

# The Use of Language Features in English Department Students' Conversations

**Ratna Padmi Trihartanti**

Bandung State Polytecnic, Bandung, Indonesia

ratna.padmi@polban.ac.id

**Abstract:** Language is a tool to exchange our ideas, and its role grows more significant that makes our communication better and more interesting, so that communication has higher value to analyse. To make our communication more compelling, and lively, we can use language features to be 'played', and they might be 'installed' without being realized by us in the room of communication. The use of language features is important, so students have to know how to apply them in their spoken, and for that reason, the research entitled: The use of Language Features in English department Students' Conversations was conducted. The aims of the research are: The first is to identify language features used in conversation of English students. The second is, to analyse the function of each language feature mostly used by them, and this research used qualitative method. After all the data have been analysed, it could be concluded that there are 4 language features used mostly in students' utterances, namely: deixis (128 times) adjacency pairs (80 times), then discourse markers (78 times) and hedges (72 times). Those four language features are used mostly because they can create natural utterance such as: expressing hesitation, softening face threatening act (FTAs), showing surprise and others. However, some students still made mistake of using them. From the result, it could be concluded also that students need to be taught Introduction to Linguistics to be applied more in Speaking, Writing and Reading.

**Keywords:** communication, deixis, hedges, conversation, polytechnic

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of activities used to express and to share our ideas. In this research, researcher analyzes verbal communication, or spoken form, or commonly we call it utterance (researcher uses two terms in this research that are: utterance and conversation). Utterance, especially the spontaneous one is used because it can be done everywhere and mostly it doesn't need complicated process except there must be two sides to interact. It is spontaneous and it needs skills to build it. Since it is spontaneous, there are some skills to be embellished to avoid neither boredom nor interest. However, how to make it more interesting and lively needs knowledge. One of the knowledge we need is to mix what language features used in utterance, so that speaker and hearer enjoy what they are talking about and knowing where they are going to. Some language features might be used by participant without understanding their meaning, and some perhaps have been understood. Anyway having better understanding in the use of language features will increase the interest of utterance itself. Mostly language features have the same function, that is, to make spontaneous utterance as natural and lively as possible. To make utterance more colorful; therefore, the function of them must be 'packaged' well to understand them succinctly. As it has been stated by Wardhaugh (1998) that language is used to communicate with others to share their feeling, wants and need. One of theories used is language features that function to make communication clear and interest; thus, all participants are able to catch not only the ideas but also they can explore their ability vividly. For that reason the research entitled: *The Use of Language Features in English Department Students' Conversations* was conducted out, and the aims are: the first is to analyze the most language features used in students' utterances. The second is to analyze the function of each language

feature found mostly in students' utterances. Students' spontaneous utterances were taken as the object of the research because there are a lot of language features found more than non-spontaneous ones.

Some researchers have done the study/research on language features and one of them is Jakobsson (2010). She made research entitled: *A study of female language features in same-sex conversation*. In her research she classified women into 6 groups and four of them use language features mostly found in women communication such as: hedges, tags-question, minimal response, and question. Another research who made the research on language features is Pan (2011). Her research entitled: *On the Features of Female language in English* claims that language as a means of verbal communication and no two speakers have the same styles in expressing their ideas. Language as a form of social behavior entertains gender as well, and she finds out that the major features of female language are from these perspectives: phonology, grammar, conversational topics and styles. The factors that form language features in female conversation are not only physiology and psychology's influence, but also the influence of society and cultures. From the previous research, it can be seen that both of them talk about the use of language features in gender, especially used by women. In this present research, it discusses about the use of language features in spontaneous utterances of students both male and female: therefore, it doesn't discuss the specific gender's utterances.

There is the main theory as the umbrella of this research, that is: language features, and the other theories are: adjacency pairs, deixis, hedges, and discourse markers that are used as kind of language features.

