



Original Article

# Gender Difference: The Use of English Discourse Markers in Business News Articles by Vietnamese Journalists

Tran Quoc Thao<sup>1,\*</sup>, Phan Huu Vinh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), 475A Dien Bien Phu, Ward 25, Binh Thanh, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*

<sup>2</sup>*Technical and Economic College of Lam Dong, 25 Tran Phu, Ward 4, Da Lat City, Lam Dong, Vietnam*

Received 03 January 2021

Revised 19 May 2021; Accepted 08 July 2021

**Abstract:** Discourse markers (DMs) appear in a quite high frequency in both spoken and written language. Moreover, they are not only cohesive devices but also tools which help convey language users' intentions to their discourse. Research into DMs is, nevertheless, still rare regarding the use of English DMs by Vietnamese writers. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the use of English DMs in business news articles by Vietnamese male and female journalists. To that end, 80 business news articles written in English by Vietnamese journalists were chosen. Kopple's (1985) [1], Fung's (2003) [2], and Fraser's (1996, 1999) [3, 4] theoretical frameworks are adapted for data analysis. It was found that both Vietnamese male and female employed English DMs in their writing in a similar way. Female journalists were, nevertheless, found to employ the interpersonal functions of the used English DMs more than their counterparts.

**Keywords:** Business news articles; discourse markers; gender, Vietnamese journalists.

## 1. Introduction

Discourse markers (DMs) belong to linguistic elements which help language users achieve the fluency and accuracy in their utterances. According to Schiffrin (1987) [5], the importance of DMs is seen via the fact that they assist discourse coherence. Specifically, language users employ DMs to join forms,

meanings, or actions to make what is being said become sensible. In addition, they can help language users convey their intended meaning productively by narrowing the contextual assumptions available between interlocutors. Hence, DMs can be useful for improving quality of communication and upholding mutuality between people [6].

DMs in English (e.g., *but*, *and*, *however*, *only*, *actually*) are found in both spoken and written language. The meanings of DMs are often examined regarding discourse rather than grammatical aspect, and their interpretation is

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [thao.tq@hutech.edu.vn](mailto:thao.tq@hutech.edu.vn)

<https://doi.org/10.25073/2588-1159/vnuer.4493>

normally determined by the context in which they occur. If DMs are removed from the utterance, there is no change in content but that utterance becomes blunt and ungracious as a result [7]. Moreover, DMs reveal a connection between “what is being said and the rest of the discourse” (pp. 159) [8]. Hence, DMs are seen to play a vital role in oral communication [9]. Besides, DMs are also important in written language as they are used with the aim of organizing texts with writers’ inputs and stances [10]. DMs also function to make texts smoother, more understandable, and more informative [11].

News articles in general and business ones in particular belong to media discourse, and they take place through a platform in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader [12]. In order to achieve the purpose of conveying intended meaning to readers in the most effective way, DMs can be considered a productive tool [13], which not only helps writers do their composition process better but also makes the reading process of readers easier [14]. Hyland and Tse (2004) [15] reveal that DMs are intrinsically and significantly interpersonal and can be used with the primary aim of persuading the reader.

One factor which may influence the use of DMs is gender. Some researchers carried out their research to explore similar and different tendencies among male and female language users regarding their use of DMs [16-18]. However, such studies were conducted in other than media discourse. To that end, the purpose of this study is to explore the gender differences in the use of DMs in business news articles by Vietnamese male and female journalists.

## 2. Literature Review

DMs have been assigned different names, such as *sentence connectives* [19], *discourse particles* [20], *markers of ideational structure* [21], *cue phrases* [22], *discourse connectives* [23], and *discourse markers* [4]. Among aforementioned names, *discourse marker* is the most widely used one. Consequently, different

definitions of DMs have been proposed by researchers as well. Maschler (1994) [24] defines DMs as “a subcategory metalingual expressions: those used to mark boundaries of continuous discourse” (pp. 325). Fraser (1996) [3] defines DMs as “an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse” (pp. 186). Similarly, Hansen (1998) [25] gives DMs a definition as “linguistic items of variable scope, and whose primary function is connective” (pp. 73).

