# Discourse Markers in Academic and Non-academic Writing of Iranian EFL Learners

Nasim Ghanbari
English Department, Persian Gulf University, Bushehr, Iran

Tahereh Dehghani
Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch of Bushehr, Iran

Mohammad Reza Shamsaddini
English Department, Persian Gulf University, Bushehr, Iran

*Abstract*—The present study investigated the type of discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners. It tried to find out the most frequent types and tokens of discourse markers and to determine a significant difference between discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing. The 60 participants of this study were selected from Safire Lian language institute. Thirty were chosen to write academic writing and 30 to write non-academic writing. Fraser's taxonomy was used as the main taxonomy but to fulfill the aims of the study, some other taxonomy was used such as Cowan (2008) and Schiffrine (1981). The Chi-Square statistical test was used to analyze data in order to find out the differences in the use of discourse markers between academic and non-academic writing. Different hierarchies of discourse markers were observed in the present study. Elaborative and inferential were the most frequent types in academic genre while in non-academic genre elaborative was only the most frequent type. Moreover, the quantitative analysis showed that there was a significant difference in the use of discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing. Furthermore, as the result revealed discourse markers were required more in academic than non-academic writing.

*Index Terms*—discourse markers, academic writing, non-academic writing, elaborative, inferential

## I. INTRODUCTION

Although people have been writing for thousand years, writing is more significant these days and while millions of people cannot write and read; most of communication takes place through writing rather than speaking (Coulmas, 2003). As Chow (2007) said in Yunus and Haris (2014) writing is a necessary device in learning that it can help learners better in different ways such as comprehending the opinions and concepts. Actually writing is not only the process of putting words together, but the production of writing is also important. The purpose and place (its audience and genre) determine the process and product of writing (Nunan, 1991). As Longer and Applebee (1981) cited in Geisler (2013) each kind of writing has specific purposes and particular kinds of learning. In fact, aims and frameworkscan produce different types of writing. Academic and non-academic are those kinds of writing that each one has its own style of learning. As Aroudet and Barrett (1984) cited in Hyland (2002) in academic writing, the writer tries to be objective in expressing their attitudes. First person pronouns avoid in academic writing. Writers aren't allowed to show their personal opinions. According to Hyland (2004) academic writing is a kind of means to discuss knowledge claims. Academic writing should be the most concrete social text; it should consider as collective social practices rather than concerning linguistic features as regularities of academic writing. The most goals of academic writing will be persuasive; to persuade an evaluation in a review, to accept a knowledge claim in a research paper and to acknowledge a schema in a text book. On the other hand, non-academic writing is a kind of individual text in which writers think, feel or believe something. It doesn't include literature, personal essays, articles, writing in popular magazine and newspapers.

Learners need to be familiar with different components of writing such as grammar, punctuation, spelling etc. to be able to write correct sentences. Awareness of discourse markers can help them a lot to write effectively. Discourse markers have a crucial role in written language. Conjunctions, adverbial phrases and prepositional phrases that link two sentences are called discourse markers (Fraser, 1999). As Schiffrin (2001) mentioned discourse markers try to make cohesion and coherence in a given text by connecting different thoughts.

Although discourse markers have been investigated a lot in recent years, some aspects of them have been unclear. Researchers pay attention much to discourse markers and writing of language, but they ignore roles of them in academic and non-academic writing. Several researchers have studied the use of discourse markers in academic writing, but none of them has paid attention to the difference of them with non-academic writing. English teachers in Iran usually ignore to teach their learners how to use discourse markers correctly in their writing. Discourse markers are one of the difficult

areas in writing of Iranian EFL learners. As Martize cited in Abdullah, et al., (2012) Iranian students have difficulty to organize a coherent text in English because they do not know how to use discourse markers. Iranian as foreign language learners has ignored discourse markers in their writing, so their texts do not have any coherence. Thus, they have low proficiency in their writing quality.