### ***Language Features***

Utterance or sometimes it is known as conversation is a form of communication in which participants tend to be cooperative better. Levinson states 'Conversation may be taken to be that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside institutional settings like religions, services, law courts, class rooms, and the like' (Levinson.1986, p.283). There are a lot of language features could be applied in spontaneous utterance to make it more lively, such as: back-channel, cohesive devices, figurative language, discourse markers, hedges and others. Each researcher will use different language features in their papers based on what types of communication they analyze and from which linguistics point of view they discussed. In this research, the researcher uses language features, among others:

### ***Adjacency Pairs***

If participants realize how to control their role in communication at any time, it is called a turn. Furthermore (Yule, 2009, p. 72) adds that 'in any situation where control is not fixed in advance, anyone can attempt to get control and this is called turn taking'. Another linguist defines a turn 'as an utterance bounded by significant pause or by utterance of other participants. In other words, a turn is the speech of one person continues until another takes the floor' (Ochs, 2009, p. 63) From those theories above, we can see that turn taking is a self-control possessed by participants to give a chance to another part to be hearer or speaker. Most of us who participate in communication though we do not know exactly what adjacency pairs are, we mostly create the situation in order to be polite and not threaten each other. Besides, we use them to 'make up' our conversation to avoid boredom.

There are a lot of adjacency pairs and according to (Levinson, 1983, p.336) there are nine, but in this research not all of them discussed. The researcher only discusses those used mostly as follows: Offer- Accept/Refuse- sequence, Question-Answer, Request-Acceptance/Rejection, Blame- Denial/ Admission and Asses-Agree/Disagree. One of adjacency pairs found is Request-Acceptance as we can see from one of the students' utterance:

S: 'Can you take me to the place that you often tell me? It seems very interesting.'  
A: 'Well, if you want, but you know something? It is very far and we can go there only on foot.'

From the utterance above, it can be concluded that S as the first speaker requests A, the second speaker, to take her to the place, where A always tells her, and A agrees to do that.

Another example of Request-Rejection is:

AP: 'Can we meet again tomorrow? I need your help'  
RS: 'Tomorrow? Hmm...I am afraid I have to accompany my mom. Sorry...'

We can see that RS as the second speaker rejects AP's request as she has another thing to do.

The next example of adjacency pairs is the pattern of Blame-Denial/Admission:

TH: '...your carelessness makes our team did not win the competition'  
DK: 'Did I do that? No, way. This is a team work if did not win, we should evaluate our team not because of me!'

The adjacency pair used above happens when TH blames DK, but the latter doesn't want to be blamed by telling her that another action should be taken to solve the problem and not to blame him.

The next type of adjacency pair found in students' utterances is Asses-Agree/Disagree. This type shows an Assessment- Agreement / Disagreement done by different speakers.

RT: 'We must finish to write this journal before next week.'  
GY: 'I agree with you, we must collect the data then.'

From the utterance above, we can see that RT as the first speaker gives assessment to finish their writing journal and the second speaker, GY agrees with it.

Meanwhile the contradictive of Assessment- Agreement is Assessment- Disagreement, and the example could be seen here:

JI: 'It is very a wonderful moment. I couldn't believe she is able to do that'  
OP: 'What? Come on, she did not do that by herself. This is a team work!'

OP as the second speaker in the utterance does not agree with JI's assessment; therefore, she expresses what she disagrees.

From those adjacency pairs found in students' conversations, we know that they are used successively by different speakers or participant to respond each question appropriately in order to make the flow of utterance runs well based on their needs or what speakers and hearers are talking about. If participants of conversation know how to use adjacency pairs correctly, they do

know not only when turn taking should be started, but they also know how to create good, clear communication so that the result of conversation will make every participant relieve. To sum up, the flow of utterance will occur well if turn taking is developed well.

### **Deixis**

Talking about deixis and deictic, we must know the difference between them very clearly. It is defined that 'Deixis is an important field studied in pragmatics, semantics and linguistics, whereas words or phrases that require contextual information to convey meaning are deictic (Levinson, 1983, p.54). Linguistics subfield of pragmatic and semantics relate closely to meaning. Pragmatic studies how the context forms the meaning and it also describes that utterances' interpretation doesn't only rely on linguistic knowledge, but it also relies on the knowledge about the utterances' context, social status of participants, distance, power, familiarity and others. However, Levinson states 'that deixis belongs to the area of pragmatics because it directly involves the relationship between the structure of language and the context in which it is used' (Levinson, 1983. p.55). In Pragmatics deictic is divided into some categories, namely: temporal deixis, personal deixis, spatial deixis, social deixis, and pragmatics deixis. In this research, types of deixis found are: personal deixis (I, you,we), spatial deixis (this, that, there, here), and temporal deixis (now, today, yesterday).

