



Comparison of the Use of Discourse Markers in English Political Speeches between Native and Non-native Speakers

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the use of Discourse Markers (DMs) in politicians' speeches on the USINDO YouTube Channel. DMs are used to organize, manage, and connect communication. Then politics becomes a public concern and USINDO becomes one of the signs of bilateral relations between Indonesia and America. The analysis was conducted from the speeches of four politicians, two from Indonesia as non-native speakers and two from America as native speakers, and used Fraser's 2009 theory. It was found that 670 markers were used by Native and Non-native. Namely Contrastive Discourse Markers (CDMs), Elaborative Discourse Markers (EDMs), and Inferential Discourse Markers (IDMs). The frequent markers found are EDMs such as 'and', CDMs such as 'but', and IDMs such as 'so'. Furthermore, both native and non-native speakers of English use DMs in political speeches for similar purposes, such as organizing discourse, managing transitions, clarifying points, and ensuring politeness. Then the different DMs are used more often, organically, and successfully in political speeches by native English speakers, who also have a more varied understanding of its use and do not use overlapping double markers.

Keywords: *discourse markers; political speeches; native speakers; non-native speakers.*

Introduction

Language has a significant role in the communication process. It builds a common understanding between speaker and listener. To determine what the speaker is trying to say, the listener must interpret what they are saying. Language and politics are related. It is a planned resource to achieve socio-politics. Political action is formed in a language. Language can convey the political goals and views of a politician. The correlation between language and politics arises from recognizing that language can be conceptualized as a valuable tool to attain socio-

political objectives. Every discourse a politician presents manifests their intentions and serves a distinct purpose (Van Dijk, 1997). Political activity by language is carried out through speech. A good speech has good linguistic features. One of the linguistic features that must be considered when giving a speech is the use of DMs.

Discourse is a type of language usage that encompasses all of the functional components of a communicative event (Johnstone, 2017). It implies that individuals use language in social events and circumstances like speeches, conversations, and interviews to convey ideas, opinions, and feelings. Discourse also implies that the speakers do not restrict themselves to speaking or conversing on these occasions. DMs are found in spoken and written form. This research aims to shed some light on the analysis of spoken form. A speaker's communicative intentions, including the addressee's expected and actual reactions, are continuously and situationally interpreted in spoken discourse (Cornish, 2006).

The characteristics of spoken discourse are usually produced spontaneously (Paltridge, 2011). It uses more repetition when pronouncing, and it is implicit that the information that is not in form, remains part of the overall communication intended by the speaker. One of the types of discourse analysis in spoken form is DMs. They are linguistic elements connected to the unit of sentences or utterances (Schiffrin, 1987). DMs are also described according to their role in building connectivity in discourse (Blakemore, 2006). DMs are phrases that link two discourse segments, but they don't add to their meaning (Fagih and Mousaee, 2015). The presence of DMs ensures that sentences are coherent. Discourse makes use of DMs because they give context to utterances. It means that they have coherence in their structure, context, meaning, and action during the interaction, which is in concert built by the speaker and listener.

DMs are found in many spoken discourses like speeches, movies, teacher talks, and interviews. Several previous studies have been done by scholars and experts that discuss DMs in the spoken discourse. Asik and Cephe (2025) investigated DMs in English-spoken discourse by non-native speakers in Turkish EFL settings. They found that Turkish non-native English speakers do not use DMs effectively or with sufficient diversity in their spoken discourse; therefore, their knowledge of the variety and roles of DMs should be increased. Then, Ajimer (2015) analyzed DMs in spoken corpora. She found that DMs are lexical items such '*as well*', '*I think*', '*you mean*', '*actually*', '*of course*', '*so*', and '*in fact*'. Crible (2019) identified the function of DMs in TED Talks. Arya (2020) explored DMs using Thai University students' conversations. Crible et al. (2020) investigated DMs in speech on TED Talks. She found the functions of but to contain a range of functions, including specification, concession, contrast, and addition. Turiman (2020) analyzed the use of DMs, especially '*so*' marks, in Malaysian job interviews.

