halliday and Hassan (1976) and Frazer (1999) as explained in Chapter Two under Analytical Framework. Finally, identification and cataloguing of instances of appropriate and inappropriate uses of DMs was done. Appropriate use, as evaluated by the researcher, constituted manifestation of proficiency in the utilisation of discourse markers while inappropriate use implied lack of proficiency. Enumeration of the occurrences of the various types of DMs was also conducted to determine the frequency with which each of the DMs was used.

**Table 5: Average scores of the learners in the two pieces of composition**

Average Score out of 20	%	No. of pupils' Scripts	%
16	80	20	06
15	75	14	05
14	70	20	07
13	65	17	06
12	60	31	10
11	55	15	05
10	50	35	12
Total		152	51
Below 10	Below 50%	148	49
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows that only 51 % of the pupils' scripts scored above 50%. The rest, 49%, scored below 50% which is below the credit level band under the Examinations Council of Zambia GCE grading scale. The low scores were due to a combination of both limited and inappropriate use of discourse markers.

#### **4.3.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative analysis was supplemented by limited application of quantitative aspects in form of descriptive statistics to show the frequencies with which the various categories of DMs occurred. The categories included DMs that enhance discourse comprehensibility which comprised propositional as well as non-propositional discourse markers. The propositional discourse markers were further sub-categorised into referential, contrastive, elaborative and causative discourse markers. The non-propositional DMs comprised discourse structure markers, discourse activity markers and discourse change or relating markers. The other category comprised the seven instances of inappropriate use of DMs which were indicative of the participants' limited proficiency. These consisted of non-equivalent exchange, overuse, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incompleteness, distraction and use of discourse markers associated with spoken discourse. Therefore, whereas qualitative analysis is the main tool, essays were also analysed quantitatively by frequency count which was used to further summarize discourse markers that either enhanced or obscured discourse coherence. Frequency count enhanced the researcher's understanding of the extent to which each category of discourse markers featured in the participants' pieces of discourse.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter has endeavoured to give an outline of the methods and techniques applied in the collection and analysis of data at the centre of this study. The chapter focused on the research design employed in this study, study population, sample size, data collection techniques and instruments, administration of research instruments, qualitative and quantitative data analysis and the conclusion. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

The previous chapter presented the methodology employed in this study. The chapter began by presenting the research design that was used, followed by the study population investigated, the sample size, data collection procedure, the instrument employed in the collection of data, the administration of the instrument, data analysis, and closed with the conclusion. The current chapter reports the findings of the study which are presented in line with the research objectives. As outlined in Chapter One, the objectives of the study were:

- (i) to identify the discourse markers used in the written pieces of English composition produced by Grade 12 ESL learners.
- (ii) to categorise the identified discourse markers according to their communicative functions as either propositional or non-propositional; and
- (iii) to establish whether or not the discourse markers employed by G12 ESL learners enhance or obscure discourse coherence.

### **5.1 Identification of Discourse Markers used by Grade 12 ESL Learners**

The first objective sought to identify the discourse markers used in the written pieces of English composition produced by Grade 12 ESL learners. The study yielded substantial evidence that Grade 12 ESL learners used discourse markers in the two pieces of English composition which were submitted for analysis. This finding seems to suggest that arising from five years of exposure to English structure lessons in which discourse markers are taught, pupils have sufficiently internalised knowledge of the existence of discourse markers and try to use them in their pieces of composition whether appropriately or inappropriately. The specific examples in the use of the identified discourse markers are presented in 5.2 below.

### **5.2 Categorisation of the Discourse Markers**

The second objective sought to categorise the discourse markers according to their communicative functions as either propositional or non-propositional. The study has provided evidence that the identified discourse markers fall under either the propositional or the non-propositional category.

#### **5.2.1 Appropriate use of Propositional Discourse Markers**

Appropriate use of propositional DMs deals with the extent to which DMs are employed to perform their pragmatic and semantic functions. Samples of appropriate uses of DMs

are presented below to illustrate how they manifested in the written pieces of composition produced by the Grade 12 ESL learners.

#### 5.2.1.1 Contrastive Discourse Markers

Contrastive discourse markers indicate the presence of an adversative relationship between two propositions whereby the implication of the linkage between the two can be described as contrary to expectation. Put differently, this sub-category of discourse markers signals that the explicit interpretation of the second segment (S2) contrasts with the interpretation of the first segment (S1). Among the discourse markers in this sub-category are: *but*, *yet*, *however* and *nevertheless*. An adversative relation may indicate affirmation, in which case the conjunction *actually* (in spoken discourse) or *in fact* (in written discourse) is used. Adversation may also indicate a dismissive relation where the conjunctions *in any case* or *in any way* among others are used. To illustrate the extent to which the Grade 12 ESL learners under investigation employed contrastive discourse markers below are the examples.

34. In 1945 his father passed away. It was hard **but** he focused on his future.
35. Seven years later, in 1937, Semi left school to work on his father's farm. **Although** he was out of school at this tender age, he developed a keen interest in farming.
36. **In spite of** the tragic death of his father, Semi still had high ambitions about his life.
37. Mr. R. Semi was appointed Minister in 1970 during the third Five Year Plan. During this period only spices were exported **compared to** 27 tons of rice, oil and machinery that were imported.
38. Between 1976 and 1980 there were many exports **whereas** the imports were few.
39. During the first, second and third Five Year Plans rice was never exported, **but**, in the fourth Five Year Plan, when Honourable Semi was Minister of Agriculture, an estimated 220 tons of rice was exported for the first time. **However**, it was still in the third Five Year Plan that an average area of 1, 420, 000 acres of land was cultivated and he farmers' average income per annum increased to K1, 040 from K610.
40. In urban areas, people with well-paying jobs afford good and decent accommodation, **but** those who come from rural areas end up living in areas with unsanitary conditions forcing them to commit crimes.
41. Almost all the young people in rural areas aspire to live in urban areas someday. **However**, the housing situation in urban areas does not

accommodate every person that comes to urban areas. To survive such people engage in crimes.

42. People from rural areas face a lot of problems such as; lack of decent accommodation and food. They have no means of making their lives any better under such conditions. *Yet* still, they have to find means and ways of getting by and they resort to crime.

In examples 34 to 42 above, the learners under investigation can be perceived to be able to use common alternates of DMs either at the beginning, middle or final position of a sentence. They can match the purpose of the variants with the meaning that they intend to convey in their pieces of composition. In all the examples listed the DMs signal that the explicit message of the second segment, in each case, is in contrast with the expected implied message associated with the first segment. Table 6 below illustrates the frequency of use of contrastive DMs by Grade 12 ESL learners in their pieces of composition.

**Table 6: Frequency of use of Contrastive DMs in Pieces of Composition  
Written by G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Contrastive DMs	Frequency	Percentage
1.	But	123	31.9
2.	Yet	37	9.6
3.	However	84	21.8
4.	(al)though	13	3.4
5.	in contrast	8	2.1
6.	on the contrary	7	1.8
7.	instead of	35	9.1
8.	Despite	29	7.5
9.	in spite of...	3	0.8
10.	on the other hand	13	3.4
11.	Nevertheless	17	4.4
12.	Whereas	3	0.8
13.	compared to	6	1.6
14.	nonetheless	7	1.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100</b>

<u>Total Number of CDMs</u>	<u>Utilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Unutilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<b>34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58.8%</b>

Table 6 above shows that a total of 34 variants of contrastive DMs were identified and presented in this study. Of these only 14 were employed by G12 ESL learners bringing the percentage of utilised DMs to 41.2%. However, 20 DMs representing 58.8% were not employed by any of the 150 participants considered in this study.

