



THE FUNCTIONS OF DISCOURSE MARKER *LIKE* IN THE DEBATE OF THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the functions of discourse marker *like* used by presidential candidates in debate. It is a descriptive qualitative method. The source of data in this study is The First U.S Presidential Debate 2020, while the data are the utterances of both Donald Trump and Joe Biden which contain the use discourse marker *like*. The results show five out of six functions of discourse marker *like* found in the debate. They are introducing an explanation, introducing an example, marking an approximate number or quantity, marking lexical focus, discourse linking and restarting. One of the functions which mostly used by presidential candidates is introduction an explanation. However, one out of six functions that is not found in the debate is searching for the appropriate expression.

INTRODUCTION

Discourse marker has a significance role in the language to help people organizing the sentence. In academic advice sessions conducted in an English as a lingua franca context, House (2010) reported that the occurrence of the discourse marker so was extraordinarily frequent. In other words, people use discourse marker to associate, coordinate, and manage to convey what they say or write. According to Schiffrin (1987), discourse markers are linguistic elements that index different relations and coherence

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discourse markers are linguistic elements that index different relations and coherence between units of talk. In the communication, sometimes the speaker and the hearer use marker to connect the unit of discourse. The form of discourse markers are words and phrases used in speaking and writing to signpost discourse. The discourse markers are also found in the spoken and written interaction. According to Castro (2009), the use of discourse markers is influenced by cognitive factors, as they help speakers and listeners navigate complex information during conversations. This cognitive engagement is crucial for effective communication, particularly in educational settings where understanding is paramount. By using discourse markers, it will help people bring their thoughts together clearly.

This study is set out to explore one discourse marker in spoken discourse, namely like. It is because like has recently gained considerable importance in spoken practices, has nowadays become one of the most frequent discourse particles in spoken communication with up to one occurrence of like every twenty words in spontaneous speech (Tagliamonte, 2005). Also based on Gabrys's (2016), like as a discourse marker turns out to be extremely useful in oral discourse which has the wide range of pragmatic functions it fulfills. Those statements show that discourse marker like is frequently used in spoken practices, such as in casual conversation, speeches, story telling, etc. This research studies about discourse marker used in spoken discourse, i.e. discourse marker like.

Understanding the functions of discourse markers is essential for uncovering how language shapes effective communication and reflects speaker intent, particularly in high-stakes interactions like debates. Discourse marker like is one of the most multifunctional discourse markers (Gabrys, 2016). From the statement, discourse marker like does not only have one function, but also have several functions. It is the uniqueness of like as discourse marker compared with others. Müller (2005) also provides a comprehensive account of the functions fulfilled by like as a discourse marker. There are six functions of discourse marker like in spoken interaction. The use of discourse marker like in spoken discourse can be seen through the debate. Consequently, this study analyzes the use of discourse marker like by speakers in debate as spoken interaction. The U.S Presidential Debate 2020 was chosen by researcher for this study. The debate becomes trending news for the United States of America in the years. The debate showed the power of the candidates for the next president of America. It can be seen from the way the speakers or

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the candidates used discourse marker like in their utterances.

The U.S Presidential Debate 2020 is a debate of presidential candidates from Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden. It will be the 59th quadrennial presidential election. During presidential election campaigns in the United States of America, it has become customary for the Republican and Democratic Party candidates to engage in a debate. The debate was conducted twice. However, this study only chooses the first debate to be analyzed in particular the use discourse marker like by the presidential candidates. The first debate took place on September 29, 2020 in Cleveland, Ohio. The debate was moderated by Fox News host Chris Wallace and it runs for 90 minutes. In 90 minutes, the debate discussed about Mr. Trump's and Mr. Biden's records, the Supreme Court, the Coronavirus pandemic, the economy, race and violence in cities and the integrity of the election (Commission on Presidential Debates). Those have 15 minutes to discuss each topic. It shows that the candidates have many chances to talk when the host give time to them. As a result, in the first debate consists of many discourse marker like when the presidential candidates talked. Discourse marker is such a complex phenomenon, involving among other things, textual, pragmatic and cognitive factors that interact with each other (Guo, 2015). So, it can be a reason of the writer to analyze of discourse marker like in the first U.S Presidential Debate.