Below is an example of deixis found in one of utterances belongs to students:

R: *'I don't know what are talking about? Did you accuse me of stealing your money?'*

G: *'No, I did not mean that! Yesterday she lost her money here, and I don't know who took it!'*

If we read the utterance above, we will be confused to understand who those participants involve in it. We do not know to whom 'I,' 'you,' and 'here' refer to without reading completely.

There are three types of deixis that could be analyzed from the utterance above. The first is personal deixis for identifying 'I,' 'you,' 'me,' 'she' and other pronouns. Meanwhile spatial deixis could be analyzed by relating it to 'that,' 'here'. The last type of deixis is temporal that refers to adverbial time as 'yesterday'. From the utterance above, we can conclude that deixis has function to explain the subject, object or demonstrative pronouns such as 'that,' and also adverbial place' here'. Those types of deixis can be used as anaphoric, and cataphoric to explain to which each word refers to. Meanwhile temporal deixis that relates to adverbial time can explain when the events in utterance happen. Some might occur in present, future and some might happen in the past. The use of deixis can make us understand better the flow of utterance since it gives us clear information of each word and its relation to others.

### **Hedges**

Many linguists conducted out a lot of research on hedges, and one of them who made a big leap in hedges is Zadeh (2001). In his article 'Fuzzy Sets', he terms the meaning of fuzziness and connects it with language and begins to learn fuzziness of language with mathematical methods. Zadeh's work followed by American linguist, Lakoff by publishing his article: 'Hedges: A Study in Meaning Criteria and the Logic of Fuzzy Concepts', he states 'a group of things fuzzier or less are hedges (Lakoff, 1973. p.471), and his statement on hedges becomes one of well-known definitions among others. Another linguist who works on hedges is He. He (1988) categorized hedges into approximator and shield. Then, approximator is divided into adaptor and rounder. Those will be explained one by one below:

Adaptor consists of words/phrases such as: sort of, kind of, somewhat, about and others. Those have function to modify language that has similarity to truth value of proposition. For example:

'She is *somewhat* helpful'.  
'He is a *kind of* person who likes gossiping.'

Both statements above use adaptors as hedges such as: 'somewhat' and 'kind of' to show modification of language that have similarity to truth value of proposition.

Another use of adaptor as hedges can be found in the next example:

AT: 'When we went there it was a *little bit* hot.'  
VR: 'It *might be*, because it was in summer.'

'A little' is hedges that show the degree of truth of the original proposition.

Rounder is used to make 'a room' to adjust language. Those words/phrases belong to rounder are: approximately, especially, about, around and others. For example:

'It is *about* 35km from here.'  
'The price is *around* 200.000 Rupiahs.'

Both statements use rounder as the exact number or amount that cannot be measured exactly, and they are used to 'give a space' in adjusting language. Another category of hedges is shields. Shield is fuzzy words or phrases that can put on speaker's commitment degree to the true proposition. Indeed, they will not change the original meaning of utterance; however, they only make tone more indirect in order to make them more polite. According to (He, 1988). Shield is divided into two. The first is plausible shield and the second is attribute shield. Modal verbs such as: 'could', 'might', 'may' and others which function is to soften utterances belong to plausible. One example of plausible shields is:

'*Could you lend me your book?*'

'Could' in the question above is indirect and it shows politeness. It will be direct if we change the question into different form that is: 'Lend me your book'

Another plausible shield is the use of hesitation words such as: 'I think', 'as far as I know', 'I am concerned', 'I suppose,' and many more. Those words show hesitation from speakers who actually are not responsible for the truth of his utterance. For example:

HG: 'Why do they want to join all the subjects?'  
PR: 'I *suppose* they want to shorten their study here.'