This research bases on difficulties of Iranian learners in using discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing. Learners need to be familiar with discourse markers and how to use them in different writing styles such as academic and non-academic writing. Hence, the purpose of the current study is to find the difference between discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners. It tries to investigate the most common sorts and tokens of discourse markers in both academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners. In addition, it aims to find the difference between using them in both styles of writing. This study will be beneficial for both teachers and learners. Teachers can be aware of the role of discourse markers in learners' writing in order to teach them effectively in EFL English classroom and how to improve the knowledge of their learners about significant role of discourse markers in their writing skill. It is supposed to help Iranian EFL learners in their writing skill to know how to use discourse markers in their academic and non-academic writing. Therefore, if the hypothesis of the study is confirmed, it will enhance the writing skill of Iranian EFL learners as well as teachers to inform the learners of any difference between discourse markers in different types of writing.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been done about discourse markers in learner's writing and different aspects of discourse markers have been studied in the last several years. The present study tried to classify them into different groups. In fact, some studies investigated the impact of discourse markers in writing quality of the learners. Some investigated the similarities and differences of discourse markers in writing of native and non-native speakers. The other researchers studied discourse markers in different types of writing….. The current study reviewed different aspects of discourse markers in learner's writing in several researches.

Martinz (2004) worked on the impact of discourse markers in compositions of Spanish undergraduate. The learners studied in advanced level. Students used a variety of discourse markers and some types used more than the others. As the result of the study showed elaborative were the most frequency used then contrastive was used as the second group. A positive relationship was found between the use of discourse markers and writing quality of the learners. It also concluded that the number of discourse markers can affect the writing quality of the learners.

On the other hand, some researchers found that discourse markers do not have any effect on the writing quality of the learners. Therefore, they believed that there was not any relationship between them. Dastjerdi and Samian (2006) studied the use of cohesive devices in argumentative essays of Iranian graduate non-English majors. The 40 papers which were written by 40 learners presented that learners had sufficient knowledge of discourse markers and employed them in their writing. Lexical devices were the most frequent types of used cohesive devices, followed by reference devices and conjunction devices. There was no positive correlation between learner's total number of discourse markers and writing quality of the learners.

In spite of the previous groups of researchers that worked on the impact of discourse markers in writing, some researchers tried to study the role of discourse markers in different languages specially native and non-native speakers' writing. Ying selected three groups of university students which include: native English speaker, non-native Chinese students (CNNS) and non-native Japanese students (JNNS). He worked on the similarities and differences of discourse markers such as because, so, etc. According to the result, all three groups used discourse markers in their writing but the study investigated the differences in the use of discourse markers among three the groups as well. In the use of different types of discourse markers an obvious difference was found between three groups of learners. The big gap observed in the number of used discourse markers as CNNS used 65, JNNS 40 while native speakers used 86. Therefore, native speakers had capacity to use discourse markers more than the other groups.

Prommas (2011) studied the use of discourse connectors in writing of Thai EFL undergraduates and native English speakers. The study tried to research the similarities and differences of discourse connectors in type, functional and syntactic distribution. Moreover, it tried to find the problems of Thai learners in the use of discourse connectors. The 24 learners were selected randomly. The 44 compositions were gathered from native and non-native speakers. Findings revealed that discourse connectors were used by non-native speakers more than native speakers.

Some of the researchers have worked on discourse markers in different types of writing. Rahimi (2011) studied the frequency and type of discourse markers in argumentative and expository writing of Iranian undergraduate EFL learners. Based on the result elaborative markers were the most frequent discourse markers while conclusive discourse markers were the least used markers in both argumentative and expository writing. Discourse markers were utilized in argumentative compositions more than expository.On the other hand, Alghamdi (2014) selected two other types of writing: narrative and argumentative. 15 students were native speakers while 15 were non-native Arabic speakers. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the use of discourse markers in both types of writings. In this study, elaborative markers were the most frequent type in those types of writing. In addition, non-native speakers used discourse markers more in their writing than native speakers.

Romas (2010) worked on descriptive and argumentative genres. Students at the college of Liberal Art were chosen to write argumentative papers while students at the college of engineering were selected to write descriptive papers. Hyland and Tse's taxonomy of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse and Halliday and Hasan's cohesion framework were applied for this study. Students from college of engineering used more addition and connective devices than the other types of discourse markers in their description writing, while students from the college of Art employed more addition, contrast, and connective and sequence devices in their argumentative writing. Therefore, ESL students used discourse markers based on the type of writing.