The analysis of the data revealed that 385 instances of use of contrastive DMs were discovered. Of the total frequencies of the use, the DM *but* was employed 123 times representing 31.9%. The 14 variants of the contrastive DMs that were employed by G12 ESL learners in this study include; *but, yet, however, (al)though, in contrast, on the contrary, instead of, despite, in spite of, on the other hand, nevertheless, whereas, compared to* and *nonetheless* (see Table 5). According to Parrot, (2000) these are the variants that are perceived to be mostly used in writing to show contradictory relations.

### 5.2.1.2 Inferential Discourse Markers

As alluded to already in Chapter Two of this study, inferential discourse markers signal that the second segment (S2) is to be taken as a conclusion following from the first segment (S1). The use of appropriate inferential discourse markers enhances discourse comprehensibility. The basic conceptual forms of sequences follow the canonical representations S1. DM+S2> as evidenced in the findings of this study and illustrated in examples 43, 44 and 45 or S1, DM+S2>, as presented in example 46 and NP1+V+DM+NP2> in example 47.

43. R. Semi wanted something better for himself. *As a result*, he began to read farming pamphlets.
44. Most people migrating to urban areas are illiterate and so they do not have qualifications to get them jobs that they came seeking. *As a result*, there is a lot of unemployment and people end up stealing to stay alive.
45. Few lucky ones manage to find employment as unskilled workers. *As a result of* their lack of skill, they are constantly oppressed by unscrupulous employers.
46. Mr. R. Semi gained a keen interest in farming, *consequently*, he started reading farming pamphlets which obviously contributed to some of the knowledge he acquired.
47. The problem of street kids is *as a result of* rural-urban Migration.

The DM *as a result* in examples 43, 44 and 45 as well as the DM *consequently* in example 46 indicate that (S2) follows from (S1). Additionally, they are to be taken as expressing conclusion while playing the function of effect. The DM *as a result of* in 47 reflects the canonical representation NP1+V+DM+NP2> which indicates that the DM links Noun Phrase 1 (NP1) to Noun Phrase 2 (NP2) suggesting that the existence of NP1 is the outcome of NP2. Table 7 below presents the frequency of use of inferential DMs by G12 ESL learners under investigation.

**Table 7: Frequency of use of Inferential DMs in Compositions Written by G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Inferential DMs	Frequency	Percentage
1.	So	287	59.5
2.	as a consequence	1	0.2
3.	Consequently	2	0.4
4.	in conclusion	7	1.5
5.	it can be concluded that	3	0.6
6.	Thus	21	4.4
7.	Therefore	52	10.8
8.	under these conditions	1	0.2
9.	Hence	28	5.8
10.	as a result (of)	73	15.1
11.	all in all	7	1.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>100</b>

<u>Total Number of IDMs</u>	<u>Utilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Unutilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>56%</b>

Table 7 shows that out of the 25 variants of inferential DMs presented and discussed in this study, 11 were employed by G12 ESL learners in the written discourses to enhance their pieces of writing. The total number of inferential DMs employed by the participants represented 44%. However, 14 inferential DMs were not utilised by the learners and these represent 56% of unutilised inferential DMs.

The 11 variants of inferential DMs that were employed in both discursive and narrative compositions are; *so*, *as a consequence*, *consequently*, *in conclusion*, *it can be concluded that*, *thus*, *therefore*, *under these conditions*, *hence*, *as a result of*, and *all in all* (see Table 6) A closer look at the data revealed that of the 11 inferential DMs, the DM *so* was the most commonly employed and it occurred 287 times out of the total of 482 inferential DMs employed in this study. *So* accounted for 59.5% of the total number of inferential DMs. G12 learners find its use comes easily and the reason they showed the tendency of using *so* as an inter-sentence connector to join two clauses. The learners under investigation made use of the DM *so* for multiple functions namely; providing an explanation, initiating a question, expressing an opinion or making a conclusion. Further analysis of the data revealed that, G12 ESL learners showed the tendency of using *so* as an inter-sentence connector to join two clauses. Despite the myriad inferential variants (25) employed in this study, G12 ESL learners seemed to be tied to the idea of the DM *so* for showing conclusion (Gilquin and Paquit, 2007).

### 5.2.1.3 Collateral (Elaborative) Discourse Markers

Collateral or elaborative discourse markers signal a relationship in which the message of the second segment (S2) matches, expands on, elaborates or enhances the message of the first segment (S1) and perhaps the preceding discourse, as in examples 48 to 52.

48. The fourth Five-Year Plan which ranged from 1976 to 1980 saw an estimated amount of 220 tons of rice being exported *in addition to* coffee, sugar cane and spices.
49. People come to urban areas to look for a better life **and** to improve their economic status through employment.
50. Mr. Semi was a very hard working student and excelled in his studies. He was showing all signs of becoming a successful student. He spent a lot of time on his books and studied extra hard during the time he was in college. *Furthermore*, Mr. Semi worked hard on his after the death of his father.
51. People who come from rural areas find it difficult to adapt to the competitive lives in urban areas. **Moreover**, they do not afford the basic needs of life which lead them into committing crimes of all sorts.
52. The economic situation in rural areas forces people to leave. **Additionally**, they come to urban areas in search of a better life which they could not find in rural areas.

In examples 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 given above the DMs *in addition to*, *and*, *furthermore*, *moreover* and *additionally* respectively provide more information to what has been presented in the preceding segment (S1). For example, in 50 the DM *furthermore* relates the segment it introduces not only to the immediately preceding segment ('He spent a lot of time on his books and studied extra hard during the time he was in college') but also to several prior segments in the paragraph. All the DMs used in examples 48 to 52 are elaborative additive DMs that provide more information to what has been provided in prior segments (S1). Table 8 below presents the frequency of use of inferential DMs by G12 ESL under investigation.

**Table 8: Frequency of use of Collateral/Elaborative DMs in Compositions Written by G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Collateral DMs	Frequency	Percentage
1.	And	274	59.1
2.	Also	118	25.4
3.	above all	5	1.1
4.	Furthermore	21	4.5
5.	Moreover	12	2.6
6.	in addition to	18	3.9
7.	Additionally	13	2.8
8.	similarly	3	0.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>100</b>

<b><u>Total Number of C/EDMs</u></b>	<b><u>Utilised</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>	<b><u>Unutilised</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>
<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>70%</b>

Table 8 shows that twenty-seven (27) variants of elaborative also known as collateral DMs were identified and discussed in this study. Of the 27 elaborative DMs, only 8 representing 30% were utilised by G12 ESL learners under investigation. While nineteen (19), variants representing 70% were not employed by any of the participants

in composition writing. The 8 elaborative DM variants that were employed by G12 ESL learners in composition writing are; *and, also, above all, furthermore, moreover, in addition to, additionally, and similarly*. Of the 8 elaborative variants employed in this study, the DM *and* was the most common DM employed by the participants. The frequency occurrence of the DM *and* appeared 274 times representing 59.1% of the total frequency of use. The DM *and* is used to add extra information to the preceding sentence. It functions as a cohesive device to link the previous sentence to the preceding one. It points to a continuation of talk in the written discourse of G12 ESL learners' pieces of composition. It consolidates the clarity of the message in a given piece of discourse.

#### 5.2.1.4 Causative Discourse Markers

The causative DMS specify that segment (2) provides a reason for the proposition presented in segment (1) as in:

53. In 1957 he was appointed Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture ***because of*** his hard work.
54. Mr. Semi's contribution to the Ministry of Agriculture did not end with his resignation in 1961 ***because*** he was elected Chairman of the Farmers' Corporative Union in 1968.
55. In my opinion rural-urban migration has contributed greatly to the problems we are faced with in towns ***because*** most of these people flock to urban areas with no vision.