PR as the second speaker starts her utterance using 'I suppose' as she hesitates about her own idea.

One example of rounder and plausible hedges used in students' utterance can be seen below:

DA: 'Do you know how many students come to that seminar?'  
FS: 'Hmm...I *think* it was *about* 40 students.'

The use of 'I think' in the conversation above is a hedge that expresses hesitation that also belongs to plausible shields. Meanwhile 'about' is rounder that shows certain range of variation.

The last hedge of shield is attribute. Attribute expresses the third person viewpoint such as: 'according to, 'it is said', 'someone says' and any others. The function of this hedge is to express the third person view point used by speaker in his /her utterance. Below is an example of attribute:

WR: 'Someone says that we cannot enter that room. 'It is forbidden for us'  
 IY: 'Really? Who said that?'

The conversation above shows the person who forbids speakers to enter the room comes from the third person viewpoint. Another function of attribute is to save the third person who makes the statement as we do not know who someone is. From all hedges found in students' conversations, it could be concluded that they are used to mitigate the imposition of utterance, for example the use of indirect words. Then hedges could be used to show hesitation of participant in expressing their ideas, and hedges could be also applied to modify language that has similarity to truth value of proposition by using 'somewhat', 'a kind of' and others. Another use of hedges is to adjust language by using some words such as: of 'around', 'about', 'approximately' and many more.

The table below explains us about hedges clearly.

**Table 1.** The Classification of Hedges and Their Words

Approximator	Adaptor		sort of, kind of (kinda), somewhat, really, almost, quite, entirely, a little bit, little, some, to some extent, more or less, preferably, better to be...
	Rounder		Approximately, essentially, about, something between...and..., over, up to, or else, or up...to..., one of the..., around, more than, minimum, maximum, no more than, less than...
Shield		Modal verb	would, could, might, may, would like, had better, should
	Plausible	Hesitation word	I think, ~~~, probably, as far as I can tell, as far as I'm concerned, seem, wonder, I am (was)
	Attribute	The third person viewpoint	according to ~someone, presumably, someone says that..., as is well known, the possibility would be..., the probability is..., generally estimated

(Taken from He, 1988)

### Discourse Markers

Discourse marker which was called particle in the past, is a word or phrase that is relatively syntax-independent and it doesn't change meaning of context and somehow it is only 'accessories' without having any meaning. But then, it functions grows rapidly. Discourse markers have been analyzed and discussed widely by (Levinson, 1983; Schrifffin, 1987; Aijmer; 2002, Lenk; 1998) and others. Furthermore, (Hulker,1991, p. 78-79) stated that there are four basic features that characterize discourse markers: (1) they do not affect the truth conditions of an utterance; (2) they do not add anything to the propositional content of an utterance; (3) they are related to the speech function rather than a referential, denotative, or cognitive function, and (4) they have an emotive, expressive function rather than a referential, denotative, or cognitive

function. From the four basic of discourse markers above, it can be concluded that the use of discourse markers enable discourse to be explored widely, since they have different functions. There are a lot of discourse markers used by students in their conversations; however, three of them, namely: 'oh', 'well', and 'I think' as a plausible hedge are found mostly in students' conversations; thus they are discussed in this research.

There are a lot of linguists who have carried out research on 'oh' as discourse markers. However, (Aijmer, 2002) is considered to be the greatest contributor to the development of discourse markers by conducting some research on 'ohs' that later on, it has a lot of functions, among others:

- **'Oh' as pure surprise**

The function of 'oh' in pure surprise shows surprise mixed with sympathy. The following dialogue shows the use of pure surprise:

A> + (-laughs) + yes God

B> *Oh it's the guests who say ah well can we help you with the washing-up now and we say \*my God no\**

C> *\*^{\Oh} these\*\* t\errible\*' people#\*\**

D> *\*\*\* we^we don't \*\* :r\eally' have# +^ those.*

C> *+^ [=m]#*

(Aijmer, 2002, cited in Trihartanti, Dianita, 2014, p.24)

From the dialogue above, speaker B said that she doesn't like guests who want to help with the washing-up, followed by C's sympathetic by saying 'oh these terrible people.' (Trihartanti, Dianita, 2014). Another example of 'oh' as pure surprise happens if the speaker reacts by surprise to something extralinguistic, and the example is as below:

A> I don't think I've ^\oh# There ^\is milk#

(Aijmer, 2002, p.112)

The example above explains that speaker A has just realized that there is milk for the coffee.