There are similar studies about the use of discourse marker like were previously conducted by some researchers such as Amador Moreno (2012), Huang (2011), Diskin (2017), Fuller (2003), and Lilleås Sandal (2016). This study is to explain the functions of discourse marker like used by presidential candidates and its syntactic positions. Rashid (2020) emphasizes that discourse markers serve as critical tools in political speeches, enhancing coherence and facilitating audience engagement, which is essential for effective communication in political contexts. Ismail (2021) further supports this by noting that discourse markers not only connect ideas but also reflect the speaker's attitude, thus influencing the audience's perception and understanding of the message. Therefore, analyzing the use of discourse markers provides valuable insights into how politicians strategically shape their rhetoric to achieve persuasive and communicative effectiveness.

METHOD

This is descriptive qualitative research that focuses on the phenomenon of a word, sentence, and phrase and also there is no numeric pattern. Pujileksono (2015) said that qualitative research is aimed at understanding social phenomena from the point of view of the research subjects. Data sources in qualitative research are: (1) words and (2) actions, the rest is additional data such as documents or written data sources, photos and statistics (Rijali, 2018). According to Sugiyono (2005), qualitative research provides a deep understanding of social and cultural contexts, allowing researchers to explore how individuals or groups interpret their experiences in specific contexts. This flexibility enables researchers to adapt their approaches based on situational needs, thereby uncovering unexpected information. Source of data in this study is The First U.S. Presidential Debate 2020 on NBC News YouTube channel. NBC news (National Broadcasting Company) is one of the major U.S. broadcast television networks, and it presented the first U.S. presidential debate completely. The debate showed two presidential candidates between Donald Trump (DT) and Joe Biden (JB) in the U.S. Presidential Election 2020. It focuses on the utterances of the presidential candidates. Therefore, the data are the utterances of both Donald Trump and Joe Biden which contain the use discourse marker like.

The data were collected based on theory of the function of discourse marker like by Müller (2005). the prosedural meanings of discourse markers allow them to limit the process of interpreting speech (Afgani, 2019). This aligns with Creswell's (2009) assertion that qualitative research seeks to create a comprehensive picture of human or social issues through detailed narratives derived from various information sources. It used content-analysis method to analyze the data to investigate the content of speech and the content of other verbal material. The discourse marker like used in the debate was distinguished and then explained its functions. The last was drawing the conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This study used Müller's (2005) theory to analyze the function of discourse marker *like* used by presidential candidates. There are six functions, namely marking lexical focus, searching for the appropriate expression, marking an approximate number or quantity, introducing an example, introducing an explanation, discourse linking and restarting.

No	Functions		Data
1.	Marking lexical focus	DT	-
		JB	They look down their nose on people like Irish Catholics like me who grew up in Scranton.
2.	Searching for the appropriate expression	DT	-
		JB	-
3.	Marking an approximate number or quantity	DT	I'm getting it for so cheap; it's like water. Oh really? Who do you have? Name one group that supports you. Name one group that came out and supported you, go ahead, like we have time
		JB	-
4.	Introducing an example	DT	You're talking about almost like being in prison. I look at New York. It's so sad what's happening in New York, it's almost like a ghost town. We built a building and we get tax credits, like the hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue.
		JB	-
5.	Introducing an explanation	DT	It's a very political thing because people like this would rather make it political and save less. I was a private business people. Like every other private person, unless they're stupid, they go through the laws and that's what it is. I got it done and you know what happened? Our economy boomed like it's never boomed But the reason is that the Democrats that run these cities don't want to talk, like you about law and order. If you look at New York where it's going up like these never seen anything. you would see problems like you've never. This is going to be a fraud like you've never seen. You go and vote. You go and vote, like they used to do.
		JB	Like almost everything else he talks about, he does not have a plan. He said this would be gone away. Whether it'd be gone -- miraculously, like a miracle.