In the examples 53, 54 and 55, the use of ***because of*** and ***because*** as DMs signal that the segment following is to be taken as expressing reason for which the content of the first segment (S1) provides justification. The extent to which Grade 12 ESL learners employed causative DMs is presented in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Frequency of use of Causative DMs in Compositions Written by G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Causative DMs	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Because	167	55.7
2.	because of	94	31.3
3.	for that/this reason	39	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

<u><b>Total Number of CDMs</b></u>	<u><b>Utilised</b></u>	<u><b>Percentage</b></u>
<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 shows that the Grade 12 ESL learners under investigation employed all the three (3) variants of the causative DMs. The three causative DMs are ***because, because of*** and ***for this/that reason***. As has been presented in Table 8 the DM ***because*** was the most frequently

employed by the participants of this study for indicating causal relations. This DM was employed 167 times, representing 55.7% of the total (300) causative DMs employed in this study.

## 5.2.2 Appropriate use of Non-Propositional discourse markers

Of the three non-propositional discourse markers presented in this study, two sub-categories were employed in the written pieces of discourse produced by Grade 12 ESL learners. The non-propositional discourse marker categories that were employed in this study are: the Discourse Structure Markers and Discourse Activity Markers.

### 5.2.2.1 Discourse Structure Markers

Examples of use of discourse structure markers are indicated in 56 to 59 below.

56. *Secondly*, what led to Mr. Semi's success was his dedication to everything he did.
57. *Finally*, Mr. Semi was appointed Minister of Agriculture.
58. *To start with*, people have different aspirations and great hope of a better life when they come to urban areas.
59. *Lastly*, the police should play their role by ensuring that there is law and order in our communities instead of allowing a few selfish individuals to rob people of their property which they have worked so hard for.

Table 10 presents a summary on the extent to which G12 ESL learners used discourse structure markers.

**Table 10: Frequency of use of Discourse Structure Markers in pieces of Composition Written by G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Discourse Structure Markers	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Finally	38	27.3
2.	first(ly)	18	13
3.	second(ly)	16	11.5
4.	Lastly	9	6.5
5.	to start with	58	41.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>

<u>Total Number of DSMs</u>	<u>Utilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Unutilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50%</b>

Table 10 shows that ten (10) discourse structure markers were identified and presented in this study. Of the ten, five (5) representing 50% of the total number of discourse markers used while the other five (5) were not. The discourse structure markers that were employed by G12 ESL language include; *first(ly)*, *second(ly)*, *to start with*, *finally*, and *last(ly)*. The DM *to start with* was the most favoured as it was employed 58 times

accounting for 41.7% of the total of 139 frequency of use of discourse structure markers.

### 5.2.2.2 Discourse Activity Markers

Discourse Activity Markers indicate that the current discourse is merely an activity that illustrates, exemplifies or explains a preceding one as in:

60. Honourable R. Semi was a great achiever, *for example*; he pursued a diploma course in agriculture, won a scholarship, went to study in the USA, became a lecturer, was appointed Permanent Secretary, became Chairman of the Farmers' Cooperative and was appointed Minister of Agriculture.
61. Rural Urban Migration has led to a lot of problems, *for example*, the proliferation of shanty compounds, casualization, crime, poverty, over-crowding, to mention a few.
62. Most of the rural-urban migrants end up committing a number of crimes. *For example*, they become murderers, robbers, serial-killers, ritual killers and prostitutes, all in the name of living a better life than they used to in rural areas.

In example 60, the DM *for example* has been employed to exemplify the achievements that Honourable R Semi attained. In example 61 the discourse activity marker *for example* introduces the list of the problems rural-urban migration brings. In example 62, the discourse activity marker *for example* has been employed to introduce the crimes rural-urban migrants commit. Table 11 below illustrates the extent to which discourse activity DMs were employed by Grade 12 ESL learners in the analysed pieces of composition.

**Table 11: Frequency of use of Discourse Activity Markers in Compositions Written by G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Discourse Activity Markers	Frequency	Percentage
1.	for example	29	49.2
2.	for instance	18	30.5
3.	in short	12	20.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

<u>Total Number of DAMs</u>	<u>Utilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Unutilised</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
8	3	37.5%	5	62.5%

Table 11 shows that eight discourse activity markers were identified and presented in this study. Of these, only three (3) representing 37.5% of the total number of discourse activity markers were utilised in this study while 5 representing 62.5% were not deployed in any of the written pieces of G12 ESL learners' discourses. The three discourse activity markers that were employed by G12 ESL learners include; *for*

*example, for instance* and *in short*. Of these, *for example*, occurred 29 times representing 49.2%, followed by *for instance*, which occurred 18 times representing 30.5%, while *in short* appeared 12 times representing 20.3% of the total of the 59 discourse activity markers that were employed by G12 ESL learners in this study.

Table 12 presents a summary of all the discourse markers in the pieces of composition analysed in the study.

**Table 12: Total Number of DMs Employed in the Study**

S/No.	Type of DM	Frequency of Use	Percentage
1.	Inferential DMs	482	26.4
2.	Collateral/Elaborative DMs	464	25.4
3.	Contrastive DMs	385	21
4.	Causal DMs	300	16.4
5.	Discourse Structure Markers	139	7.6
6.	Discourse Activity Markers	59	3.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,829</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 12 above reveals that inferential DMs were the most frequently employed DMs in the written pieces of composition produced by G12 ESL learners. A total of 1,829 DMs was employed by G12 ESL learners under investigation. Of these, 482 representing 26.4% were inferential DMs, 464, representing 25.4% were elaborative or collateral DMs while 385 representing 21%, were contrastive DMs. Causative DMs occurred 300 times accounting for 16.4%. Discourse structure markers accounted for 139 appearances translating into 7.6%. Discourse activity markers were employed 59 times translating into 3.2%, while discourse change or relating markers were not employed by any of the participants.

The participants of this study employed more inferential DMs in both narrative and discursive pieces of composition. Table 13 below illustrates the use of DMs in narrative and discursive pieces of composition.

**Table 13: Number of DMs Employed in Narrative and Discursive Compositions of G12 ESL Learners**

S/No.	Type of DM	Narrative Composition	Discussion Composition	Total
1.	Inferential DMs	284	198	<b>482</b>
2.	Elaborative DMs	271	193	<b>464</b>
3.	Contrastive DMs	204	181	<b>385</b>
4.	Causal DMs	162	138	<b>300</b>
5.	Discourse Structure Markers	86	53	<b>139</b>
6.	Discourse Activity Markers	17	42	<b>59</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>1,829</b>

Table 13 above illustrates the frequency of DMs employed in both narrative and discursive pieces of composition. The results indicate that G12 ESL learners employed more DMs in the narrative type of composition than they did in the discursive type. A total of 1,024 times of utilisation of DMs in narrative composition was noted compared to 805 times of utilisation in discursive composition.

### 5.3 Inappropriate use of Discourse Markers

While the findings in 5.2 indicate instances of appropriate use of discourse markers to enhance discourse comprehensibility and coherence, the study also revealed occurrences of inappropriate use of discourse markers resulting in obscureness of discourse coherence. Seven categories of inappropriate use of discourse markers were identified impeding discourse comprehensibility. These comprised non-equivalent exchange, over-use, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incompleteness, distraction and use of discourse markers associated with spoken pieces of discourse. Each of these has been illustrated in the sections which follow.

#### 5.3.1 Non-equivalent Exchange

The problem of non-equivalent exchange pattern was discovered in both narrative and discursive pieces of composition. The use of non-equivalent patterns hampered the smooth and logical flow of information in that the DMs used did not logically relate proposition (S2) to proposition (S1) thereby making the pieces of composition in which they were used incomprehensible as illustrated below in examples 63, 64, 65, and 66.

63. Mr. Semi was a very hardworking man during his time as Minister. It **furthermore** helped him to improve the conditions of the farmers.
64. Unsanitary conditions are a common sight in compounds all over urban areas. It **therefore**, makes it difficult for the government to provide social services.
65. Mr. Semi read pamphlets and worked on the farm after dropping out of school. They **additionally** contributed to his success in college.
66. Rural-urban migration has contributed to a lot of the problems being faced in urban areas. They **furthermore** become over-populated because of rural migrants.