### **'Oh' as arriving at a realization**

The use of 'oh' as arriving at a realization happens if speaker doesn't remember what to say, whereas hearer knows what the speaker wants to say. After knowing that the hearer mentions something correctly, then the speaker will use 'oh' which functions as arriving at a realization. We can see from the example below:

TE: *'If I am not mistaken, he is reading a new novel. It is written ...by a new writer..hm...hmm...'*

JH: *'Oh, Dita Sumarto!'*

TE: *'Aah...yes, she is, Dita Sumarto'*

From the conversation above, it can be seen that the first speaker JH hasn't finished his utterance since he forgets the name of the writer, but the hearer or second speaker TE knows what should be answered, then he mentions it without waiting for the first speaker to finish his speech.

- **'Oh' in clarification sequences**

'Oh' makes important tasks in clarification sequences as has been mentioned by Schifffrin (1987). It occurs when the request for clarification or correction comes from the hearer. If it takes place, it is customary for the speaker to signal the change of state from 'misinformed' into informed by using 'oh'. The application of 'oh' in clarification sequences can be seen below:

A> ^ did you 'also' scotch that : other st\ory#  
which is^ something 'like-^was he ^wasn't he  
re'fused the :ch\air in/Oxford#  
a> who  
A> ^SK/eat#  
^ wasn't he re\*'fused\*  
a> \*that's Meak\*  
A> oh M\eak#  
^y\es#  
and ^he said!d\amn you 'sir#  
^d\amn 'you#  
a> \*yes this is this is\* Meak to Seddon and this\*\* is true\*\*  
A> \*\*\*^oh#\*\*  
^ that "is !tr\ue' is it#  
^y\es#  
(Aijmer, 1996, cited in Trihartanti, Dianita, 2014, p. 24-25)

We can see the first speaker (A) mentions a name, but then the second speaker (b) clarifies that the name has been mentioned by the first speaker is not correct.

Furthermore, Aijmer states that 'oh' has different types of politeness functions for inviting, thanking, apologizing, and showing appreciation.  
For example:

A: 'Will you come tomorrow?'  
B: '**Oh**, I am sorry'. 'I have promised to help my sister'

The conversation above shows the use of 'oh' has similar function as mitigator to avoid face threatening act (FTA), though B, has used negative politeness, *I am sorry* that has the same meaning that is, to avoid FTA. We can compare with the conversation below in which there is no 'oh.'

A: 'Can you help me?'  
B: 'I am sorry. I really must do something else'.

For the second conversation, we can see the hearer avoids FTA by using negative politeness strategy, apologizing, but the first conversation is considered to be more polite than the second one. The first conversation is considered to be more polite because it uses the discourse marker 'oh' that has function to mitigate the utterance, so it minimizes the imposition of utterance in order to avoid the FTA.

Another discourse marker is 'well', and the theory used is from Jucker (1997). He develops the use of 'well' as discourse marker, and after conducting series of research, he concludes that 'well' as discourse marker has different four functions, namely: 'well' as frame marker, 'well' as face-threat mitigator, and 'well' as a pause filler to bridge interactional silence, then 'well' as a qualifier.



- ***'Well' as a frame marker***

This kind of 'well' as discourse marker has function to introduce a new topic in the middle of conversation or it prefaces direct reported speech. Below is an example of 'well' as a frame marker.

HY: *'... I don't know but perhaps it will be difficult for you to explain the problem in the next meeting'*

KL: *'I have tried to find out the cause but... well...can I have the stake holder list for the next launching?'*

The use of 'well' above is as a frame marker that is to introduce the new topic to the first speaker, HY. Firstly, KL as the second speaker responds to HY's question; then, she introduces a new topic.