The study suggests that teaching DMs in speech, specifically the usage of '*so*', should focus on pragmatic roles and functions rather than semantic meanings to abstain from incorrect or overuse of this specific language element. Then, Nookam (2010) investigated the use of DMs such as '*and*', '*but*', and '*so on*' in business

conversations. The researcher found that the lack of DMs in Thai EFL student interactions highlights the need for pedagogy to raise learner awareness of the influence these short words can have on communication quality.

Based on previous research in spoken discourse, the study of DMs can be examined further. This study analyzes political speeches. Graber (1993) discusses the concept of political discourse, asserting that political speech serves not only as a one-sided communication but also as a form of social interaction to exert influence on the nation. Moreover, it serves as a significant diplomatic instrument facilitating the negotiation of particular meanings and references. In political texts, discourse markers serve as crucial cohesive devices for effectively conveying the intended message.

Relational DMs are primarily used to indicate a two-way relationship between a host unit and its context, whereas non-relational discourse markers carry out a variety of meta-discursive tasks about punctuation and structure, interpersonal management, and other topics (Crible, 2014). DMs can be found in the verbal discourse form. First, the DMs analyzed conversations during teaching. Gloria & Eva (2017) used teacher conversation with primary and secondary school pupils (non-native speakers) as the object of discourse analysis. Then, Lin (2016) analyzed the interaction between British and Taiwanese students in the classroom. Both of them used Fung and Charter's (2007) theory. The theories include the types of DMs. They are interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive markers. It is the four basic functional categories in the analytical framework.

To identify the functions, each DM was analyzed qualitatively. The study demonstrates how spoken speech has filtered into classroom conversational settings. DMs are employed in educational settings to comprehend the lesson when assisting with learning. This proves that the realm of spoken discourse has also penetrated the conditions of conversation in learning. The research has clear pedagogical ramifications for enhancing EFL instruction and preparing students for everyday situations. The findings of markers in the two studies for non-native speakers are also the same, namely the distribution of the three most commonly used IDMs and EDMs (e.g., *'all right'*, *'so'*, *'and'*). Lin (2016) found that native speakers use more direct messages than non-native speakers.

The most common markers found in non-native speakers are interpersonal markers (e.g., *'right'*) and structural markers (e.g., *'first'*, *'second'*), while native speakers have a significantly higher usage of referential markers (e.g., *'because'*, *'or'*) and cognitive markers (e.g., *'I mean'*, *'I think'*). Another researcher also analyzed the speech of British (native speakers) and Pakistani (non-native speakers) students (Jabeen et al., 2011). The result of the analysis is that the markers usually found in speech are, *'I mean'*, *'you' 'know'*, *'I think'*, *'kind of'*, *'sort of'*, *'well'*, *'you see'*, and *'so'*. This study establishes the distinctions between native and non-native speakers and may have educational implications. The native speakers used more DMs than non-native speakers.

His findings suggest that Pakistani English is a distinct variety, and learners should not necessarily strive to achieve native-like speech. The research may also have pedagogical implications for teachers and learners, helping them understand the different functions and uses of DMs in Pakistani English. Many things influence the use of DMs, some of which are due to non-linguistic factors such as age, social class, gender, relationship between the partners, ethnicity, role, and formal or informal content. Based on many studies, the use of DMs is seen in spoken form. In addition to education and business, there are also DMs found in Politics, one of which is this study which will analyze DMs used by politicians from native and non-native speakers on the USINDO YouTube channel.

Method

The research belongs to descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research addresses research topics that examine the meaning that people or groups assign to a social or human issue, starting with presumptions and the use of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that guide the study of these issues (Creswell, 2016). The research approach provides descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words from the study's object. The final written report or presentation includes a thorough explanation and interpretation of the situation, the researcher's reflexivity, the voices of the participants, an addition to the literature, or an invitation for change (Creswell, 2013).

The research was done for several purposes to resolve the problems, they are to explain the uses, similarities, and differences of DMs by American politicians as native speakers and Indonesian politicians as non-native speakers in USINDO English political speeches. This research indicates a qualitative approach comparing non-native and native speakers in using DMs in English political speeches. To eliminate bias, the results of the investigation are supplemented with expert judgment. This study's data sources include speech transcripts. The data was processed as sentences. The transcript was important for scholars to determine which words or sentences were uttered in the speech. The researcher employed content analysis to identify the figurative language used in the movie script. Content analysis was a technique for gathering data from documents. In this study, the data come from the English political speeches by Indonesian politicians as non-native and American politicians as native speakers.