Examples 63 to 66 above illustrate the application of non-equivalent exchange in the use of discourse markers. **It** in examples 63 and 64 as well as **they** in example 65 and 66 do not clearly refer to any specific antecedents resulting in the use of **furthermore**, **therefore**, **additionally** and **furthermore** respectively being illogical.

### 5.3.2 Overuse

The pattern of overuse was identified as a result of the high density of the occurrence of DMs in two perspectives. The first type of overuse related to the preceding variant of a DM lacking clarity with regard to how it relates to the other segment to which the DM is expected to connect. As a result, there were breaks in the flow of information because the learners' utilisation of DMs did not successfully cue readers to the relationships between respective sentences resulting in incomprehensibility on the part of the reader. The second type of overuse related to repetition of a particular DM instead of using its variant. Examples 67 and 68 below illustrate overuse of the first type while 69 and 70 reflect overuse of the second type.

67. *But*, when his father died, he was still in college. *In contrast to* other students, Semi worked hard than any other boy or girl. He is *also* very disciplined and determined.
68. *Because* they are poor, they give in to temptations so easily. *Compared to* those who live in towns, people from rural areas are used as conduits of crime by criminals. *Furthermore* contributes to trust issues among people.
69. *As a result of* rural-urban migration there are many street kids in urban areas. *As a result* they have no one to support them they steal and commit other terrible crimes. *As a result*, they are a danger to society.
70. After the death of his father, R. Semi devoted his time to developing the farm **and** studying **and** he worked tirelessly both at college **and** the farm **and** he was awarded for his hard work **and** he is today remembered as a successful man **and** his works are written in books.

Examples 67 and 68 above show a case of overuse because of the absence of precedents for *but* and *because* respectively thereby mystifying the reader as to the type of propositions to which the sentences provide follow-up. Further, the reader is unable to predict the direction being cued by the writer with regard to the flow of discourse in linking the various elements because, the use of the DMs *compared to* and *furthermore* in 68 break the flow of information between the preceding information in the first segment (S1) and the subsequent segments.

Examples 69 and 70 involve repetition of the use of *and* six times and the use of *as a result* three times respectively.

### 5.3.3 Surface logicity

The pattern of surface logicity involves the use of discourse markers to impose logicity or bridge the gap among propositions when actually their existence does not. Examples 71, 72, 73 and 74 below illustrate the problem of surface logicity.

71. Mr. Semi was elected chairman of Farmers' Corporative Union in 1968. **However**, two years later he was appointed Minister of Agriculture. **However**, he brought a lot of positive changes to the ministry.
72. Mr. Semi attained many accolades in his life as a young man. **Additionally**, it was his commitment and dedication to whatever he did that made him be very successful in life; **additionally**, he was a happy man.
73. Many people nowadays flee village life to come to towns to find a better life. **Consequently**, they end up disappointed when they find the difficult conditions town urban life has to offer. **Consequently** they find no jobs and no place to stay.
74. Mostly people from rural areas do not find jobs in town. **Therefore**, they try hard to find means and ways of survival. **Hence** they end up committing crimes and spend their lives behind bars.

Examples 71, 72, 73 and 74 above demonstrate the inappropriate use of DMs under the category known as surface logicity in that **however**, **additionally**, **consequently** and **therefore/hence** do not serve as appropriate logical connectors for (S1) and (S2) resulting in incomprehensibility and incoherence.

#### 5.3.4 Wrong Relation

The fourth pattern of inappropriate use of DMs is wrong relation which showed in learners' written discourse as a result of failure by the participants to use suitable discourse markers to express a certain textual relation. Below are excerpts from participants' discourse.

75. In 1930 Semi started school at Gamba Primary School. **Additionally**, he stopped school to work on his father's farm.
76. Semi studied for a diploma course in agriculture from 1944 to 1945. **Yet**, he was their best student in his intake.
77. There are just a lot of people in urban areas. **Because**, rural-urban migration does not contribute to the rapid increase in crime.
78. Shanty compounds hide criminals from rural areas. **Nevertheless**, they trouble a lot of innocent people.

Examples 75 and 76 show the misuse of the DMs **additionally** and **yet** in the pattern of wrong relation. The use of the elaborative marker **additionally**, in example 75 is incorrect because the following proposition suggests a contrast not an elaboration. Example 76 shows the misuse of **yet** in the pattern of wrong relation because the succeeding sentence indicates an elaboration not a contrast.

Examples 77 and 78 also display the misuse of DMs in the pattern of wrong relation. The use of the causative DM *because* in example 77 is inappropriate because it does not provide logical connection of (S2) to (S1). Instead of employing a causative DM, the learner should have employed an inferential DM. Additionally, the contrastive marker *nevertheless*, in example 78 is inappropriate since the preceding sentence required a causative DM to bridge the sense between the foregoing and the subsequent sentence. As such, a collateral or elaborative DM would have been appropriate in this instance. Examples 77 and 78 should have read:

- 77 (a) There are just a lot of people in urban areas. **As a result**, rural-urban migration does not contribute to the rapid increase in crime.
- 78 (a) Shanty compounds hide criminals from rural areas. **Consequently**, they trouble a lot of innocent people.

### 5.3.5 Semantic Incompletion

Semantic incompletion is an instance whereby there is lack of elaboration in the use of the discourse marker resulting in the marker being less functional and to a greater extent ‘*hanging*.’ Examples of this type are indicated in 79, 80, 81 and 82 below.

- 79. His father died in 1945. **As a result**, Mr. Semi worked alone.
- 80. Three years after his studies in the USA, Mr. Semi returned to teach at Yabo Agriculture College **Therefore**, he served.
- 81. People face a lot of problems when they come to urban areas. **As a result** they commit crimes.
- 82. Zambia is a land of freedom. **So** people are free to be where they want.

Examples 79, 80, 81 and 82 above show the misuse of the DMs *as a result*, *therefore* and *so* in the pattern of semantic incompletion. The examples are inappropriate because there should be more explanation about the inferences suggested by the DMs. However, the learners under investigation ended their writing abruptly leaving the reader in suspense or ‘*hanging*’ as to what the writer intended to convey. This type of writing creates discourse incomprehensibility resulting in low scores in composition writing among ESL learners.

### 5.3.6 Distraction

The pattern of distraction showed up in participants’ written pieces of discourse as a result of their unnecessary use of DMs as demonstrated in examples 83, 84, 85 and 86 below.

83. Honourable Semi was appointed minister during the 2<sup>nd</sup> five year plan. **Therefore**, through his hard work, 132, 000 acres of land was cultivated from 120, 000 cultivated during the first five year plan.
84. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> five year plan, only spices were imported. As for the exports **nevertheless**, 27 tons of rice, oil and machinery were exported.
85. Rape cases, murder, robberies, ritual killings and stealing are very common in urban areas. The people in urban areas are **however**, responsible for these crimes and not the people from rural areas.
86. There are a lot of criminals in urban areas who commit serious crimes and these are **yet** not from rural areas.

The excerpts 83, 84, 85 and 86 above illustrate the inappropriate use of the DMs **therefore**, **nevertheless**, **however** and **yet** in the pattern of distraction. Without the use of these DMs the sentences remain logical. Therefore, the use of DMs in this manner distracts the readers and hampers discourse coherence.

### 5.3.7 Use of Discourse Markers Associated with Spoken Discourse

The other misuse or inappropriate use of DMs concerned the use of DMs that are characteristic of spoken instances of discourse. Below are examples.