Despite the disagreement on aspects of DMs, the most well-known and important characteristics of DMs are connectivity, non-truth-conditionality, weak clause association, orality, initiality, optionality, and multi-categoriality [20, 26-27]. Other five characteristics (prosody, position, optionality, indexicality, and multi-grammaticality) are also proposed [20, 28].

There has not been a mutual classification of DMs among researchers. Halliday and Hasan (1976) [19] call DMs cohesive devices which consist of five categories, namely reference, repetition, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Redeker (1990) [21] separates DMs into two classes including those marking ideational structure (e.g., connectives, or temporal adverbials) and those signaling pragmatic structure (e.g., *alright*, or *well*). Schiffrin (1987) [5] considers DMs as linguistic expressions such as pronouns, conjunctions, and adverbs which play the cohesive role in discourse.

Similar to definition and classification, there has not been a common agreement on how to determine functions of DMs so far in spite of a considerable number of studies in DMs. This may be because the functions of DMs have been identified based on the subjectivity of speakers/writers or the personal interpretation of researchers [29]. However, results from studies of previous researchers [7, 26, 30-32] reveal that DMs share two common functions. The first one, or textual function, can be seen via the relations between elements in a discourse, e.g., between the way discourse segments are arranged, between one proposition

and another, between previous and next utterance, between turns of speakers, or between topics [5]. The second function, interpersonal function, associates with the social exchange and the expression of attitudes, feelings, and evaluations [26].

A number of studies on the use of DMs regarding the gender factor have been found. In the context of Asia, Kim and Kang (2011) [34] investigated how men and women used DMs in their private speeches. Their study showed that women used more DMs and responded more emotionally than men. Contrary to women, men used more diversified language in terms of idea expression. Besides, women used more DMs to show eagerness than men while men preferred to deploy DMs in order to show enthusiastic expressions. Alami et al., (2012) [35] found out that Iranian female speakers used more DMs than male. Besides, Iranian women were mainly concerned with interpersonal needs while men paid more attention to the textual of their discourse. Pasaribu (2017) [18] found out that Indonesian male students used a bit more DMs in their writing than female ones. Both genders shared similarities as they heavily used elaborative markers with the aim of connecting ideas in the discourse. Tavakoli and Karimnia (2017) [29] carried out a research into how Iranian advanced EFL learners used DMs in spoken language. This study revealed that female learners used all sub-categories of DMs more than male ones. Despite the interest in gender differences in the use of English language, there are few studies conducted in Vietnam to explore how men and women distinctly use DMs in both spoken and written English. A research on the use of DMs used by Vietnamese is necessary to fill this gap and its

findings may have significance to press writers in particular and EFL learners in general. Hence, this study will give an account of how different DMs are used in business news articles written by Vietnamese journalists.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Materials

The materials used for DM analysis of this research were business news articles written in English by Vietnamese journalists. They were selected from seven online newspapers in English version including Vietnam Investment Review, VnExpress, Saigon Times, Vietnamnet, Vietnam Economic News, Vietnam Economic Times, and Hanoi Times, which are the most suitable source of data for this study. A total of 80 articles published in the period 2018-2019 were selected and divided into two separate sub-categories, namely Male Corpus and Female Corpus with 40 articles in each. Topics of 80 articles are diversified and cover different fields such as economic news, property, merger and acquisition, governmental economic policy, investing, stock market, and local economy. Eighty articles were coded as M1, M2 to M40 for articles in the male corpus; F1, F2 to F40 for articles in the female corpus. The two corpora contained 36,126 running words (17,889 for Male Corpus; 18,237 for Female Corpus). The amount of word types is 6,316 including 3,062 in male corpus and 3,254 in female one.