The researcher transcribed all of the videos connected to non-native and native Political English speeches. They are Sri Mulyani (Minister of Finance) and H.E. Airlangga Hartanto (Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of Indonesia). Besides that, there are also speeches from American politicians as native speakers. They are Jacob Levine (Chief Climate Officer CCO, U S International Development Finance Corporation), and Edgard Kagan, Senior Director for East Asia and Oceania, National Security Council on the USINDO YouTube channel. For analyzing the data, started with some steps:

1. Watching and transcribing the videos
 The researcher watched and transcribed four the videos from USINDO YouTube channel. Two by non-native and two by native speakers.
2. Identifying the data
 Which refers to identifying the utterances that are included in DMs based on the linguistic expression that exists in the utterances.
3. Categorizing the data
 This step divides DMs into some categories based on Fraser (2009)'s theory.
4. Calculating the data
 The researcher counted utterances that were included in DMs that existed in the English political speeches.
5. Interpreting the data
 The interpretation of the data is based on the findings associated with Fraser 2009's theory of DMs

A document was produced and used to gather the data. The research material was a speech transcript. The transcript served as an instrument for the researchers' in-depth analysis of the speech.

Table 1: Data collection table

No	Utterance	Type of DMs	Function

Table 2: The table of DMs type and function based on Fraser 2009's theory

No	Types of DMs	Utterance	Functions
1	Contrastive Discourse Markers (CDMs)	<i>'but', 'alternatively', 'although', 'contrariwise', 'contrary to expectations', 'conversely, despite (this/that)', 'even so', 'however', 'in spite of (this/that)', 'nevertheless', 'in comparison (with this that)', 'in contrast (to this/that)', 'instead (of this that)', 'nonetheless (this/that point)', 'notwithstanding', 'on the other hand', 'on the contrary', 'rather (than this/that)', 'regardless (of this/that)', 'still,</i>	CDMs, where a CDM signal a direct or indirect connection between S1 and S2

		<i>though', 'whereas', and 'yet'.</i>	
2	Elaborative Discourse Markers (EDMs)	<i>'and', 'above all', 'after all', 'also', 'for example', 'for instance', 'further(more)', 'in addition', 'alternatively', 'analogously', 'besides', 'by the same token', 'correspondingly', 'equally', 'in other words', 'in particular', 'likewise', 'more accurately', 'more importantly', 'more precisely', 'more to the point', 'moreover', 'on that basis', 'on top of it all', 'or', 'otherwise', 'rather, and, similarly'.</i>	
3	Inferential Discourse Markers (IDMs)	<i>'so, all things considered', 'as a conclusion', 'as a consequence (of this/that)', 'as a result (of this/that)', 'because (of this/that)', 'on these /those grounds', 'then', 'therefore', 'thus', 'consequently', 'for this/that reason', 'hence', 'it follows that', 'accordingly', 'in this/that/any case', and 'on this/that condition'.</i>	IDMs, where an IDM signals that S1 provides a basis for inferring S2. Indicate a logical or inferential connection between ideas, suggesting an implicit conclusion or consequence.

Results

There are some results of this research related to the research problems that have been decided in the study and exited the interpretation by adopting Fraser 2009’s theory of DMs. It is used by American Politicians as Native Speakers in USINDO English Political Speeches. The researcher will explain the classification of DMs from the data that had been analyzed to make it clear.

DMs Used by American Politicians as Native Speakers in USINDO English Political Speeches

The politicians are Edgard Kagan and Jacob Levine. The data found 175 utterances of DMs type in the speeches of American politicians on the USINDO YouTube channel. There are 125 elaborative markers, 33 contrastive markers, and 17 inferential markers. It can be seen in the table below:

Table 3: Compilation of DMs used by Native Speakers

No	Speakers	EDMs	CDMs	IDMs
1	Edgard Kagan	75	23	8
2	Jacob Levine	50	10	9
Σ		125	33	17
Percent		71%	19%	10%

No	Type	DMs	Freq	Σ
1	EDMs	And	65	75
2		I mean	3	
3		More importantly	1	
4		Also	6	
5	CDMs	But	21	23
6		Than...	2	
7	IDMs	Because (of)	3	8
8		Then	1	
9		So	3	
10		As a diplomat	1	
Σ				106