87. **Actually**, Mr Semi worked on the farm single handed after the death of his father.
88. **Honestly**, Honourable Semi was a very hardworking man and that is why he achieved a lot for himself and his country.
89. Many people come to urban areas with the hope that they will acquire riches **as you know** there are many opportunities in urban areas.
90. **Frankly**, the people from rural areas face many challenges which lead them into crime.

In examples 87, 88, 89 and 90 above the DMs **actually**, **honestly**, **as you know** and **frankly** are characteristic of spoken and not written discourse. Their use in formal pieces of written discourse suggests lack of sensitivity by the writers to the lexical choice requirements of various registers of language use.

## 5.4 Summary

The current chapter has presented the categories of discourse markers that enhance and those which disrupt discourse comprehensibility in the written discourse of Grade 12 ESL learners investigated in this study. The categories are propositional discourse markers and non-propositional discourse markers. Propositional discourse markers

include; Contrastive DMs, Collateral (Elaborative) DMs, Inferential DMs, and Causative DMs. Non-propositional DMs comprise Discourse Structure Markers, Topic Change Markers and Discourse Activity Markers. The findings reveal that the participants of this study preferred propositional DMs to non-propositional DMs. Under propositional DMs, the participants employed more inferential discourse markers followed by collateral discourse marker, contrastive discourse markers and causative discourse markers were the least utilized. In the non-propositional category, Discourse Structure Markers were the most employed. These were followed by Discourse Activity Markers, while Discourse Change Markers were not employed by any of the informants. Further findings reveal that seven patterns of misuse or inappropriate application of DMs disrupted discourse comprehensibility in both narrative and discursive compositions written by Grade 12 ESL learners under investigation. The seven patterns of inappropriate application of DMs include non-equivalent exchange, overuse, surface logicity, wrong relation, semantic incompleteness, distraction, and the use of speech-related discourse markers in writing. The next chapter presents the discussion of findings, conclusion, pedagogical implications and recommendations for future study.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Overview**

Chapter Five presented the findings of the study. The chapter catalogued and exemplified instances of both appropriate and inappropriate use of discourse markers in the written pieces of composition produced by Grade 12 ESL learners investigated in the study. Two categories of discourse markers were identified as enhancing discourse coherence, when appropriately used, and therefore as indicators of proficiency in the use of DMs to enhance discourse comprehensibility. These are the propositional discourse markers and the non-propositional discourse markers. The findings reveal that the participants preferred using propositional DMs to non-propositional DMs in their writing. Seven patterns of inappropriate use of DMs were identified as obscuring discourse coherence. The present chapter discusses some of the major findings of the study by relating them to theoretical framework as well as to literature review, draws the conclusion and suggests some recommendations relating to pedagogy as well as further research.

#### **6.1 Discussion of Findings**

The study revealed that the ESL learners investigated in this study employed both propositional and non-propositional discourse markers to facilitate discourse comprehensibility and coherence. This finding suggests the participants' awareness of the relevance of DMs in discourse production and comprehension and is supported by Kalajahi (2012) whose results revealed that all the participants in the study conducted were fully aware of utilising DMs in their writing but did not have sufficient knowledge for the proper use and choice of appropriate ones. While all the four subcategories of propositional DMs discussed in this study were employed by the participants, only two of the three subcategories of non-propositional DMs were observed. Appropriate use of the discourse markers enhanced discourse comprehensibility and was suggestive of the participants' proficiency in the use of such discourse markers. The study also revealed that the participants in the study only used a limited number of discourse markers out of so many which were available for use.

### **6.1.1 Propositional Discourse Markers**

This section discusses the findings in terms of the use of propositional DMs by G12 ESL learners in composition writing to enhance discourse coherence. Propositional DMs are used to connect words or other constructions in writing. DMs in this category are employed to serve as connective devices to create logical and consistent pieces of discourse. The four propositional discourse markers that were employed by G12 ESL learners are the inferential discourse markers, contrastive discourse markers, elaborative discourse markers and the causative discourse markers.

#### **6.1.1.1 Inferential Discourse Markers**

Inferential DMs were the most frequently employed DMs in the pieces of composition written by G12 ESL learners investigated in this study. The appropriate use of inferential DMs signalled that the second segment (S2) was to be taken as a conclusion based on the first segment (S1). The inferential DMs enhanced discourse coherence by directing the reader to expect a conclusion arising from the first segment (S1). The justification of the learners' preference in utilising more inferential DMs than any other DMs seems to relate to Rahayu's (2015) findings which revealed that cause and effect essays tend to show more use of inferential DMs. The use of more inferential DMs can be attributed to the fact that the two questions attempted by G12 ESL learners in this study, related more to cause and effect hence the use of more inferential DMs.

In the inferential category of discourse markers there was overuse of the propositional DM *so* in the initial position of sentences which made the pieces of writing sound monotonous leading to low scores. In fact the use of this discourse marker in initial position was neither necessary nor appropriate. This finding resonates with that of He (2001) who reported that indiscriminate use of *so* had the effect of obscuring discourse coherence on account of either monotony or inappropriate use. The other finding was that most of the cases of the overuse of the DM *so* did not introduce a consequential result, but loosely linked the current sentence to the previous one. For most L2 learners, there seems to be a possible negative interference from the learners' mother tongue. It might be the case, therefore, that L1 interference is common among ESL learners.

#### **6.1.1.2 Contrastive Discourse Markers**

The participants employed several variants of contrastive DMs in all the three positions (initial, medial and final), a feature typical of ESL learners. According to Jabeen et al. (2011) native speakers generally use DMs at the beginning. In addition, unlike native speakers who use DMs in a functional way as separate units (Othman, 2010) non-native learners, as was the case with the G12 ESL learners investigated in this study, use them randomly (Schiffrin, 1987; Jackerand Ziv 1998; Aijmer, 2002; Müller, 2004). Further, native speakers for instance, know how and why these DMs should be used. For example, DMs functioning as opening information are normally employed at the beginning of the sentence by native speakers. In other words, native speakers know how to initiate the flow of discourse, hold it and end it. ESL learners in general and G12 ESL learners in particular, commit both mistakes relating to both use and usage of DMs although they use them less than is done by native speakers (Jabeen, et al., 2011).

Initial position is generally regarded as the expected slot for DMs as observed by Schourup (1999:233). The present study also revealed that DMs tend to occur more frequently in initial position. Since these items “prototypically introduce the discourse segment they mark” (Hansen, 1997:159) they have been referred to as “natural themes” Halliday (2004:83). The close relation between DMs and sentence initial position is also realised by the theory of grammaticalization. This theory suggests that “linguistic items which come to be used as markers can seemingly, in a majority of cases be shown more to the initial position” Kamesjö (2005:43).

Underlying this close association between DMs and the sentence initial position is the assumption that this position is significant at both sentential and discoursal levels. The onset of a sentence is considered “a strategically important position” because it is the point “where continuity as well as breaks in continuity can be marked” Hasselgard (2004:77). It is also the information contained in this position that carries the flow of discourse by locating and orienting the sentence within its content as well as contributing to the development of discourse.

The significance of the initial position as a text organiser is what makes it the most appropriate place in which DMs can fulfil their role in discourse. Being located at this significant point gives them wide scope over the whole sentence (propositional markers), and paragraph (non-propositional markers) thereby allowing them to influence and guide the hearer/reader in the interpretation of everything that follows. As Halliday (2004:83) states, the use of DMs enables “the speaker or writer to make explicit the way the clause relates to the surrounding discourse (textual) or project his or

her own angle on the value of what the clause is saying (interpersonal).” Additionally, Halliday explains that “it is natural to set up such expressions as the point of departure.” Thus, the tendency of DMs to occur initially then is related to their function in discourse. As Schourup (1999:233) states “Because they are used to restrict the contextual interpretation of an utterance, it makes sense to restrict context early before interpretation can run astray.” However, DMs that appear in other positions in the sentence do not have this power over the whole segment.