The current study provided an overview of many studies on discourse markers in writing. Most of the researchers worked on the effect and the role of discourse markers in native and non-native but just a few attended to different genres and types of writing. Therefore, this part requires more studies and attentions. Moreover, most of the studies worked on the academic writing while the present study tries to compare both academic and non-academic writing. This study will examine these two genres and find differences in both academic and non-academic writings of Iranian EFL learners. Awareness of the academic and non-academic genre can also help learners to improve their writing quality and become a professionalized writer. In addition, Jalilifar (2008) worked on discourse markers in writing of Iranian EFL learners but he did not focus on genres while the current study considers genres of writing in Iranian EFL learners as well.

## III. CURRENT STUDY

The current study aimed to analyze discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners. According to what has been said so far, the following questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the most frequent types and tokens of discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners?

2. Is there a significant difference between discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners?

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

Participants in this study were 60 male (24) and female (36) learners. A total of 60 male and female participants were selected from Safire Lian English language institute in Bushehr. Participants were studying English at advanced level. The reason for the selection of these participants was to pass several levels in English institute; therefore, they were able to write about their attitude and express themselves. Their ages ranged between 20 and 38. Their native language was Persian. None of the participants had an opportunity to speak English outside the classroom. Sixty learners with advanced level of proficiency from 72, according to OPT, were selected to write non-academic writing and academic writing. Thus, each group was forced to write different genres.

### B. Instrumentation

The following instruments were used to fulfill the aims of the present study:

1. An Oxford placement Test (OPT) was selected consisting of listening and grammar to determine the homogeneity of the participants. OPT as a universally valid language test was used in this study. Participants were supposed to answer listening questions in 10 minutes and grammar questions in 50 minutes. The scoring of the compositions was between 142 to 150.

2. Academic writing: Thirty participants wrote one academic essay based on IELTS test. Academic papers were supposed to be the same as IELTS writing.

3. Non-academic writing: Thirty participants were supposed to write one text about their personal interest in non-academic writing.

4. Fraser's taxonomy of discourse markers (1999): According to Fraser's taxonomy, discourse markers contained several groups including contrastive markers, elaborative markers and inferential markers,…. Cowan (2008) and Schiffrine (1981) was also added for those discourse markers that ignored by Fraser's taxonomy.

### C. Procedure

First, in order to have 60 homogeneous participants, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was held. Then, according to OPT test 60 learners were selected for this study from Safire Lian institute; 30 participants were selected to write academic text and 30 participants were selected to write non-academic text for the current study.

The next step, participants were supposed to write one academic and one non-academic texts. The academic writing should follow the style of IELTS exam. Advanced participants were expected to produce a written argument on a given topic and to organize the text clearly. They wrote 250 words in 40 minutes. They wrote their essays in response to a point of view, argument or problem; essays must be in a formal style. In non-academic writing, the advanced participants at Safire-Lian institute wrote one text about their personal interests. The topic of the compositions was taken from IELTS exam and for advanced learners from their textbook. Participants were expected to write 250 words

in non-academic genre. In this type of writing, the format and style were not concerned. In fact, both groups wrote one text but the nature and the kind of their writing were different. The time which participants would have to write was 40 minutes. None of the students were aware of the research and specifically crucial role of discourse markers in their writing. Finally, 60 papers were gathered for the data analysis.

As the last step, two experienced raters evaluated the writings of the participants. The teachers investigated discourse markers and its types based on Fraser's taxonomies in academic and non-academic writings. Then, discourse markers in academic and non-academic writings of the participants were compared. The teachers distinguished and counted each type of used discourse markers in each composition. The raters analyzed the discourse markers in learner's writing to determine the differences in both genres of writing.

### D. Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data obtained in this study, the following statistical procedures were used:

Analysis NO.1: was analysis of the OPT test based on performance of the students. It was a descriptive analysis in order to have homogenous participants for this study.

Analysis NO.2: two experienced raters analyzed the texts based on Fraser's taxonomies of discourse markers. It evaluated discourse markers that were used in academic and non-academic writings of participants. Moreover, the professional teachers were selected to check the texts to estimate the consistency of the raters in identifying the discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners.