- ***'Well' as a face-threat mitigator***

Another example taken from student' conversation is the use of discourse marker 'well' functions as a face –threat mitigator:

IR: *'...I think it is better for you to hire someone to clean your house.'*

JD: *'Well...I know better when I should clean my house, in fact I can do it by myself.'*

The use of 'well' in the conversation above is to mitigate the imposition of utterances from both speaker and hearer. It is not easy for IR as the first speaker to advise JD as the second speaker or hearer because the situation is not good for both. IR knows that JD is a very busy student so that she can't be able to clean her house alone while her house is very dirty. On the other hand, JD feels it is only her who is able to clean her house after she lives separately from her parents. Actually both speaker and hearer are afraid of conducting face threatening acts (FTAs); therefore, the first speaker (IR) uses 'I think' to avoid FTA, on the other hand the second speaker (JD) uses 'well' to mitigate the effect of her utterance as she never wants to hire someone to clean her house, or actually, she does not want to take IR's advice. If the situation above happens, it is called face-threats or face threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

- ***'Well' as a pause filler***

Another function of 'well' is as a pause filler to bridge interactional silence. In this use, it marks a speaker's claim to the floor (Jucker, 1997). We can see an example below:

LP: *'Do you think we can finish this assignment tonight?'*

MG: *'...Well,' we have done it almost all day, and we are tired and sleepy'*

LP: *'Well' there we are...'*

The conversation above shows that 'well' is used as a pause filler to bridge interactional silence. If we see LP's utterances, we can see that every utterance of LP's shows hesitation from the beginning of conversation till the end of it. LP is not sure what to utter; moreover, she tries hard to find the right answer, still LP wants to keep the floor, and she does use 'well' to fill the empty space.

- ***‘Well’ as a qualifier***

Lakoff is a Linguist who deals with the discourse marker ‘well’ in the context of questions and answers. He notes ‘that it is used in cases in which respondents know that they are not providing directly the information the questioner asked for, or in other words in cases in which they sense ‘some sort of insufficiency’ in their replies (Lakoff, 1972, p.458-463). The replies are not sufficient because speakers leave it up to the questioners to add in some of the details, or because the respondents are going to give some additional information themselves (Trihartanti, Dianita, 2014) For example:

LP: ‘*Do you think we can finish this assignment tonight?*’

MG: ‘*...Well, ’... We have done it almost all day, and we are tired and sleepy.*’

The last discourse marker found mostly is ‘I think’. ‘I think’ is one of hesitation words belongs to plausible hedge that shows speaker’s hesitation.

Below is discourse marker that shows hesitation used by students.

GT: ‘*Do you know who is the girl standing over there?*’

YR: ‘*Hmm... I think, she is Anissa...oh I do not know her*’

‘I think’ is discourse marker shows hesitation of YR as he is not sure whether the name of the girl is Anissa or not.

‘I think’ also functions as negative politeness that belongs to theory of Politeness from Brown& Levinson (1987). In politeness theory, ‘I think’ is one of quality hedges expresses that the speaker is not responsible fully for the truth of his utterance, which is the same as his doubtfulness. ‘I think’ whether it is used as discourse marker or as negative politeness strategy, both have the same function, that is, to show speaker’s hesitation. The use of ‘hmm’ as discourse marker shows also the speaker’s hesitation; moreover it is added by ‘I think’ that make speaker’s hesitation stronger.

## **METHOD**

This research uses qualitative method since it doesn’t relate to any numerical numbers, and the result of analysis is in descriptive form. The data was taken from 2 classes that consist of 60 students. Each class has 30 students and they had to work in pairs. There were 30 conversations produced by them. The first steps was, the students were asked to make spontaneous utterances with free themes to create various language features. Those students were given 10 minutes to prepare their utterances, and after that they had to perform in front of the class. The time given for each group was about 10-15 minutes. While they were conducting their utterances, the lecturer who is also the researcher recorded theirs using a smartphone, then the students’ utterances were written to identify and classify language features found so that the process was easier. After finishing the process, the last step was to analyze what kinds of language features mostly used and what are their functions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After all the process above finished, the result of analyzing could be found out that from the 30 students, they used more than 6 language features in their conversations, however, language

features mostly used are: deixis, adjacency pair, discourse markers, and the last is hedges. In this discussion part, researcher wants to discuss the function of them.