From the findings as presented it can be said that appropriateness in the use of DMs in both narrative and discursive pieces of composition written by G12 ESL learners under investigation is polysemic (Urgelles-Coll, 2010) which means they have multiple meanings and can be varied depending on the situation and context in which they are deployed. More general DMs which are acceptable in different relations of a particular type of DMs become the most favoured ones. Some variants thus, may have more than one applicable position, for example, the contrastive DM *however*. This variant can be placed in three positions: at the beginning of a proposition (initial) within the proposition (middle) or at the end (final) of a proposition.

It is the case, therefore, that the DMs occurring in sentence internal or final positions display differences in meaning from their counterparts that occur initially. “Different positions,” states Hansen (1997:156) “are responsible for subtle changes in meaning or function.” Occurring sentence-initiality seems to be the most common predominant case for DMs, whereas, appearing sentence medially and finally seems to be motivated by specific reasons such as emphasis. This seems to suggest that initiality is a distinctive feature of DMs from which some markers deviate in particular instances to convey some intended meaning.

The DM ‘*but*’ was particularly outstanding among the contrastive discourse markers used. It is used when preceding information contradicts the earlier proposition. Its prominence in the pieces of composition analysed appears to reflect the position observation by Blakemore (2002) and Prasert (2013) that *but* is acceptable in most contrastive relations in which other contrastive markers are not. Additionally, the DM *but* is perceived to have a simple structure viewed from syntactical structure. It is the case, therefore, that its eminence in the scripts confirms the assumption that non-native writers tend to show a characteristic of simplicity in structure (Silva, 1993).

One of the positive aspects of the findings of this study is that through the appropriate use of contrastive DMs the learners created coherence in the sense that they were able to match the purpose of the variants with the meaning that they intended to convey in their written pieces of discourse. In this regard, they were able to clearly show how the explicit sentence two (S2) message was contrastively related to the implied message of sentence one (S1).

#### **6.1.1.3 Elaborative or Collateral Discourse Markers**

Elaborative or collateral DMs were employed in G12 ESL learners' written pieces of discourse to indicate additional information. Hinkel (2004) asserts that ESL writers tend to provide insufficient amplification in their essay writing. However, the findings of this study refute the previous assumption in that in both narrative and discursive pieces of composition investigated in this study, the learners were able to develop their propositions in detail signalled by the high use of elaborative markers. The use of elaborative DMs contributes to the smooth flow of information in the sense that the DMs indicate a relation in which the message of the second sentence (2) parallels and possibly expands, enhances or refines the message of the first sentence (S1). In other words, elaborative DMs provided more information to what had been provided in prior segments thereby contributing to thematic progression and enhancing discourse coherence and comprehensibility.

The DM *and* was the most frequently used followed by the DM *also* which was employed 118 times, representing 25.4% of the total frequency of use in all the 300 compositions written by G12 ESL learners. The use of the elaborative DM *and* in the beginning (initial) of a sentence, as was the case in most of the scripts analysed, implies a low sense of formality. This style shifts the sense of formal writing into a casual (informal) one. This finding is in agreement with similar findings which state that the DM *and* characterises the L2 writing as a less formal one. Theoretically, in writing the use of some advanced elaborative DMs such as *above all*, *furthermore*, *moreover* and *similarly* should be higher after learners have been instructed on the use of these devices (Martnez, 2003; Gilguin and Paguot, 2007; and Darstjerdi and Semian, 2011) thereby reflecting a high level of proficiency. The findings did not reflect this theoretical position in the sense that the G12 ESL learners who participated in this study still favoured the DM *and* to signal additional information (see Table 7) thereby suggesting limited proficiency. Additionally, the repeated use of '*and*' and '*also*' can be attributed to L1 interference because in most Zambian languages there is only one word for adding

information. For instance, in Bemba language, ‘*na*’ can be used interchangeably to mean ‘and’ as well as ‘also.’ The learners’ failure to employ most of the elaborative DMs presented in the current study can be attributed to their lack of knowledge of use and the existence of such DMs.

#### **6.1.1.4 Causative Discourse Markers**

The causative DMs were employed by the informants of this study to provide reasons for which the content of the first segments (1) of each sentence provided a justification. In this sense, the use of causative DMs provided smooth flow of information because the DMs enabled the reader to create concrete interpretation and comprehension of discourse.

In the analysis of the data at the centre of this study, DMs are considered as signals that function as instructions to the reader to help him or her build the most adequate mental representation. The appropriate use of causative DMs reflected in the texts written by G12 ESL learners eased or facilitated understanding of the information relayed in the pieces of composition.

The DM *because* is frequently employed to show a causal relation in academic writing but according to Hinkel (2003) it associated more with spoken than it is worth written discourse. Therefore, the frequent use of the causative DM *because* by G12 ESL learners in composition writing as an academic exercise can be attributed to L1 interference. This is the case because, for instance, while there are alternative ways of expressing cause in English as presented in Table 4, there is only one word ‘*pantu*’ in the Bemba language, as is the case in many Zambian languages, which is equivalent to *because* and is employed interchangeably to cover all the three variants of the causative DMs *because*, *because of* and *for that reason* which in English have different semantic connotations. Thus, it can be concluded that the learners tend to transfer their L1 to L2 due to lack of knowledge of the semantic and stylistic use of the causative DMs. In fact, the use of the DM *because* renders the discourse less formal. The DMs *because of* and *for this/that reason* are considered to be more formal than *because* and should be employed more in academic writing to show causative relations.

#### **6.1.2 Non-Propositional Discourse Markers**

Non-propositional discourse markers are “words and phrases that writers use to sequence and structure ideas and information in paragraph-length discourse”

Hernandez, (2008:666). These markers “have the function to signal relationships between prior and coming discourse” Biber and Barbien (2007:265). Three non-propositional discourse markers exist as discourse coherence devices. These are the discourse structure markers, discourse activity markers and discourse change or relating markers. However, of the three subcategories of non-propositional discourse markers, only two were identified in the written scripts of the Grade 12 ESL learners. The two are the discourse structure makers and the discourse activity markers.

#### **6.1.2.1 Discourse Structure Markers**

Discourse structure markers are text-structuring tools that act as markers of openings or closings of discourse units or in-between transitions (Thornbury and Slade, 2006) which are employed by writers to structure or organise their texts in order to enhance coherence. This coherence in turn helps the reader to build a coherent mental representation of the text thereby sustaining its comprehension. Therefore, discourse structure markers play a significant role in textual cohesion as evidenced from the findings of the present study which indicated that learners who employed discourse structure markers appropriately in their writing produced more coherent pieces of composition.

#### **6.1.2.2 Discourse Activity Markers**

The learners under investigation employed discourse activity markers to indicate that the new proposition in a given piece of discourse represented an activity such as illustrating, exemplifying or explaining a preceding discourse. This enabled the reader to form concrete impressions of the propositions being elicited and communicated by the writers.

#### **6.1.2.3 Topic Change Markers or Topic Relating Markers**

The topic change markers or topic relating markers were not at all utilised by any of the informants in this study in their written pieces of discourse signifying that the Grade 12 ESL learners under investigation are not adequately exposed to this subcategory of non-propositional discourse markers (cf. Fraser, 1999:946-949). Nonetheless, studies by many researchers indicate that explicit instruction of learners in the utilization of this type of DMs is cardinal to enhancing discourse coherence and more so the quality of writing (Hamid and Kaveifard, 2011; Sun, 2013; Zarei, 2013; Kamali and Noori, 2015) because like any other types of DMs, they contribute to the structure and flow of information in composition writing (cf. Castro, 2009 and Feng, 2010).