Analysis NO.3: The data was analyzed statistically. In order to determine the difference between academic and non-academic writingin the use of discourse markers, the SPSS software was applied. The qualitative analysis was used to determine the most common types and tokens of discourse markers based on Fraser's taxonomy.

The Chi-square statistical test was used to determine the quantitative aspect of the study in which the differences between discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing were investigated.

Therefore, the first research question was analyzed qualitatively and the second one was explained quantitatively.

## V. RESULTS

For the current study the Fraser's taxonomy of discourse markers was used. Fraser's was the main taxonomy in this study. In order to achieve the aims of this study, some other taxonomy were used such as Cowan (2008) and Schiffrine (1981). The table 4.1 shows discourse markers' taxonomy and their definitions by Fraser and the other researchers. Therefore, a new model was presented for academic and non-academic writing.

TABLE 5.1.
TAXONOMY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS

| | |
|---|---|
| a=Contrastive markers: | Show contrast between two sentences.<br>Such as: but, however, |
| b=Elaborative Markers: | Are used to demonstrate similarity between sentences.<br>Such as: and, moreover, in addition,….. |
| c=Inferential Markers: | Refers to conclusion which comes from the preceding sentence.<br>Such as: so, therefore,…… |
| d=Conclusive Markers: | Shows a conclusion to what has been mentioned before.<br>Such as: in sum, in conclusion, to sum up,…. |
| e=Reason Markers: | Provide reasons for the content of preceding sentence.<br>Such as: because, since,….. |
| f=Exemplifier Markers: | Provides the example for the content of preceding sentence.<br>Such as: for example, for instance,…. |
| h=Ordering markers: | Ordering the main points that speakers or writers want to make and indicating a sequence of step.<br>Such as: first, firstly, second,…. |
| g=Topic relating markers: | Relate the topic of second sentence to the first sentence.<br>Such as: back to my original point, by the way, with regards to,…. |
| i=Attitudinal markers: | Expressing the writer's attitude regarding the truth of preceding content and introducing content in support of cognitive stance.<br>Such as: in fact, indeed,.... |
| j=Transition markers: | Function as cues to direct the listener or reader's attention.<br>I think, in my opinion,…. |

### A. Results of Research Question one

The current study consisted of two research questions. The first research question that was propounded to investigate was:

1. What are the most frequent types and tokens of discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners?

This question was investigated in writings of 60 Iranian EFL learners in both academic and non-academic types of writing. According to the question, the following results were obtained.

The Figure 1 shows the frequency of discourse markers in percentage in academic writing:
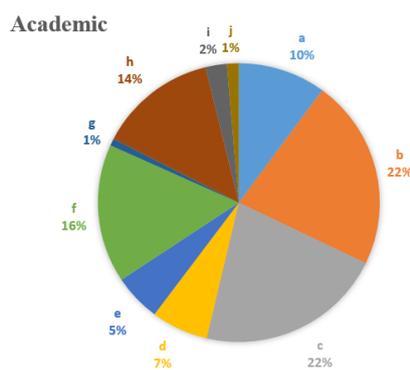
Figure5.1: Frequency of discourse markers in academic writing

As it is observed, the most frequent types of discourse markers in academic writing are elaborative and inferential markers that included 22%. Next, 16% of the whole markers referred to exemplifier markers, 14% to ordering markers, 10% to contrastive, 7% to conclusive markers, 5% to reason markers, 2% to attitudinal markers and 1% to topic relating markers and transition markers.

The Figure 2 presents the frequency of discourse markers in percentage in non-academic writing:
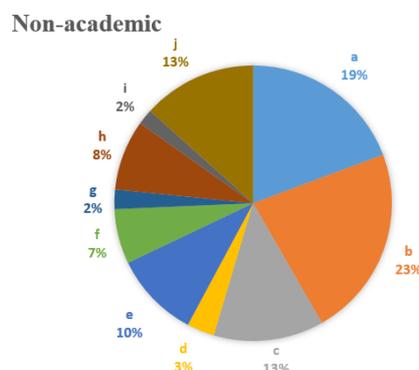


Figure5.2: Frequency of discourse markers in Non-academic writing

As the Figure 12 shows, elaborative marker that involved 23% is the most frequent type of discourse markers in non-academic writing. 19% of the whole discourse markers include contrastive, 13% to inferential markers and transition markers, 10% to reason markers, 8% to ordering markers, 7% to exemplifier markers, 3% to conclusive, 2% to attitudinal and topic relating markers.