Table 1. Description of Corpus

No	Corpus	Number of articles	Word tokens	Word types
1	Male corpus	40	17,889	3,062
2	Female corpus	40	18,237	3,254
Total		80	36,126	6,316

### 3.2. Framework for Data Analysis

After being purposely selected, all 80 business news articles were converted into plain text format and then coded as M1, M2, M3 to M40 for articles in the male corpus; F1, F2, F3 to F40 for articles in the female corpus. The software named AntConc was used to count the

frequency as well as look for the types of DMs in two corpora.

Next, pragmatic functions of DMs were explored in order to detect how DMs in two corpora were used. This study was carried out based on categories of DMs adapted from previous studies [1-4] as in Table 2.

Table 2. Taxonomies of DMs

Theories	Categories	Examples	
Fraser’s taxonomy (1996, 1999) [3-4]	Message-related DMs	Contrastive	<i>But, however, although, in contrast, instead (of), rather (than), etc.</i>
		Elaborative	<i>And, also, besides, in addition, in short, in conclusion, for example, etc.</i>
		Inferential	<i>So, of course, accordingly, as a result, because of, therefore, etc.</i>
		Reason	<i>After all, because, since</i>
	Topic-related DMs	<i>Back to my original point, before I forget, by the way, etc.</i>	
Kopple’s (1985) [1], Fung’s (2003) [2] taxonomy	Interpersonal DMs	<i>Obviously, absolutely, basically, actually, exactly, sort of, kind of, like, just, perhaps, may, might, clearly, according to</i>	

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results

The use of DMs in business articles by Vietnamese male and female writers.

As indicated in Table 3, the overall number of DMs in articles by Vietnamese male journalists was 877 within 17,889 running words and it was 865 within 18,237 running words in articles by female journalists. Taking consideration into the number of DMs used regarding running words (877 out of 17,889 and 865 out of 18,237), it can be understood that

there is a so-called equality between male and female journalists in terms of total number of DMs deployed by each group.

From the obtained total number of DMs, the average number of DMs in each article was calculated as well. It can be seen that the average number of DMs in each of the articles by male journalists is 21.93 and it is 21.75 in each of the articles by female ones. It is possible to state that there is not a significant difference in the average number of DMs appearing in each article in each group.

Table 3. DMs in articles produced by male and female journalists

	By male journalists	By female journalists
Total number of DMs	877	865
Average number of DMs in each article	21.93	21.75

Table 4 shows distribution of five sub-classes of DMs used in the two groups of articles. Male journalists deployed a bit more DMs than female journalists (877 vs. 865) in their articles.

They used more *elaborative DMs* (694 vs. 682), many more *inferential DMs* (31 vs. 19), and more *interpersonal DMs* (72 vs. 64) than female journalists. However, they deployed

fewer *contrastive DMs* (78 vs. 90) and *reason DMs* (2 vs. 10) than female ones. Besides, two groups shared few similarities in the use of DMs. Firstly, it is the heavy use of *elaborative*

*DMs* (694 vs. 682). Another similarity is the quite low frequency in the use of *reason DMs* (02 vs. 10). The last similarity is that both groups did not use any *topic-related DMs*.

Table 4. Distribution of DMs among different sub-classes

Sub-class of DMs	By male journalists		By female journalists	
	F	%	F	%
Contrastive	78	8.89	90	10.40
Elaborative	694	79.13	682	78.84
Inferential	31	3.53	19	2.20
Reason	2	0.23	10	1.16
Topic-related	0	0.00	0	0.00
Interpersonal	72	8.21	64	7.40
Total	877	100.00	865	100.00

Furthermore, *elaborative markers* were the most used category in articles by male journalists (38.79% per 1000 words) and by female journalists (37.40% per 1000 words). Regardless the case of *topic-related markers*, *reason markers* is the least used category in both articles by male and female journalists (0.11% and 0.55% per 1000 words, respectively).