Consequently, the absence of topic change markers in the participants' pieces of written discourse signals either lack of knowledge over the existence of these devices or inadequate familiarity with their use. This is the case because these DMs are not available in both the Junior and the Senior Zambian English Language Syllabuses, nor are they available in the selected textbooks that teachers and learners use in the teaching and learning of English language in the school curriculum. The analysis of the Junior English Language syllabus for Grades 8 and 9 revealed that a very narrow set of discourse markers are taught under the component of Structure. The DMs taught at junior level include; *and, but, as a result, therefore, consequently, for this reason, because* and *since*. The Senior English Language Syllabus which caters for Grades 10, 11, and 12 on the other hand, contains DMs such as *while, despite, apart from, in spite of, besides, although, in other words, and on other hand* (MOE, 2013). The implication of this finding therefore is that ESL learners in secondary schools are not adequately exposed to a wide range of DMs, more so to topic change markers. Furthermore, non-propositional DMs generally, are not reflected in the English Language Syllabuses. Moreover, the absence of topic change markers in the written pieces of discourse produced by Grade 12 ESL learners investigated in this study perhaps, implies that even some of the teachers of English in secondary schools are oblivious to the existence of such DMs and their importance in enhancing discourse cohesion and comprehensibility in composition writing.

Generally, compared with propositional DMs, non-propositional DMs were less frequently employed by Grade 12 ESL learners in their writing. The frequency of use in both subcategories is indicative of low turnout due to lack of knowledge on the use of these subcategories of discourse markers. More so, whereas all the subcategories of the propositional discourse markers were employed in the written discourses produced by Grade 12 ESL learners, only two of the three types of the non-propositional DMs were employed. In this regard, it can be concluded that although the learners employed some propositional DMs, the findings reveal that the learners under investigation are not sufficiently exposed to non-propositional DMs. Additionally, topic relating DMs were not employed by any of the participants. Failure to employ topic relating DMs which facilitate thematic progression rendered the written pieces of discourse incoherent and incomprehensible resulting in low scores.

The appropriate use of DMs by the learners facilitated the enhancement of comprehensibility of the written texts thereby rendering support to both coherence

theory and relevance theory as outlined in Chapter Two of the study. Coherence theory postulates that one of the characteristics of coherent texts is the presence of a definable set of coherence relations whose recovery or recognition is essential for comprehension and that such relations are made possible through the use of DMs (Mann and Thompson, 1986; Fraser, 1990, 1999; Sanders, Spooren and Noordman, 1993; Knott and Dale, 1994; Hovy and Maier, 1994). The relevance theory postulates that hearers (and readers) interpret information by searching for relevance (Blakemore 1987, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1992 and 1993). In this regard, the role of DMs is to guide the receiver's interpretation process through the specification of certain **relevant** properties of the context thereby facilitating appropriate processing of information for the effective interpretation of a given piece of communicative event. The role of DMs in discourse coherence is also supported by Brown (1977) who states that "While discourse markers are grammatically optional and semantically empty, they are not pragmatically optional or superfluous. They serve a variety of pragmatic functions" If such markers are omitted, the discourse is grammatically acceptable but, would be judged unnatural, awkward, impolite, unfriendly or dogmatic within the communicative context (Biton, 1996).

The coherence enhancing capacity of the correct use of DMs as evidenced from the current study also renders support to previous studies by Martinez (2004), Alghamdi (2014) whose investigation showed that correct use and frequency of discourse markers were key indicators of the quality of ESL writing, Jalilifar (2008) who observed that the participants in the study used a great deal of DMs in their written pieces of discourse and that there was a positive relationship between writing experience and appropriate use of discourse markers; Kalajahi *et. al* (2012) whose findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between the scores of the compositions and the number of DMs utilized; Daif-Allah and Albeshar (2013) who observed that there was a positive and direct relationship between test scores and the use of discourse markers and Kamalli and Noorii (2015) who observed that teaching DMs to students enhances their awareness and sensitivity of discourse and subsequently sharpens their writing skills. In view of both theoretical and literature support for the role of DMs in discourse, it is plausible to suppose that ESL learners and users who are competent in the use of the DMs of the L2 will be more successful in both oral and written ESL interaction than those who are not.

### **6.1.3 Inappropriate use of Discourse Markers**

This section of the dissertation discusses findings regarding inappropriate use of discourse markers resulting in discourse incomprehensibility. There are two major implications arising from inappropriate use of DMs. The first relates to the meaning of DMs. As observed by Fraser (1999) the meaning of DMs is procedural not conceptual (Fraser, 1999). This status of DMs probably makes their appropriate use in a second language extremely difficult (MacLean and d'Anglejan, 1988). Secondly, their misuse or non-use has an impact on both production and comprehension. In production, the learners' discourse will probably be less comprehensible due to lexico-grammatical errors or imperfections. After analysing the data inappropriate use of DMs displayed seven patterns. These are: wrong relation (WR), non-equivalent exchange (NEE), semantic incompleteness (SI), distraction (D), surface logicity (SL), overuse (O) and the use of speech-related (SR) DMs. As a result of these misuse patterns or inappropriateness of use of DMs, the learners' pieces of discourse became less cohesive and coherent.

There was substantial evidence of inappropriate use of DMs which reflected wrong relation in the scripts analysed. This is an instance where the participants tended to use some DMs interchangeably in instances where interchangeability was not allowable. This development resulted in discourse incomprehensibility. Among the seven categories of inappropriate use of discourse markers, discovered and discussed in this study, wrong relation was found to be a major problem.

Non-equivalent exchange was found to be another problematic category of inappropriate use of discourse markers in the written pieces of discourse produced by the Grade 12 ESL learners investigated. In this pattern, the use of the DMs appears appropriate at face value but deeper semantic analysis reveals lack of antecedent specificity for the DM used resulting in discourse incoherence since the function of DMs is to "signal relationships between prior and coming discourse" (Biber and Barbieri, 2007:265). Additionally, Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that DMs function as anaphoric signals of the semantic relations obtaining between a given clause and its preceding clause. They control the interpretation of the message conveyed by one discourse segment in relation to the interpretation of another by bridging a relationship between them (Fraser, 1998, 1999; cited in Wei 2011:676).

A third category of inappropriate use of DMs related to semantic incompleteness. This category, like that of non-equivalent exchange, involved the use of DMs that initially

appeared appropriate but further semantic analysis revealed lack of coherence. Semantic incompleteness involved lack of elaboration thereby making the pieces of discourse less functional. In this pattern, the learners under investigation failed to hold the flow of information to the end, resulting in the formulation of sentences which ended abruptly. The abrupt end and failure to employ elaborative DMs rendered the pieces of discourse produced incoherent.

Distraction constituted the fourth category of inappropriate use of DMs. This pattern involved the use of DMs in slots where they were not required. The pattern can be attributed to lack of familiarity with the concept of a variant of a given DM and the context in which it is used. The implication of this observation is that the study participants were not sufficiently conversant with the use and functions of DMs. However, studies show that explicit instruction of pupils on the use of discourse markers is very cardinal in augmenting the quality of writing (Hamid and Kaveifard, 2011, Zarei, 2013; Sun, 2013 and Kamali and Noori, 2015). Most of the existing research on DMs in both spoken and written discourse has emphasised the essential role of DMs in building discourse coherence (Redeker, 1990; Schiffrin, 2001; Dulgen, 2007; Hernandez, 2008) which is a requirement for all formal writing.

Surface logicity constituted another category of inappropriate use of discourse markers. Surface logicity exists where the writer attempts to impose logicity or to bridge the gap among propositions through the application of DMs, yet their use results in the production of illogical constructions. The pattern of surface logicity was found to occur due to misunderstanding of the concept of a given variant and the context in which it is used. This observation reflects lack of familiarity with the use of such DMs and, consequently, lack of proficiency.