*B. Results of Research Question Two*

The second research question that was brought up to investigate was:

2. Is there a significant difference between discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners?

In order to investigate the second research question, 60 papers of academic and non-academic were examined by Iranian EFL learners. Based on this investigation, the following results were obtained:

TABLE 5.2.
RESULTS OF CHI-SQUARE FOR DISCOURSE MARKERS' TAXONOMY

| Group | Academic | | Non-academic | | Chi-Square | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean ±sd | $\sum F^1$ | Mean ±sd | $\sum F$ | | |
| A | 1.233 ±0.858 | 37 | 1.4 ±1.003 | 42 | 0.316456 | 0.574 |
| B | 2.700 ±2.037 | 81 | 1.633 ±1.402 | 49 | 7.87692 | 0.005** |
| C | 2.633 ±1.189 | 79 | 0.933 ±0.980 | 28 | 24.3084 | 0.001** |
| D | 0.800 ±0.407 | 24 | 0.233 ±0.430 | 7 | 9.32258 | 0.002** |
| E | 0.667 ±0.994 | 20 | 0.733 ±0.691 | 22 | 0.0952381 | 0.758ns |
| F | 2.067 ±1.081 | 59 | 0.467 ±0.629 | 14 | 27.7397 | 0.001** |
| G | 0.168 ±0.379 | 3 | 0.167 ±0.461 | 5 | 0.5 | 0.480ns |
| H | 1.733 ±0.583 | 50 | 0.600 ±0.855 | 18 | 15.0588 | 0.001** |
| I | 0.300 ±0.596 | 9 | 0.133 ±0.434 | 4 | 1.92308 | 0.166ns |
| J | 0.167 ±0.379 | 5 | 0.967 ±0.964 | 29 | 16.941 | 0.001** |
| Total | 12.2 | 367 | 7.26 | 218 | 37.9504 | 0.001** |

1-∑F: Sum of frequency, The Measurement of Chi-square was based on sum of frequency of each marker, ** very significant (p<0.01), * significant (p<0.05), ns: non-significant.

Based on the table 2, discourse markers were used more in academic writing than non-academic writing. As we can see, on average, in non-academic writing the frequency was 218 that showed the mean of 7.26 while in academic writing the mean increases to 12.2. Therefore, there was a significant difference between academic and non-academic writing.

## VI. DISCUSSION

### A. Research Question One

The first question which the most frequent types and tokens of discourse markers were investigated was descriptive. Based on the results, both elaborative and inferential discourse markers were the most frequent types in academic writing but in non-academic writing just elaborative was the most frequent one. In academic, the second frequent discourse markers was exemplifier, then ordering, contrastive, conclusive, reason, attitudinal, topic relating and transition markers, respectively. In spite of academic writing, in non-academic genre the second group was contrastive, next inferential and transition with the same frequency, reason, ordering, exemplifier, conclusive, attitudinal and topic relating markers, respectively. The first finding of the data coexisted with Rahimi (2011), Martinez (2004) and Modhish (2012) that discovered only elaborative discourse markers (specially and) are the most frequently used discourse markers while in this study, both elaborative and inferential used with the same frequency in academic writing; in fact in the most previous studies, elaborative was the only one that used more than the other. Moreover, in this study both inferential and elaborative discourse markers were the most frequently used in academic while in non-academic only elaborative was the most common and frequent used type. The nature and style of writing can entail this finding. Furthermore, significant difference between the hierarchy of used discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing was discovered. Based on Rahimi (2011) Contrastive, inferential, reason, exemplifier, and conclusive markers, respectively, was the least frequently used connectors in both genres. But the current study found out the different hierarchy in each genre. The context of the study might be the reason of the difference in hierarchy of used discourse markers in these studies. Meanwhile, the current study was done in institute while that study was done in university of Shiraz.Proficiency level can be the other reason to show why learners with different proficiency level obtained different results as well.

### B. Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant difference between discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing of Iranian EFL learners.