#### 4.2. Functions of DMs

##### 4.2.1 DMs in Male Journalists' Articles

To start with functions of DMs in male journalists' articles, message-related DMs were first examined. Among 78 contrastive DMs found in male journalists' articles, most of them were mostly employed in order to indicate the contrastive relationship between discourse segments. For example,

i) The Dinh, 26, was once an office worker, *but* he resigned to become a coin trader (M12);

ii) Vietnam's joining the CPTPP, *however*, has been pushing Scavi to make elaborate preparations (M21).

It can be stated from the examples (i) and (ii) that *but* and *however* fulfilled a function of contrastive DMs which indicates that a given utterance is a contrast of interpretations from a prior discourse. However, in this study, contrastive DMs also revealed other functions. For example;

iii) Current market leader Grab has expanded to offer GrabFood and GrabCar

Business, the latter targeting the corporate sector. *But* experts say Vietnam and many other countries in the world face a slew of challenges in the digital economy such as upgrading the skills of the workforce and adapting to rapidly changing technologies (M37).

From the example (iii), *but* is seen to play its role as a topic-switcher;

iv) The team concluded that the attempts to prevent IUU fishing were *still* limited. Therefore, the yellow card remains valid on Vietnamese seafood products (M9);

Considering the use of *still* in example (iv), it can be stated that *still* was also used for expressing evaluation;

To continue with functions of elaborative DMs, there were found 694 occurrences of them. In all cases of use, they were deployed to signal a quasi-parallel between inferior discourse segments and second ones. For example;

v) The selection of good quality FDI projects involves a number of issues. *For example*, it requires clear and scientific planning on the development direction of key sectors (M16);

vi) Once the planning is completed, a transparent criteria system is needed to accurately assess the quality of the proposed investment projects. *In addition*, it is necessary to ensure compliance with the planning in practice (M16);

The use of for example in (v) expresses that the writer would like to provide a clearer clarification for the previous segment. Meanwhile, in addition in (vi) showed its function as an additive device which helped adding information and refining the presentation available in previous discourse. However, there was one exceptional case which was revealed in the example below:

vii) Tiki, which ships goods across the length and breadth of Vietnam, has annual sales of about \$240 million, according to the Financial Times. *And* it is not the only e-commerce firm recording continual losses in Vietnam (M7);

In (vii), *and* was used for indicating the writer's continuation. From this, the writer could have a room for expanding the discussed issue in his article.

The third sub-class of message-related DMs, inferential DMs, was used in male journalists' articles with 31 occurrences. In all cases, they all signaled that the segment they pre-modified was taken as expressing a conclusion which the previous segment conveyed. This function can be seen in examples (viii) and (ix).

viii) However, the expectation of closer links with and support for domestic enterprises so they can take part in global supply chains has yet to be realized (M17);

ix) However, consumers cannot take possession of these products until next month. *Thus*, domestic importers continue to encounter difficulties in buying autos from Japan and the United States (M11);

Taking the *reason DMs* into consideration, there was only DM to be found, and it occurred twice. In both two cases, the second segments provided a reason for the content of prior segments. Its consequential function is illustrated in the example (x):

x) Contrary to all predictions that bitcoin investors are upset *because* bitcoin's day is over, investors are still optimistic about the fate of the currency (M12);

To continue with interpersonal DMs, there were 72 ones found. Among them, *according to*

was the most used DM with the frequency of 51. The deployment of *according to* in articles revealed that journalists tended to use a kind of hearsay purpose. In other words, according to provided writers essential support for their ideas in their articles. Furthermore, the use of this DM appeared in most of articles which may indicate that most journalists tried to seek for reliable sources for their ideas. Hence, it can be stated that *according to* showed a so-called evidential function as seen in examples (xi) and (xii);

xi) *According to* the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers, Vietnam has roughly 110,000 fishing boats, of which 33,000 specialize in offshore fishing (M9);

xii) *According to* Vu Kim Hanh, chair of the Vietnam High Quality Product Business Association, there are three problems enterprises think about when carrying out digital transformation (M13);