			<p>There's thousands of scientists out there, like here at this great hospital, that don't work for him.</p> <p>But we've never accomplished it, but we've never walked away from it like he has done. It's a little bit like how this guy and his friends looked down on so many people.</p> <p>We have to have community police, like we had before, where the officers get to know the people in the communities.</p> <p>The fact is that they're going to be millions of people, because of COVID, that are going to be voting by mail-in ballots, like he does by the way.</p>
6.	Discourse link and restart	DT	-
		JB	My son -- My son -- My son, like a lot of people, like a lot of people you know I had a drug problem. He's overtaken it. He's fixed it. He's worked on it. And I'm proud of him.

Table 1. Functions of Discourse Marker *Like*

There are 22 data which were collected based on the utterances of presidential candidates between Donald Trump (DT) and Joe Biden (JB) which denoted the function of discourse marker like based on theory of Müller in 2005. According to the findings, there are five functions of discourse marker like found in the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020. They are marking lexical focus, marking an approximate number or quantity, introducing an example, introducing an explanation, discourse link and restart. Meanwhile, there is one function of discourse marker like based on Müller (2005) that was not found in the presidential debate. The function is searching for the appropriate expression. Furthermore, this section elucidates broader explanation of each function of discourse marker like orderly.

Discussion

Based on the findings, there are five functions of discourse marker *like* found in the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020. They are marking lexical focus, marking an approximate number or quantity, introducing an example, introducing an explanation, discourse link and restart. Meanwhile, there is one function of discourse marker *like* based on Müller (2005) that was not found in the presidential debate. The function is searching for the appropriate expression.

Marking Lexical Focus

Marking lexical focus is one of the functions of discourse marker *like* which appeared in the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020. As stated by Müller in 2005, marking lexical focus is a function of discourse marker *like* which serves to focus on the (new) information, and also it may focus on given information. The related studies have already done by researcher who analyzed about marking lexical focus on their research. They are Amador Moreno in 2012 and Fuller in 2003. Those studies supported this study by adding information and comparing with this current studies.

In the debate, there is only one utterance which indicates the use of marking lexical focus. Joe Biden as presidential candidate used this function in giving his opinion in the debate. Here is the evidence of the utterances of Joe Biden when he got chance to give his opinion in the the debate.

- (1) Biden: They look down their nose on people **like** Irish Catholics **like** me who grew up in Scranton.

The utterance (1) above is a part of utterances of Joe Biden who discussed about racism. When he gave his argument, he used two discourse markers *like* to highlight or focus on new information on his explanation about the racism. He highlighted Irish Catholics and himself who grew up in Scranton were looked down their nose on people. In the case, the function of marking lexical focus used in this utterance based on theory of Müller in 2005.

The related study by Amador Moreno in 2012 also discussed about the function of discourse marker *like*. He stated that *like* can operate as a focusing device, often highlighting or reinforcing feelings (generally of displeasure): “I presume she’s telling him about Aoife, who’s, like, still in hospital”; or “I can see Claire’s eyes, roysh, just, **like**, welling up with, **like**, tears”. From the statement above, it makes stronger that discourse marker *like* used by Joe Biden includes the function of marking lexical focus.

On the other hand, this study is not the same as the result of Fuller (2003) about the use of discourse marker *like* in this function. The study discussed about the use of the discourse marker *like* in an interview. The result presented that marking lexical focus is frequently used in interview. It is totally different from this study. In the First U.S Presidential Debate was only found one marking lexical focus. So, the difference is found between this study and the previous study.