Table 3 shows a compilation of DMs used by Native speakers. This shows that all types of DMs are found in speeches delivered by American politicians. In the following, the researcher will show the DMs used by Edgard Kagan:

Table 4: The DMs used by Edgard Kagan

Table 4 shows that Kagan used 106 markers on his speech. He often used EDMs especially marker 'and' to elaborate S1 and S2. He uses all kinds of DMs. That means he tries to deliver a speech with a structure that can string together each sentence well. Below, some DMs type used by Kagan:

1. **Edgard Kagan:** *"I think is truly impressive and I really want to commend you for your work it's very humbling. And at the same time a great honor to be here to really recognize and to honor minister Sri Mulyani."*

It shows that "and" is the type of EDMs. The function is to mark the relational aspect between S1 and S2.

2. **Edgard Kagan:** *"I think in both advancing global interests but also, I mean, I believe very strongly that your work minister has been very good for the United States."*

It shows that 'but' is the type of CDMs. The function is to mark the contrast aspect between S1 and S2.

3. **Edgard Kagan:** *"...We felt that this is investing in a partnership that is of tremendous importance to us. So, I just wanted to very quickly just note a couple of things."*

It shows that 'so' is the type of IDMs. The function is to mark the conclusion

aspect between S1 and S2.

In the following, the researcher will show the DMs used by Jacob Levine:

Table 5: The DMs used by Jacob Levine

Table 5 shows that Jacob used 69 markers in his speech. He often used EDMs, especially the marker 'and' to elaborate S1 and S2. He uses all kinds of DMs. That means he tries to deliver a speech with a structure that can string together each

No	Type	DMs	Freq	Σ
1	EDMs	And	43	50
2		Also	6	
3		According to	1	
4	CDMs	But	6	10
5		Yet	1	
6		Although	1	
7		But seemingly	1	
8		Rather than	1	
9	IDMs	Because (of)	3	9
10		So	6	

sentence well. Below, are some markers of each type used by Jacob:

1. **Jacob Levine:** *"Thank you so much Ambassador Osius and thank you uh minister Ambassador Blake David."*

It shows that 'and' as the type of EDMs. The function is to mark the relational aspect between S1 and S2.

2. **Jacob Levine:** *"I feel extra naked. Um... but this is really terrific. And I just want to give a shout-out to USINDO."*

It shows that 'but' is the type of CDMs. The function is to mark the contrast aspect between S1 and S2.

3. **Jacob Levine:** *"...We can't be effective in Southeast Asia if we don't have a strong relationship with this with a prosperous successful Indonesia. So, I want to thank Minister Sri Mulyani for all that she has done for the relationship"*

It shows that 'so' is the type of IDMs. The function is to mark the conclusion aspect between S1 and S2.

DMs Used by Indonesian politicians as non-native speakers in USINDO English Political Speeches

In this research, three types of DMs are used by Non-native speakers. The researcher will explain the classification of discourse markers from the data that had been analyzed to make it clear. The researcher found 423 data of DMs type in the speeches of Indonesian politicians on the USINDO YouTube channel. There are 236 elaborative markers, 44 contrastive markers, and 215 inferential markers. It

can be seen in the table below:

Table 6: Compilation of DMs used by Non-native Speakers

No	Speakers	EDMs	CDMs	IDMs
1	Sri Mulyani	182	40	201
2	H.E Airlangga	54	4	14
Freq		236	44	215
Percent		48%	8%	44%

Table 6 shows a compilation of DMs used by Non-native speakers. This shows that all types of DMs are found in speeches delivered by Indonesian politicians as non-native speakers. It shows that the use of markers is appropriate so that the message can be conveyed by the listener. Below, are some markers of each type used by Sri Mulyani:

Table 7: DMs used by Sri Mulyani

Table 7 shows that Sri Mulyani used 423 markers in his speech. He often used IDMs especially the marker 'so' where a signal that S1 provides a basis for inferring S2. He uses all kinds of DMs. Below, are some markers of each type used by Sri Mulyani:

1. **Sri Mulyani:** *"It's really good to be back here again, uh... after almost 18 months. And this is my first time traveling abroad during this pandemic. And I do hope that I'm going to be able to continue traveling".*

It shows that 'and' as the type of EDMs. The function is to mark the relational aspect between S1 and S2.