The goal of this hypothesis was to determine the difference in the use of discourse markers in academic and non-academic genres of writing. In fact, different types of discourse markers in different types of writing were investigated in this study. Indeed, different genres of writing imposed significant difference in the use of discourse markers.

According to the result of the study, participants in both academic and non-academic writing used discourse markers but in the number of used discourse markers, a significant difference was discovered. Participants of academic genre who wrote an academic text performed better than those in non-academic writing who wrote non-academic genre. Better performance of the academic participants in using discourse markers maybe because of the nature and kind of tasks that expected from them. Academic genre can be considered as a good kind to involve learners deeper in the way they write their text and hence leading to different amounts of used discourse markers. For instance, ordering and inferential discourse markers were used more frequently in academic than non-academic because of the nature of the academic and the way that expected the learners to write in academic genre.

The result of the current study was different from Alghamdi (2014) that found that there was no significant difference in the use of discourse markers in narrative and argumentative writing. Elaborative, contrastive and reason markers were used more than the other categories of discourse markers in both types and both groups of native and non-native speakers. But in the current study there was a significant difference between genres of writing and it can be due to different topics. The dissimilar genres and topics cause different results and findings because different topic and genre make the learners to write in a different way, thus different results can be expected.

Ramos (2010) discovered that students from college of engineering applied more addition and contrast connective devices than the other types of discourse markers in their descriptive writing, while students from the college of Art employed more addition, contrast, connective and sequence devices in their argumentative writing. However, in this study in academic genre the exemplifier markers was the most frequent type after elaborative and inferential; different findings can be referred to context because the current study was done in EFL setting while Ramos' study was done in ESL setting. In addition, the difference in proficiency level can cause the difference, as the students at the college of Engineering wrote descriptive papers and students at the college of Liberal Art wrote argumentative papers but in the present study the English learners in language institute wrote the texts. Thus, different proficiency level might lead to different findings. Language background was possibly the other reason of the difference between the findings of the studies; studies with participants of different first language could come up with different results. Since language background can be the reason of transfer.

To sum up, the finding of the study indicated some intriguing results. In this study, a significant difference between academic and non-academic in the use of discourse markers was found. Academic learners used discourse markers more than non-academic; because participants in academic knew the style of academic and the importance of coherence and cohesion in their text, while non-academic text was a kind of personal text without any special style. Therefore, the nature of genres of writing could be the reason for the significant difference between them. Therefore, based on the result, the null hypothesis of the study which indicated no significant difference between academic and non-academic was rejected.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Lots of language learning researchers worked on discourse markers. Discourse markers are those elements which join words in a clause, sentence or paragraph in order to indicate the connections like ordering, addition and contrast Cowan (2008). Discourse markers are linguistic devices which are used to bind sentences and expressions together. These linguistic devices are words or phrases that are used to join information and concept and show the relationship in conversion and in writing. Discourse markers join the present sentence or utterance with the next one (Redeker, 1991). Gerard (2010) said in Sharndama (2013) discourse markers function as the "glue" which hangs parts of the text together. The words such as 'however', 'although' and 'nevertheless' are belonged to 'linking words', 'linking phrases' or 'sentence connectors' which the relationship between sentences and paragraphs doesn't exist without them. Some studies have done on the types of discourse markers and most of the researchers discovered that elaborative markers are the most frequent and used type in writing of the learners.

The first finding of the study was referred to the new model of discourse markers in both academic and non-academic writing which they were based on Fraser (1999), Cowan (2008) and Schiffrine (1981) taxonomy. As the finding of the current study showed, different writing genres imposed different kinds of discourse markers and different amounts of used discourse markers. According to the findings, participants of both genres did not have the same tendency about using discourse markers. As the findings of the first question showed, different hierarchies of discourse markers were observed in this study, as in academic elaborative and inferential with the same amount of used were both the most frequent in this type of writing. The second frequent discourse markers was exemplifier, then ordering, contrastive, conclusive, reason, attitudinal, topic relating and transition markers, respectively. In contrast to academic writing, in non-academic genre elaborative discourse markers were the only most frequent type in this group. Then, the second group was contrastive, next inferential and transition with the same frequency, reason, ordering, exemplifier, conclusive, attitudinal and topic relating markers, respectively. As the results displayed, for example inferential discourse marker in academic genre was the most frequent type but in non-academic genre this marker was not used as much in academic genre. The variety of results may show the difference in structure, nature and purpose of each kind of writing because academic genre is a kind of formal writing; therefore, the way of writing is crucial. Due to these aspects of academic writing, inferential, exemplifier and ordering were used more. Compared to academic writing, non-academic writing is a kind of personal text in which learners can write without limitation or any special format. Based on this aspect, learners in non-academic writing used transition, contrastive more than the other types while in academic transition markers were the least used discourse markers. Since transition markers state personal opinion and attitude, thus it can be more common in non-academic than academic writing. Types and frequency of used discourse markers changed in each types of writing.