Marking An Approximate Number or Quantity

This function was used to indicate a number or quantity in the utterance. As stated by Müller in 2005, typically, *like* as discourse marker is used before numerical or quantity phrases to reduce the commitment of the speaker to the utterance and because the exactness of the information is not important for the speaker's purpose. The previous research from Fuller in 2003 also showed the use of discourse marker *like* in the interview.

Based on the finding, there are two utterances by Donald Trump which indicate marking an approximate number or quantity. It is only found two discourse markers *like* used by Donald Trump, while Joe Biden did not. To make detail, the evidence of the utterances used by Donald Trump can be seen below.

- (2) Trump: So we're cutting health care, all of the things that we've done -- insulin. I'll give an example: insulin. It's going to, it was destroying families -- destroyed people, the cost -- 'I'm getting it for so cheap; it's **like** water.

In this data (2), Trump used discourse marker *like* when he discussed about healthcare plan. He said that drug prices (insulin) will be coming down, and the cost will be more cheap. In this case, he used discourse marker *like* and followed by word "water". It showed that he discussed about the cost of insulin is similiar with the cost of water. It is because the word "water" indicates to the cost or quantity. Consequently, the marking an approximate number or quantity is found in this data.

- (3) Trump: Oh really? Who do you have? Name one group that supports you. Name one group that came out and supported you, go ahead, **like** we have time.

Based on data (3), Trump refuted the previous statement of Joe Biden about "reimagining policing". He used discourse marker *like* to indicate the time. It also includes the function of marking an approximate number or quantity of discourse marker *like*.

hose data showed Donald Trump marked twice approximate number or quantity in his utterances. According to Müller (2005), *like* can thus qualify numbers as well as expressions of quantity, time period and frequency when specifying their exact value is not necessary for the comprehension of the utterance. Those data are not directly showed a spesific number. However from the context, it can be seen that, Donald Trump marked approximate quantity in his utterances.

This result of this study is not in line with the result of previous research from

Fuller (2003) about this function. Fuller found in his research that the function of marking an approximate number or quantity is frequently used in interview. Meanwhile, this study only found two utterances by Donald Trump which include the function of marking an approximate number or quantity. Thus, it can be seen the difference from the frequency of the discourse marker *like* in this function.

Introducing an Example

This function illustrates two things which have a similarity by using discourse marker *like*. As stated by Müller (2005), the exemplifier function of *like* is equivalent to 'such as' or 'for example'. This is because they have the same function that citing or introducing an example. There are two similar researches from Huang (2011) and Lilleås Sandal (2016) which also discussed about the function of discourse marker *like*.

The data shows that there are three utterances of Donald Trump used discourse marker *like* in this function. Those utterances include the function of introduction an example in different context. Besides, there is no utterance of Joe Biden which indicated the use of dicourse marker *like* in this function. The use of this function can be seen as follows.

(4) Trump: You're talking about almost **like** being in prison

Based on data (4), Donald Trump used discourse marker *like* when he discussed about the economy of America. Both presidential candidates have different plan of the economy development of U.S. As stated by Müller (2005), two variants of introducing an example can be distinguished: *like* introducing an example of a general concept, and *like* introducing an example without a general concept being mentioned. In the case, Donald Trump did not mention the general concept. He used discourse marker *like* to exemplify the personal of Joe Biden explicitly. In the debate, he said "*like* being in prison". He argued that Biden did know anything about the condition of U.S economy. Thus, the evidence above can be proven that he used discourse marker *like* to introduce an example.

(5) Trump: I look at New York. It's so sad what's happening in New York, it's almost **like** a ghost town.

The data (5) shows that Trump illustrated the condition of New York during pandemic. According the statement of Müller (2005), Donald Trump used discourse marker *like* introducing an example of a general concept. It is different from (4). Trump

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used a general concept by describing the condition of New York which was so sad. Then, he said “a ghost town” after discourse marker *like* which indicate to quite town. It can be seen that Trump exemplified the condition of New York with a ghost town by using discourse marker *like*.