Other interpersonal DMs including *just*, *kind of*, *may*, and *might* served different functions. *Just* in (xiii) was deployed with the aim of praising the rapid growth of Tiki. It helped set off the success of Tiki in comparison with the quite short time it was in business. Therefore, *just* can also be used as an emphazier. The similar function was also found in the use of *kind of* in the example (xiv). In this case, *kind of* appeared in the same phrase with *like* which was used to make a comparison. In regard to the content of the discourse and the context, the writer used *kind of* to emphasize that the growth of crypto currency would end sometime.

xiii) Tiki Jsc. (Tiki) started off as an online book store in 2010 before venturing into e-commerce. *Just* six years later, the firm was valued at \$45 million (M7);

xiiii) However, like any other *kind of* goods, the upward path cannot last forever (M12);

However, in the example (xv), the writer used *kind of* when he tried to reduce the risk of negation. It was because crypto currency such as Bitcoin or Ethereum has not recognized as real currency. Therefore, its "true" value in financial market has not been widely approved.

It can be stated that *kind of* functions as a hedge;

xv) Now, crypto currency is developing as a *kind of* electronic share which can be used for exchange (M12);

In respect to the two tokens found in (xvi), it can be seen that the journalists showed a kind of modulation in his statement. Accompanying with the use of *may*, he also quoted words from another source of information to support his claim. Similarly, it can be seen that the writer showed a kind of prudence in their commitment to proposition with the use of *might* in the example (xvii). The writer tended to use *might* when they sought for the reduction in the force of his statements. Additionally, his prudence was showed by the fact that he used *might* accompanying with the presentation of reasons which helped lead to their statement. Therefore, *may* and *might*, in connection with their function, can be attributed as a hedge.

xvi) According to real estate experts, homestay businesses *may* profit in the short-run, but *may* lose in the long run as this model mainly caters to adventure tourists, whose tastes are always changing (M36);

xvii) Besides, when China's textile and garment export faces a threat, the Chinese government *might* step up efforts to shift export production to neighboring countries, including Vietnam, to make avail of these countries (M1);

Table 6. Functions of DMs in male journalists' articles

Textual functions	
Functions	Examples
Contrastive	<i>But, however</i>
Additive	<i>In addition, for</i>
Consequential	<i>Example</i>
Topic-switching	<i>So, thus, because</i>
Indicating	<i>But</i>
continuation	<i>And</i>
Interpersonal functions	
Functions	Examples
Evidential	<i>According to</i>
Emphasizing	<i>Just, kind of</i>
Hedging	<i>May, might, kind of</i>

In brief, both textual functions and interpersonal functions could be found. Textual functions included *contrastive, additive, consequential, continuation indicating, and topic-switching* while interpersonal functions consisted of *evidential, emphasizing, and hedging* as presented in Table 6.

#### 4.2.2. DMs in Female Journalists' Articles

The first sub-class of DMs which would be analyzed in this part is contrastive DMs. Most of them signaled the contrast between the propositional content of the discourse segment in which they occurred and another segment. It can be seen in the examples (xviii) and (xix):

xviii) *Despite* the incentives and potential market draw, convenience stores require abundant financial resources (F19);

xix) It is a key economic sector in terms of employment creation and contribution to exports. *However*, the sector needs more government support to remove bottlenecks (F18);

However, contrastive DMs also served other functions. In the example (xx), *but* was used for the purpose of topic switching while *still* was used to introduce a new topic in (xxi).

xx) The risk of stroke is increased, *but* there is no single cause. With the increase in the older population around the globe comes an increase in the incidence and prevalence of chronic conditions, contributing to an increase in the reported prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cholesterol (F21);

xxi) Cost is *still* the main consideration in the Vietnamese handset market, and Vinsmart will likely pursue a strategy executed by many successful brands: plenty of features at a low price-point, according to Fitch Solutions (F36);

There was one contrastive DM (*despite*) used for another purpose. Besides contrastive function, this DM was also deployed to contribute a kind of reinforcement to the writer's statement as seen in the example (xxii). Hence, *despite* also served emphasizing function.