Inappropriate use of discourse markers was also manifested through overuse of certain DMs suggesting limited repertoire of internalised DMs on the part of the Grade 12 ESL learners. Overuse of a limited set of preferred or better understood DMs causes breaks in the flow of information thereby obscuring discourse coherence. This finding resonates with those of Tinko (2004), Kalajahi *et al* (2012) and Albasher (2013) as well as with Li and Schmitt (2009) who discovered that since non-native student writers lack deeper knowledge of DMs, they overuse the limited set of those which they know well. For example, most of the learners investigated in this study used the DM *and* more than once. The other observation arising from the analysis of the data is that some learners also used only one DM repeatedly instead of a variety of them. Overuse of specific

DMs was indicative of limited exposure of the participants to the available range of DMs and the contexts in which they are used. This observation seems to suggest inadequate proficiency in the use of discourse markers by the participants even after twelve years of learning and using English as a second language. The learners under investigation failed to generate the reader's interest in reading the script on account of unclear organization, development and flow of information in their pieces of composition. Lack of variation in the use of DMs in composition writing suggests lack of proficiency and renders a piece of writing monotonous thereby putting off the reader resulting in low scores.

The overuse of DMs in the learners' pieces of written discourse did not contribute to the unity of discourse through relating and joining discourse segments in coherent ways. Therefore, they also exposed the writers' low levels of fluency and inability to effectively direct or signal the reader to the direction he/she must take to interpret and understand authentic language use. It is the case, therefore, that overuse of DMs causes the writing to be redundant and difficult to comprehend.

Another occurrence of inappropriate use of DMs related to the presence of DMs which are typically characteristic of spoken instances of discourse. When used in written discourse such DMs do not serve as either functional or organisational facilitators of discourse. In other words, such use does not show how the two propositions involved in the first sentence (S1) and the second (S2) are related. The prevalent use of speech-related discourse markers in the written pieces of discourse produced by the participants seems to suggest both first language (L1) interference and lack of knowledge about the rhetorical structures and conventions associated with written formal English. These findings confirm those of Kaite (2012) who investigated the use of spoken discourse features in learner academic writing with reference to informal and semi-formal DMs in learners' writing. DMs such as *actually, now, honestly, as you know, I think, frankly* were the most frequently employed by Grade 12 ESL learners.

This section of the dissertation has discussed the findings pertaining to inappropriate use of DMs resulting in discourse incoherence and incomprehensibility. The findings seem to suggest lack of competence in the appropriate use of use of DMs emanating from lack of familiarity with the wide range or repertoire of DMs that are available for use, which in turn suggests limited proficiency. These findings support those of previous studies by Alghamdi (2014) whose work revealed overuse of DMs at sentence-initial position and an unnecessary use of semantically similar DMs within the boundary

of a single sentence; Daif-Allah and Albeshar (2013) whose findings revealed that the students overused the additive connectors followed by the causative, the contrastive and the illustrative ones and that students' use of DMs was too limited and the ones that were most frequently used were *and*, *in addition* and *for example*; Narita, Sato and Sugiura (2004) whose study revealed overuse of *in addition*, *of course*, *moreover*, and *first*, underuse of the logical connectors such as *and* *instead*, *then* and *yet* and influence of L1 transfer on the learners' use of conjunctions remained indefinite; Lai (2008) whose results indicated that even though the groups investigated committed errors in utilising some conjunctions (*therefore*, *furthermore*, *in other words*, *besides*, *nevertheless*, *by contrast*, *on the contrary*, *because*) in their writing; Djigunovic and Vickov's (2010) whose findings revealed that the participants had relatively poor command of English resulting in the tendency to use a relatively small range of English DMs and attributed the low acquisition of English DMs to L1 interference and inadequate input; Simci (2012) who observed that the use of speech-related DMs in learner academic writing contributed to the excessively oral tone exhibited in learners' writing resulting in the attainment of low scores; Hamed (2014) who observed that the participants employed the conjunctions inappropriately and that adversative conjunctions posed the most difficulty for the learners followed by additives and causals and Chen (2015) whose findings revealed that the learners under investigation tended to initiate propositions with *in my opinion*, *I think* and *so* which are associated with spoken discourse and attributed the practice to students' lack of knowledge about rhetorical structures and conventions associated with English academic writing and as a result of L1 interference.

Based on the qualitatively generated and analysed data and in relation to the findings from literature review presented in this study, it can be concluded that the Grade 12 learners whose scripts were analysed are not sufficiently proficient in the use of the DMs. Consequently, they are unable to use DMs appropriately to facilitate discourse coherence and comprehensibility thereby attaining low scores in their written pieces of discourse.

The comment on studies by Kookhaei (2014) and Moddish (2012), whose findings draw non-conformist conclusions to both the present and previous ones on the link between use of DMs and writing quality, is that the absence or presence of statistical significance alone is not sufficient indicator of absence or presence of link between use of DMs and discourse coherence and comprehensibility. Both the present and previous studies have shown that it is not so much the quantity of discourse markers used which enhances

discourse coherence but the quality with which they are used. This is the case because it is possible for one student to use more discourse markers inappropriately thereby scoring less and another student to use fewer discourse markers correctly and score more. Therefore, the defining characteristic of the link between the use of DMs and discourse coherence is not how many DMs have been used but how those DMs have been used.

## **6.2 Implications of the Study**

The findings from the present study raise three major implications. The first is that there is inadequate teaching of DMs and how they are used. This observation explains why only a limited number of DMs were used out of so many that are available. Another implication is that there is inadequate practice on the use of even the few DMs with which the learners are familiar thereby accounting for the widespread inappropriate use of DMs observed in the analysed scripts. Thirdly, even where DMs might have been taught, the content is restricted to those listed in the syllabus, which list does not include all the available DMs. The outcome of such an approach is that learners are exposed to only a limited set of DMs which they tend to use repeatedly resulting in overuse.

## **6.3 Conclusion**

The ability to write coherently in order to comprehensively convey information remains a mandatory skill for all school leavers as they prepare for either further education or employment. The present study has yielded evidence that the attainment of such skill can be enhanced through the achievement of proficiency in the use of discourse markers thereby rendering support to both theory and literature. This observation explains the inclusion of DMs in the English Language Syllabus from Grade 8 to Grade 12. From the presentation and discussion of the results there is demonstration of use of discourse markers by all the Grade 12 ESL learners who participated in the study, recording a total of 1,829 instances of use of discourse markers from 300 scripts giving an average of six DMs per script. It is the case, therefore, that the participants are aware of the relevance of discourse markers in enhancing discourse coherence and comprehensibility. However, the use of only 44 out of the 107 available discourse markers as well as the prevalent inappropriate use of discourse markers seems to suggest that there is inadequate proficiency in the learners at Grade 12 level. Consequently, they are unable to produce sufficiently coherent and comprehensible pieces of composition resulting in low scores. In this regard, the study has provided

evidence of lack of proficiency in the use of discourse markers by the Grade 12 ESL learners who participated in the study.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

Arising from the discussion of the findings, the implications and the conclusion drawn some recommendations are hereby proposed for pedagogy and further research.

##### **6.4.1 Recommendations for pedagogy**

- (i) English Language Curriculum Designers should expand the Secondary School English Language Syllabus to incorporate all the propositional and non-propositional DMs discussed in this study.
- (ii) Secondary school teachers of English language should progressively teach all the propositional and no-propositional discourse markers from Grade 8 to Grade 12.
- (iii) Secondary school teachers of English language should progressively engage learners into regularly practising the appropriate use of all the propositional and non-propositional discourse markers from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

##### **6.4.2 Recommendations for further research**

- (i) Longitudinal studies on the development of proficiency in the use of discourse markers in English composition writing by grade level.
- (ii) The extent of inappropriate use of discourse markers arising from first language interference.
- (iii) The functional roles of DMs used in other positions other than initial.
- (iv) Proficiency in the use of discourse markers in essays written by students in higher institutions of learning.

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