

## Using English Discourse Markers by Saudi EFL Learners: A Descriptive Approach

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**Abstract :** Background: The language of EFL learners is of special interests to linguists. Little research has been tackled on issues concerning English Discourse Markers (EDMs) among Saudi EFL learners. Aims: Employing a corpus-based descriptive analysis, the current study attempts at detecting EDMs in the talk of Saudi EFL learners, their frequency, use, usage, etc., in comparison to other EFL learners as well as native speakers. Methods: Two hundreds Saudi EFL learners were randomly selected from 20 public and private schools (ten students from each school) across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Subjects were individually recorded while they were studying English in class. Recordings were then linguistically and statistically analyzed by the researchers. Conclusion: Results illustrate that EDMs “and”, “but” and “also” are the most frequent EDMs in the talk of Saudi EFL learners. These devices are randomly used by Saudi EFL learners who mix their use (appropriateness) with usage (correctedness) due to the influence of their L1 (Arabic). In compare to other EFL learners (native and non-native), Saudi EFL learners use less EDMs. These results confirmed the claims that EFL learners use EDMs less than native speakers. This paper, although preliminary in nature, can help arrive a better understanding of using EDMs by Saudi EFL learners. Further, it can also assist in getting appropriate insights into the way how these EDMs are used in Arab Gulf countries. The researchers decided to conduct an in-depth study into the use of EDMs in the oral work of Saudi EFL learners.

**Keywords :** English discourse markers, Saudi EFL learners, use, usage, frequency, native speakers

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