Type	DMs	Freq	Total
EDMs	And	147	182
	I think	14	
	Also	21	
CDMs	But also	2	40
	But	36	
	Although	1	
	Even though	1	
IDMs	And then	16	201
	First, Second, third	14	
	So	127	
	Because (of)	44	

2. **Sri Mulyani:** *"I can explain you until overnight, but still functioning meaning that we can make decision we deliver and that's exactly what the minister of education and health is doing to reform on a human capital aspect..."*

It shows that 'but' is the type of CDMs. The function is to mark the contrast aspect between S1 and S2.

3. **Sri Mulyani:** *"And the position as the finance minister is not easy because all*

the goals the target, the dream they are all need money. So how you are going to combine between achieving the goals without creating sustainability problem”.

It shows that ‘so’ is the type of IDMs. The function is to mark the conclusion aspect between S1 and S2.

In the following, the researcher will show the DMs used by Airlangga Hartanto:

Table 8: DMs used by Airlangga Hartanto

Table 8 shows a compilation of DMs used by Non-native speakers. This shows that all types of DMs are found in speeches delivered by Indonesian politicians as non-native speakers.

- 1. Airlangga Hartanto:** *“Ibu Mari Pangestu managing directors of World Bank and all ambassador Rosan. And my wife is here Yanti, the most important woman in this room.”*

It shows that ‘and’ is the type of EDMs. The function is to mark the relational aspect between S1 and S2.

- 2. Airlangga Hartanto:** *“In fact, we have not only written to the average pre-COVID GDP level of around five percent. But, since Q2 2022, our economy continued to gain momentum during the recent quarters of 2022.”*

It shows that ‘but’ is the type of CDMs. The function is to mark the contrast aspect between S1 and S2.

- 3. Airlangga Hartanto:** *“Ibu Mari uh uh I was in the parliament when Ibu Mari became minister so I think with today’s role of Ibu Mari to oversee some of the emerging countries as well. So we would like that.”*

It shows that ‘so’ is the type of IDMs. The function is to mark the conclusion aspect between S1 and S2.

No	Type	DMs	Freq	Σ
1	EDMs	And	44	54
2		Equally	1	
3		Also	9	
4	CDMs	But	3	4
5		Even though	1	
6	IDMs	So	21	14
7		Because	2	
8		Then	1	

Differences between Non-native and Native Speakers in Using DMs

The use of DMs in political speeches in the USINDO Channel is used to carry out effective communication. DMs help organize ideas, convey relationships between sentences, and maintain the coherence of one sentence with another. The researchers compared the results of both and found that the use of several things that stand out, namely related to the frequency of use, the selection of markers, the

function of each statement, and the overall effectiveness of the marker. Native English speakers tend to use discourse markers more naturally and often, they use them without conscious thought. Their use of DM can be subtle because it is a natural competence of native speakers. They use DM to manage the flow of conversation, mark transitions, express agreement or disagreement, and connect ideas smoothly.

Meanwhile, non-native speakers might rely more on particular markers that they are more accustomed to using, or they might employ DMs less frequently. They might overuse some discourse markers and struggle to employ a wide variety of them. Then researcher found that both formal and informal registers contribute to the diverse and extensive repertoire of discourse markers used by native speakers. Depending on the circumstance, they can switch between markers with ease. They employ these markers to signify a topic shift, provide information, introduce contrast, and show cause-and-effect links, among other rhetorical situations. Discourse markers may be preferred by non-native speakers, particularly those that are direct translations from their original tongues or that they have come across more frequently in educational sources.

For example, they may use "so" or "and" excessively to link concepts. Non-native speakers may find it difficult to understand the subtleties of political rhetorical markers in further complex circumstances. In conclusion, discourse markers are used more often, organically, and successfully in political speeches by native English speakers, who also have a more varied and sophisticated grasp of how to utilize them in various rhetorical contexts. However, non-native speakers could encounter difficulties like a smaller selection of discourse markers, excessive usage of certain markers, and trouble understanding the nuances of function and context in political speech. Non-native speakers can, however, improve their use of discourse markers and become more proficient in English political communication with more exposure and practice.