(6) Trump: We built a building and we get tax credits, **like** the hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Almost similar with data (5), however the utterance (6) is different in the time and the content. The similarity is Trump introduced an example of general concept. He has a general concept that he have already built building and they get tax credits. Then he used discourse marker *like* before the hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue. The hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue is example of the building which was built by Trump. Consequently, this utterance (6) is categorized in the function of introducing an example.

Those data presented that Donald Trump used discourse marker *like* three times in this function. This analysis based on theory of Muller, that there are two categorizes of discourse marker *like* to introduce an example. The data (4) used discourse marker *like* to introduce an example without preceded by general concept. Meanwhile, data (5) and (6) are preceded by general concept in the use of discourse marker *like* in the introducing an example

The related studies that have already done about the function of introducing an example are from Huang (2011) and Lilleås Sandal (2016). Huang also agreed with Muller’s theory that exemplifications can be broadly divided into two variants; one of which is exemplifications preceded by a general term or description, while the other is not preceded by a general term or description. Furthermore, the result of this study is in line with Lilleås Sandal’s study that the introducing an explanation is most frequently used by speaker, and followed by an introducing an example in the second position. In other words, the frequency of introducing an example is less than an introducing an explanation.

Introducing an Explanation

Based on the findings, this function is mostly used by presidential candidates in debate. This function is different with marking lexical focus which focus on adding new information. However, this function introduces more explanations to make more

understandable without adding new information. The clarification brought by *like* may take the form of a repetition of the previous extract in slightly different words or a reformulation of the content with an alternative term expressing the same idea (Müller, 2005). This function is discovered in the review related research from Diskin (2017), Lilleås Sandal (2016), and Fuller (2003).

In the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020, there are 15 utterances of presidential candidates which contain discourse marker *like* introducing an explanation. There are 8 utterances which was produced by Donald Trump and there are 7 utterances which was produced by Joe Biden. The use of this function can be seen as follows.

- (7) Trump: It's a very political thing because people **like** this would rather make it political and save less
- (8) Trump: I was a private business people. **Like** every other private person, unless they're stupid, they go through the laws and that's what it is.

Based on the data (7) Donald Trump talked about his disagreement about the opinion of the future from two experts, Dr. Redfield and Dr. Slaoui. In the case, Donald Trump introduces an explanation which is preceded by discourse marker *like*. According to Muller, discourse marker *like* introduces a repetition of something the speaker has said before. He gave more explanations by illustrating the experts would rather make it political and save less. So, he used this function of discourse marker *like* to make it more understandable.

The case of data (7) also occurs in data (8) but it is in different time and content. Donald Trump talked about the tax laws. He said that he did not want to pay the tax, because he is a private business people. Further, he did repetition of word "private" followed "every other private person " to give more explanations which has said before. Consequently, he introduces an explanation which is preceded by discourse marker *like*.

- (9) Trump: I got it done and you know what happened? Our economy boomed **like** it's never boomed.

Furthermore, data (9) shows that Donald Trump used discourse marker *like* to give an explanation which has said before about the economy of America. As stated by Muller, *Like* here converts what would sound *like* a mere repetition into an explanation. As a side effect, together with the change in the formulation, it indicates

that the speaker distances himself to a certain degree from the previous line he uttered. It can be seen that he did repetition of word “boomed” which said before by changing the formulation. However, it still explains about the economy of U.S which boomed.

(10) Trump: But the reason is that the Democrats that run these cities don't want to talk, **like** you about law and order.

Muller also stated that not all discourse marker *like* introduces explanation by repetition words, however it can be in different word but the same content and same idea. As illustrated in the data (10) that Donald Trump introduces an explanation in which is preceded by discourse marker *like* about Joe Biden. It seems there is no repetition of words, but he argued in the same idea. The word “you” here indicates to Joe Biden which is from Democrat party. So in the case, Trump personally judged Joe Biden by introducing an explanation which is preceded by discourse marker *like*.