The first is deixis as it can be found easily, such as: personal deixis for showing participant's role in the conversation such as: 'I', 'you', 'we', and from the use of personal deixis, we know who the participants were in those conversations, so will not be confused. Another is spatial deixis. This kind of deixis was used by the students to show what they wanted to refer to especially if they wanted to show noun or nouns that could be an event, occasion, or things. The last deixis mostly found is temporal deixis. It was used to show the time when the actions took place. By using deixis the flow of conversation could be understood clearly. The use of deixis found in students' conversations is a lot and one of them is:

GT: *'I perhaps will not come to the party. I want to study harder for the exam'*

WR: *'Oh...but you have promised to accompany me, so we can meet those guys tomorrow'*

In that conversation, we can find types of deixis such as personal 'I', and 'we', 'you', then 'those' the plural form of 'that' is spatial deixis that refers to the guys, and the last is temporal deixis in the word 'tomorrow' to show about the time that will happen. The use of deixis will make the readers or listeners understand better because they know who takes part in conversation, and also when the actions happen.

The next language features used is adjacency pairs. The students are not taught adjacency pairs; therefore, sometimes they made mistakes in making appropriate response. Below is one of adjacency pairs used wrongly by students:

LM: *'What do you think of being away from the college for a week?'*

SD: *'Hmm....a lot of bad things happen if we are away for a week' By the way when the final test will be started?*

From the conversation above, it can be seen that LM offers SD to be away from college but SD did not accept, nor did he refuse explicitly.

Another language features used by the students is hedges. Hedges found a lot and one of the reasons is because hedges could modify language that has similarity to the truth value of proposition as we can see in the conversation below:

TH: *'...we somewhat understand, often confuse'*

KL: *'I think that is not the correct statement. The correct one is, we are really confused'*

The above conversation uses 'somewhat' and 'really' to modify language that have similarity to or that have closeness to the truth of value. In fact the students could not mention the exact degree as the word 'somewhat'

The last language features found is discourse markers. Some students still made many mistakes in using some discourse markers for example the use of 'well'. Here is one of the mistakes made by students.

UR: *'I think she does not come here, perhaps she is angry with me'*

WT: *'Well,... well, ....well, ...I am not sure either'*

The use of 'I think', 'well...well...well' are discourse markers. The use of 'I think' shows the speaker's hesitation, meanwhile the second speaker uses 'well...well,...well' to mitigate the imposition of her utterance because actually WT as the second speaker knows well that 'she'

will not come, and the use of ‘well..., well..., well...’ as discourse marker will avoid face threatening acts (FTAs). However, the use of ‘well,...well,...well,...’ is not the same as ‘well’ If WT meant to show her hesitation, so it is wrong because ‘well,...well,.. well,...’ functions as ‘all right’ and it does not show the speaker’s hesitation.

Another mistake made by students in using discourse markers can be seen from below conversation:

ND: ‘...Do you know her address?’

AD: ‘Oh...at 26 Margahayu street...’

The use of ‘oh’ as discourse marker in that conversation is not correct because ‘oh’ commonly expresses surprise. Meanwhile AD used ‘oh’ to reply ND’s question about someone’s address. It is not common for someone using ‘oh’ to answer kind of question like that.

Another use of discourse markers in students’ conversation is:

RT: ‘Could you tell me the reason why you did not ...’

WA: ‘Hmm....it is ...hmm...a little hard for me... hmm...’

The use of ‘Could’ could be as hedges and could be as negative politeness strategy, namely: ‘be indirect’ so that it sounds more polite. Another discourse marker is ‘hmm’. The use of ‘hmm’ is to build ‘a bridge’ in order to fill the empty space so that there is no pause, but if it is used too often in communication, it will not be good and it makes conversation clumsy.