Similarities between Non-native and Native Speakers in Using DMs

Despite the differences between native and non-native speakers of English, there are several similarities in the use of DMs in political speeches. Both groups use DMs to serve similar functions in organizing and structuring discourse, although the frequency, variety, and fluency of their use may differ. Both native and non-native speakers use discourse markers to organize their speech and structure their ideas. DMs help in managing the flow of the speech, signaling different stages of the argument or presentation. Both native and non-native speakers use contrastive discourse markers to signal differences or contrasts between ideas. These markers help to highlight competing viewpoints or alternative arguments, which is a common feature of political discourse.

Both groups use discourse markers to clarify or explain points, especially when speaking to a broad or diverse audience. This is especially important in political speeches, where complex ideas must be communicated clearly. Both native and non-native speakers use discourse markers to maintain politeness and rapport with their audience, which is particularly important in political communication to establish trust and goodwill. Then, both native and non-native speakers use discourse markers to transition from one idea or topic to another. In summary, both native and non-native speakers of English use discourse markers in political speeches for similar purposes, such as organizing discourse, managing transitions, clarifying points, and ensuring politeness. While the frequency and nuance of DMs might differ based on the speaker's level of proficiency, both groups rely on these markers to structure their communication and engage with the audience effectively.

Discussion

This study is similar to the previous one by Muller (2005) which discusses that two factors influence DMs in their use and frequency. They are linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Linguistics includes native versus non-native speakers, acquisition of English in formal and informal contexts, usage of English in formal and informal contexts, aboard versus aboard, British versus American influence, and native speaker contact. Meanwhile, non-linguistic factors are gender, age, social class, ethnicity, relationship between the partners, role, and formal versus informal content for recording. If we look at the data and compare it with the current study, it is indeed proven that the discourse used by native and non-native speakers is influenced by linguistic factors which show that the topics discussed are delivered in a semi-formal style.

In addition to the linguistic factors, the results are almost similar, the difference is seen in the percentage of both because the background of non-native speakers is influenced by social class and roles where they are politicians who have previously received education where native speakers live. They are familiar with the discourse markers used by native speakers, although there are many double discourse markers used by non-native speakers. However, it was found that gender did not have much influence on this because the topics discussed were global, namely regarding the conditions of each country during COVID-19 and the hope for bilateral cooperation between the two. However, what is striking is that Sri Mulyani has a longer speech duration than other speakers. When compared to Muller (2005), when the discussion of a topic leads to a gender habit, the markers used are also in line with it.

Conclusion

In summary, both native and non-native speakers use DMs in political speeches for similar purposes, such as organizing discourse, managing transitions, clarifying points, and ensuring politeness. While the frequency and nuance of DMs might differ based on the speaker's level of proficiency, both groups rely on these markers to structure their communication and engage with the audience effectively. Then the differences DMs are used more often, organically, and successfully in political speeches by native English speakers, who also have a more varied and sophisticated grasp of how to utilize them in various rhetorical contexts.

However, non-native speakers could encounter difficulties like a smaller selection of discourse markers, excessive usage of certain markers, and trouble understanding the nuances of function and context in political speech. Non-native speakers can, however, improve their use of discourse markers and become more proficient in English political communication with more exposure and practice. DMs, both formal and informal, are a prevalent component of native speaker language. The ability to use discourse markers indicates a higher level of fluency and natural language composition and interpretation.

Discourse analysis is also important for English learners. DMs will teach students how native English speakers interact and communicate in their daily lives. In addition to textual-grammatical English, they should start thinking about teaching contextual-functional English. DMs have a place in English teaching. It is extremely advised and critical to pay great attention to teachers' instructions and to implement and use them automatically, precisely, and effectively. Furthermore, any overemphasis on these DMs should be avoided as a diversion from the topic material and should be utilized in concert with other ways to facilitate the learning process and achieve the most efficient and effective language learning results.

Discourse markers are used more often, organically, and successfully in political speeches by native English speakers, who also have a more varied and sophisticated grasp of how to utilize them in various rhetorical contexts. However, non-native speakers could encounter difficulties like a smaller selection of discourse markers, excessive usage of certain markers, and trouble understanding the nuances of function and context in political speech. Non-native speakers can, however, improve their use of discourse markers and become more proficient in English political communication with more exposure and practice.

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