xxii) Coal, *despite* its harmful environmental impacts, is still the dominant power source for Vietnam (F6);

There were 682 elaborative DMs found. They all showed their true function that is

signaling a kind of quasi-parallel between discourse segments. Specifically, they helped add more details to segments, elaborate ideas, signal the parallel in the content of segments, clarify the preposition of sentences in which they appeared, or provide clearer explanation as seen in examples (xxiii) and (xxiv).

xxiii) This is the fastest growth of subscribers Viettel has seen in any market around the world, including Vietnam, *and* is an achievement few telecom companies can match in the context of the slowdown in the global telecom industry (F1);

xxiv) Lotte Group plans to start construction of the \$600 million and 7.3 hectare Lotte Mall Hanoi before year-end, *and* open in 2021 with facilities *such as* offices, hotels, and commercial sites (F22);

Twenty-four inferential DMs were found in female journalists' articles. Inferential DMs signaled that the propositional content of second segments, or segments in which they occurred was the conclusion deduced from the content of prior segments. In other words, all inferential DMs served the consequential function which can be seen in examples below:

xxv) PV Oil requested the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the prime minister to extend the deadline to early July, which was promptly refused. *As a result*, Shell and other interested companies lost the opportunity at strategic stake in PV Oil (F25);

xxvi) In this sense, foreign companies have an advantage over Vietnamese ones. *Therefore*, domestic businesses need to build their own high-quality brands, with clear origin and competitive prices (F19);

Turning to *reason DMs*, there were 10 ones. They all served the function that they signaled the second segment provided a reason for the content given in the preceding segment. This function can be seen in the example (xvii).

xxvii) Second buyers should be careful with projects where the first buyers offered a lower price than those quoted by the developers *because* these projects are likely to have problems, including flood risks (F23);

Shifting to interpersonal DMs, there were found 64 ones. Among them, *according to* was the most used one. In all cases, this DM was used when writers would like to refer to information from other sources as shown in the example (xxviii). Considering the use of *according to*, it can be assumed that writers tended to seek for certain credibility of what they claimed. Thus, it is possible to state that *according to* in female journalists' articles served a so-called evidential function.

xxviii) Pangasius heads to export volume's target of US\$2-2.2 billion, making up about 31.5% of total seafood exports, *according to* the Directorate of Fisheries (F15);

The second most used interpersonal DM, *just*, served different functions. In the example (xxix), *just* was used as a tool for emphasizing the certainty of the claim. However, in the example (xxx), another function of *just* was found. In this case, *just* expressed a kind of up-toning function. Nevertheless, in the example (xxx), *just* functioned as an evaluation since it helped conveyed the attitude of the writer to the proposition.

xxix) However, the projects are still on paper. An analyst commented that the elimination of projects is *just* a formality, because in fact, the projects have stopped operating for a long time (F11);

xxx) Mytel, the Viettel-owned mobile operator based in Myanmar, has signed up more than two million subscribers in *just* one month since officially starting operations (F1).

xxx) ... the city needs 6,000 kilometres of sewers of all types. However, at present, the sewer system has a total length of *just* over 4,000 km (F23);

Three other interpersonal DMs (*may*, *perhaps*, and *might*) were used by writers to reduce the force of their claims. In other words, writers seemed to use them to give rooms for interpretations. It can be concluded that *may*, *perhaps*, and *might* were used as hedges as in the examples below:

xxxii) The expansion of the Dung Quat oil refinery in the central province of Quang Ngai is scheduled to start this quarter, but difficulties



in financial arrangement *may* cause delays for the project (F8);

xxxiii) Flood risks are emerging as one of the most important factors to consider in a residential unit, *perhaps* even superseding location, price, and facilities,... (F23);

The last interpersonal DM, *basically*, was used to express that writers have a certain evidence in which they would like to convey. From this, *basically* can be seen to serve commentary function as in the example (xxxiv).

xxxiv) In particular, the CPTPP's rule of origin provisions are based on the yarn-forward concept, which *basically* states that all garment materials, from the yarn, fabric, sewing thread and the final garment itself,... (F26);

In short, both textual and functions could be found in the use of DMs in female journalists' articles. There were five textual functions found including contrastive, additive, consequential, topic switching, and topic introducing. Meanwhile, there were six interpersonal functions, namely *up-toning*, *emphasizing*, *evaluating*, *evidential*, *hedging*, and *commentary* (Table 7).