(11) Trump: If you look at New York where it's going up **like** these never seen anything.

(12) Trump: you would see problems **like** you've never.

(13) Trump: This is going to be a fraud **like** you've never seen.

(14) Trump: You go and vote. You go and vote, **like** they used to do.

Those data (11) – (14) above have similar cases, however they are in different time and content. Those utterances from Donald Trump used discourse marker *like* to introduce an explanation. As illustrated in data (11) and (12) discussed about a dramatic increase in homicides in America. In data (11) and (12) Trump introduces an explanation without repetition word, and both of them have the same ideas which preceded by discourse marker *like*. Meanwhile in the same case, data (13) and (14) talked about ballots of U.S presidential election. In data (13) Trump argued that there was a fraud about ballots of U.S presidential election. Then, he used discourse marker *like* followed an explanation. In data (14) Trump also used discourse marker *like* followed an explanation about vote.

(15) Biden: Like almost everything else he talks about, he does not have a plan.

The introduction an explanation also used by Joe Biden. As illustrated in data (15) Joe Biden personally judged Donald Trump as his rival of presidential candidate. He gave an explanation about healthcare plan of Donald Trump which is preceded by discourse marker *like*. There is no repetition, however Biden used discourse marker *like* to introduce an explanation in the same idea that Trump did not have a plan.

- (16) Biden: He said this would be gone away. Whether it'd be gone -- miraculously, **like** a miracle
- (17) Biden: There's thousands of scientists out there, **like** here at this great hospital, that don't work for him

Data (16) and (17) have the same topic which discussed about disagreement of Donald Trump with his own scientists, but they were in different time. According to Muller, introduction an explanation includes a reformulations and alternative terms. As illustrated in data (16), it shows that Biden used words “a miracle” after discourse marker *like*. This word indicates the explanation which has been said before about Donald Trump. While data (17) used discourse marker *like* to give more explanation about the scientists toward Trump without repetition words.

- (18) Biden: But we've never accomplished it, but we've never walked away from it **like** he has done.

An introducing an explanation also found in this data (18). This utterance is the answer of Joe Biden about the reason for the voters to trust him to be the next president, rather than his opponent. Joe Biden argued that he tried to make the voters trust him to be the next president. Then, he used discourse marker *like* to give explanation by saying “*like* he has done”. The pronoun “he” refers to the Donald Trump who also tried to make voters trust him.

- (19) Biden: It's a little bit **like** how this guy and his friends looked down on so many people.

The data (19) is the utterance of Joe Biden which argued about racial insensitivity. He also argued that people have to be made aware of what other people feel like, what insults them, what is demeaning to them. By using discourse marker *like*, he gave more explanations about Donald Trump and his friends looked down on so many people. So, Joe Biden gave more explanations which preceded by discourse marker *like* to make more understandable.

- (20) Biden: We have to have community police, **like** we had before, where the officers get to know the people in the communities.

- (21) Biden: The fact is that they're going to be millions of people, because of COVID, that are going to be voting by mail-in ballots, **like** he does by the way.

Data (20) and (21) show that Joe Biden used discourse marker *like* in this function. The data (20) discussed about policing. Joe Biden argued that he needs community police, then he said “*like* we had before,.....”. It shows that he gave an

explanation preceded by discourse marker *like*, that he had already had a community police. While, the data (21) discussed about the preparation to reassure the American people of the next President. Then, he used discourse marker *like* which followed by “he does by the way “ the related explanation with his explanation before.

Those data have already discussed in this discussion section. There are 15 utterances of discourse marker *like* produced by presidential candidates. However, Donald Trump used more discourse markers *like* of introducing an explanation rather than Joe Biden. It has been shown that there are 8 utterances from Donald Trump and 7 utterances from Joe Biden including discourse marker *like* introducing an explanation.