Another result of the study showed the superiority of discourse markers in academic writing over non-academic writing. Additionally, academic learners used more discourse markers. Therefore, there was a significant difference between academic and non-academic writing in the use of discourse markers based on the second research question. The mean for the use of discourse markers in academic was 12.2 and in non-academic it was 7.26. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants in academic genre were more willing to use discourse markers than non-academic learners. Moreover, the mean in the use of each type of discourse markers was not the same; for example, the significance in the use of inferential markers in these genres was 0.001 that presented a significant various between them. Indeed, in the use of elaborative, inferential, conclusive, exemplifier, ordering and transition discourse markers a significant difference was found, while in the use of discourse markers such as contrastive, reason, topic relating and attitudinal no significant differences were found. In conclusion, the most frequent type and ordering were not the same in each genre. Based on the text different types and amount of discourse markers are required. A similar pattern was not observed in those types of writing. Moreover, a significant different between academic and non-academic writing was discovered. In fact, discourse markers were required more in the genre of academic than non-academic.

Regarding the findings of the present study, several theoretical and pedagogical implications can be mentioned. This study found a variety of types and frequency of discourse markers in academic and non-academic writing. Furthermore, the difference in using discourse markers was noticed in different types of writing. The findings of this study can help discourse markers and its types to be known as one of the important components of academic and non-academic writing. Discovering those varieties of discourse markers used by Iranian EFL learners can be a huge step to improve writing skill. The results can help the theory of discourse markers to be distinguished its type in academic and non-academic writing. Furthermore, variety of types and numbers in academic and non-academic writing will be more clarified. Therefore, regarding the importance of discourse markers and its types in writing, they should not be ignored in

academic and non-academic genres. In conclusion, the theory of discourse markers and its difference in two types of writing can be beneficial for the writing skill. Different writing genres affect using discourse markers in number, amount and types in each genres of writing. Because of the importance of discourse markers in writing, teachers should pay more attention to the genres which involve their students. The result can help teachers to be aware of academic and non-academic genre and teach discourse markers to their students in an efficient way and inform them about different structures of these genres and their purposes, so they become professionalized in their field. In addition, finding can help teachers to teach different genres differently and effectively. Teachers should clarify the difference between different types of writing and how they are used rightly. Moreover, it might be useful for material developers to design materials which are based on realistic illustration of the academic genre.

The present study also had some limitations such as participant, time, age of the learners and so on.. So doing such a study had its limitation that was impossible to conduct on them.

Considering the crucial role of writing and discourse markers, future research should be done. According to this study, the participants were Iranian EFL learners that they were studying English at advanced level of language proficiency. Further studies can be worked on the other nationalities and levels of language proficiency. This study did not consider age and gender. The future studies can investigate the relationship between age and gender of the learners and discourse markers in writing. In addition, the willingness and tendency of the learners and their relationship with each genres of writing were not important in this study, while in the other studies it can be the question and problem of the study. The tendency of the learners might be one of the issues in finding different results in each type. Another area of the research that can be investigated will be a comparative study of discourse markers in different types of writing between native and non-native speakers. Moreover, comparing discourse markers in first language and second language in their academic and non-academic might be the other issue of the future studies. It will be an interesting issue to investigate the difference between Persian and English in using discourse markers in academic and non-academic genre and it will be a beneficial research in English teaching to help Iranian EFL learners.