From the results and discussion, it can be shown that language features mostly used are: deixis, adjacency pairs, then discourse markers and hedges. The number of deixis used is lower than adjacency pairs because there are only three categories of deixis used. Language features found in students’ utterances such as discourse markers, hedges have functions as ‘hesitation’, ‘face-threat mitigator’, ‘surprise’. There is a close relation between hedges and discourse markers that is similar to politeness especially negative politeness strategies. The use of ‘I think’ could be used both as discourse marker and also as negative politeness strategy. Meanwhile adaptor and rounder hedges such as a little, about, around also belong to negative politeness strategy and all of them function to soften the mitigation of utterance in order to reduce the imposition of participants’ speech. By reducing the imposition of utterance, every participant will avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs), especially by the use of hedges and discourse markers that function also as negative politeness strategy. Some students could create conversation well, but some could not because they did not understand how to apply language features in it. Students made some mistakes in using language features, but the most one made by the students was the use of discourse markers.

The use of language features might be introduced slightly to Engineering and Business Administration students also, so they are able to apply them in their Presentation subject, and also in their daily activities. For the next research, it might involve Engineering and also Business Administration students as the object in order to know what language features used among them to be compared to English department students.

To sum up, the analysis result of language features used in students’ conversations can be seen in table below:

**Table 2.** Language Features Mostly Found

NO	Language Features	The frequency of appearance in conversation
1	Deixis	128 times
2	Adjacency Pairs	80 times
3	Discourse Markers	78 times
4	Hedges	72 times

## CONCLUSIONS

English department of Bandung State Polytechnic is not linguistics study program, and the students do not learn linguistics which is important to be given especially in analyzing text both spoken and written. Linguistics develops significantly and it can be applied in language skills especially in Speaking and Writing and Reading. By using language features, it will make communication more lively, natural and more interesting especially in spontaneous utterance. The importance of language features as the basic tools in communication must be known by the students well. By giving Introduction to linguistics, Text Analysis, and Functional Grammar subjects, students will have various options to conduct their Final Project. Polytechnic is well known as a vocational college, so students who graduate from this institution must be ready to work in national and international industry professionally, and they must be ready to compete with others not only in their core knowledge, but also in in their interpersonal communication skills.

## REFERENCES

- Ajmer, K. (2002). English discourse particles: Evidence from a corpus. *Studies in Corpus Linguistics*. US: John Benjamins.
- Brown, P., Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fraser, B. (1988). Types of English discourse markers. *Acta Linguistica Hungaria*, 38, (pp.19-33)
- He, Z. R. (1988). *A survey of pragmatics*. Changsha: Hunan Education Press.
- Hilker, K. (1991). Französisch: Partikelforschung. *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik*, vol. I (pp.77-88). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Jakobsson, S. (2010). *A study of female language features uses in the same –sex conversation*. Retrieved from [www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:375135](http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:375135)
- Jucker, A. H. (1997). The discourse marker *well* in the history of English. *English Language Linguistik*, vol. I (pp.91-110)
- Lakoff, G (1972). *Hedges: a study in meaning criteria and the logic of fuzzy concepts*. Papers from the 8th regional meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society. Chicago. (pp. 183–228)

- Lenk, U. (1998). *Marking discourse coherence: Functions of discourse markers in spoken English*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ochs, E., Kremer-Sadlik, T., Sirota, K. G., & Solomon, O. (2009). Autism and the social world: *an anthropological perspective discourse studies* 6.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974) 'A Simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation', *language* (pp. 696-735)
- Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schourup, L. C. (1982). *Common discourse particles in English conversation*. New York: Garland.
- Trihartanti, & Dianita (2014). The use of oh and well as discourse markers in conversation of Bandung State Polytechnic: Foreign language learning and teaching. *Language Education and Acquisition Research Network (LEARN) Journal*, 7(1), 22-44. Retrieved from [https://social.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/learn/article/view/1000108/\(ISSN\)1905-7326](https://social.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/learn/article/view/1000108/(ISSN)1905-7326)
- Yule, G. (2009). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Discourse markers: *Introduction*. In: A Jucker & Yael Ziv (Eds.), *Discourse markers: Description and theory*.
- Wardhaugh, R (1998) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing LTD.
- Zadeh, L. A. (2001). *Fuzz Sets. Informational and Control* (pp. 338-353). New York: Academic Press.