The related studies had already done a research about the use of discourse marker *like* introducing an explanation. Diskin (2017), Lilleås Sandal (2016), and Fuller (2003). Diskin showed that the vast majority of discourse markers *like* were used to introduce an explanation by native and non-native speakers of English in Ireland. The similar result also occurred in the Lilleås Sandal research that the introducing an explanation is frequently used. However, the different result of research was found in the Fullers’ research about discourse marker *like* used in interview. The result showed that the function of marking lexical focus is mostly used in the interview. Based on the previous studies, this study has the similar result with Diskin and Lilleås Sandal. While, it has difference result of research with Fullers’ research.

Discourse Link and Restart

This is the last function which found in the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020. Based on theory of Muller, the discourse link *like* occurs in two variants: either the speaker changes the focus of the narrative from one movie character to another, or the speaker returns from a digression to the main story line. Furthermore, discourse marker *like* can also occur in the context of a restart, i.e. “a point at which the present speaker stops an item under construction and recommences” (Müller, 2005). *Like* thus indicates the speaker’s self-repair after a false start. This restart can be expressed by the same words as those used in the part preceding *like* or by a new structure. This function is discovered in the review related research from Huang (2011).

Based on the findings of this study, there is only one discourse marker *like* in the function of discourse link and restart. The discourse marker *like* in this function

used by Joe Biden as presidential candidate of U.S. Meanwhile, Donald Trump did not use discourse marker *like* in this function. The use of this function can be seen as follows.

(22) Biden: My son -- My son -- My son, **like** a lot of people, **like** a lot of people you know I had a drug problem.

The data (22) is the utterance of Joe Biden in the use of discourse marker *like*. Joe Biden talked about his son. In the case, he did some repetition words in his utterances. He did repetition of words “a lot of people” twice which were preceded by discourse marker *like*. From the case, it shows that he did false start, then he restarted again with the same word. So, it can be identified that the data (22) includes the function of discourse link and restart.

Based the discussion above, it can be seen that this study found discourse marker *like* in this function. Joe Biden did a false start when he used discourse marker *like* in his utterances. The function did not find in the Donald Trump’s utterances. It shows that Donald Trump had already prepared well of his performance in the debate, so he felt confidence and did not do false start in his utterances. In addition, this function also found in the previous study from Huang (2011). However the study has contrary result with this current study. The result showed that Chinese non-native speakers did false start in their speech by following the hesitation markers “eh and um and pauses”. However, the result of this study is Joe Biden did the repetition and restarted by using discourse marker *like* twice. So, there are the differences between the previous study and this current study.

According to the theory from Müller (2005), five out of six functions have already found in this debate. They are marking lexical focus, marking an approximate number or quantity, introducing an example, introducing an explanation, and discourse link and restart. Besides, searching for the appropriate expression is a function of discourse marker *like* which was not found in this debate. Furthermore, from the findings and discussion above showed that an introducing an explanation is mostly used by presidential debate, and followed by an introducing an example, marking an approximate number or quantity, marking lexical focus, and discourse link and restart.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The highest frequency of function of discourse marker *like* in the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020 is introducing an explanation which was found fifteen utterances. The next function which also frequently used in the debate is an introducing an example which was found three utterances, followed by marking an approximate number or quantity which was found two utterances, then only one utterance of marking lexical focus and one utterance of discourse link and restart. However, this study did not find the function of searching for the appropriate expression in this debate.

It is suggested for the next researchers to analyze another source of data by using those theories, such as an analysis of discourse marker *like* used by news presenter or new anchor. It is because there is no research used the source of data. Furthermore, this study used the First U.S Presidential Debate 2020 as source of data. In this debate, there are still many things that can be analyzed for the next researchers. The researcher found many overlaps occurred in this debate. So, the next researcher can use this source data to analyze overlap or other cases. Thus, there are two suggestions for the next researchers, and it can be new research in another case.

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