## REFERENCES

[1]  Alghamdi, E. A. (2014). Discourse Markers in ESL Personal Narrative and Argumentative Papers: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 4(4), 294-305.
[2]  Arnaudet, M. L., & Barrett, M. E. (1984). Approaches to academic reading and writing. United Kingdom: Prentice-Hall.
[3]  Chow, T. V. F. (2007). The effects of the process-genre approach to writing instruction on the expository essays of ESL students in a Malaysian secondary school. PhD diss., Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.
[4]  Cowan, R. (2008). The Teacher's Grammar of English with Answers: A Course Book and Reference Guide. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[5]  Coulmas, F. (2003). Writing system: An ntroduction to their linguistic analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[6]  Dastjerdi, H. V., & Samian, S. H. (2011). Quality of Iranian EFL learners' argumentative essays: Cohesive devices in focus. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 65-76.
[7]  Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers?. *Journal of pragmatics,* 31(7), 931-952.
[8]  Geisler, C. (2013). Academic literacy and the nature of expertise: Reading, writing, and knowing in academic philosophy. New York: Routledge.
[9]  Gerard, S. (2000) Discourse Markers. Center for Applied Linguistics. Learning English Online at Warwick.
[10] Hyland, K. (2002). Authority and invisibility: Authorial identity in academic writing. *Journal of pragmatics*, 34(8), 1091-1112.
[11] Hyland, K. (2004). Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing. The United States: University of Michigan Press.
[12] Jalilifar, A. (2008). Discourse markers in composition writings: The case of Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. *English Language Teaching*, 1 (2), P114-122.
[13] Kalajahi, S., Abdullah, A. N. B., & Baki, R. (2012). Constructing an Organized and Coherent Text: How Discourse Markers Are Viewed by Iranian Post-Graduate Students?. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2 (9). Page 196-202.
[14] Langer, J. A., & Applebee, A. N. (1986). Reading and writing instruction: Toward a theory of teaching and learning. *Review of research in education,* 171-194.
[15] Mart ñez, A. C. L. (2004). Discourse markers in the expository writing of Spanish university students. *Ib érica,* 8, 63-80.
[16] Modhish, A. S. (2012). Use of Discourse Markers in the Composition Writings of Arab EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 5(5), p56-61.
[17] Nunan, D. (1991). Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers (Vol. 128). United Kingdom: Prentice hall.
[18] Prommas, P., & Sinwongsuwat, K. (2011). A comparative study of discourse connectors used in argumentative compositions produced by Thai EFL learners and English-native speakers. In The 3rd International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, Prince of Songkla University.
[19] Rahimi, M. (2011). Discourse markers in argumentative and expository writing of Iranian EFL learners. *World Journal of English Language*, 1(2), p68-78.
[20] Redeker, G. (1991). Linguistic markers of discourse structure. *Linguistics*, 29(6), 1139-1172.
[21] Schiffrin, D. (1981). Discourse markers (No. 5). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[22] Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D., & Hamilton, H. E. (Eds.). (2001). The handbook of discourse analysis. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
[23] Sharndama, E. C. (2013). An analysis of discourse markers in academic report writing: pedagogical implications. *International of Journal of Academic research and reflection,* 3(1), p15-24.

[24] Tan-de Ramos, J. (2010). A Comparative Study of the Discourse Marker Types in the Body Section of the. *TESOL Journal,* 2, 62-73.

[25] Yunus, M. M., & Haris, S. N. F. (2014). The Use of Discourse Markers among Form Four SLL Students in Essay Writing. *International Education Studies*, 7(2), p54-63.

**Nasim Ghanbari** holds a phD in applied Linguistics. She is an assistant professor at English Department of Persian Gulf University in Bushehr, Iran. Her areas of interest include language assessment, academic writing and writing assessment. Currently, she teaches courses in language testing& assessment, essay writing and research methodology.


**Tahereh Dehghani** holds an M.A. in TEFL. She has been working as a teacher since 2012. The current paper was written based on her thesis. Her thesis was defended in September, 2015 in Islamic Azad University. Her main interests are writing assessment and teaching English as a Foreign/ Second Language.


**Mohammad Reza Shamsaddini** holds a phD in Applied Linguistics. He is an assistant professor at the Department of English in Persian Gulf University, Bushehr, Iran. His areas of interests are teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Discourse Analysis, Syllabus Designed and English for specific Purposes. He has published many articles in international journals.