Table 7. Functions of DMs in female journalists' articles

Textual functions	
Functions	Examples
Contrastive	<i>Despite, however</i>
Additive	<i>And, such as</i>
Consequential	<i>As a result, therefore, because</i>
Topic-switching	<i>But</i>
Introducing new topic	<i>Still</i>
Interpersonal functions	
Functions	Examples
Evidential	<i>According to</i>
Emphasizing	<i>Despite, just</i>
Hedging	<i>May, might, perhaps</i>
Up-toning	<i>Just</i>
Evaluating	<i>Just</i>
Commentary	<i>Basically</i>

## 5. Discussion

Results of this study revealed that male journalists used 877 DMs, while female journalists used 865 DMs. This implies that both male and female journalists used DMs in their articles similarly. This finding may be due to the fact that English is a foreign language for Vietnamese writers. This finding is opposite with that from previous research [26, 35]. However, this is in line with the statement of Koczogh and Furko (2011) [36] which reveals that there are no substantial quantitative differences in the use of DMs between men and women. Moreover, it is similar to results achieved from the study of Pasaribu (2017) [18]. Her findings showed that Indonesian male students used a bit more DMs than female ones in their writing.

Turning to functions of DMs, DMs in male journalists' articles served 5 textual functions and 3 interpersonal functions. In female journalists' articles, DMs served 5 textual functions and 6 interpersonal functions. From this finding, it is possible to state that females employed DMs for different purposes in their articles. The difference in the use of interpersonal functions can be that females might tend to indicate the relationship to the readers. This result was supported by Escalera (2006) [16] who claimed that there is a difference in the use of DMs between men and women, but that difference is not really significant as the use of DMs is investigated within given context. Taking consideration into the data of this study, it is obvious that "business news articles" is a given context which she mentioned.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has showed that the general distribution of DMs in articles by male and female journalists is similar. In terms of function, all DMs found in articles by male and female journalists all served textual functions or interpersonal functions. In a few cases, a DM could serve more than one function. Male and female journalists employed the textual

functions rather similarly except for one case. Male journalists utilized *indicating continuation*, whereas female ones used *introducing new topic*. Moreover, female journalists employed three more interpersonal functions (e.g., *Up-toning*, *Evaluating*, *Commentary*) than male ones.

There are some limitations in this study. The main one is the quite small size of the data used for analysis. Another limitation is that this study only focuses on investigating frequencies and functions of DMs in order to explore the differences between the DMs usage of Vietnamese male and female journalists. Other important aspects, such as procedural meaning or cohesive effect, were not mentioned. Hence, a larger study with more various sources of data is also required to obtain a more meaningful insight into DMs in the context of Vietnam where English is used as an EFL, not mother tongue. From this, there might be a hope that DMs will be continuously studied with the application of other theoretical framework, such as DMs and discourse, DMs as cohesive devices, or DMs and relevance theory.

## References

- [1] V. Kopple, Some Exploratory Discourse on Metadiscourse, *College Communication and Composition*, Vol. 36, 1985, pp. 2-93.
- [2] L. Fung, The Use and Teaching of Discourse Markers in Hong Kong: Students' Production and Teachers' Perspectives, (Doctoral Dissertation), University of Nottingham, 2003.
- [3] B. Fraser, Pragmatic Markers, *Pragmatics*, Vol. 62, 1996, pp. 167-190.
- [4] B. Fraser, What are Discourse Markers? *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 31, 1999, pp. 931-952.
- [5] D. Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- [6] D. Blakemore, The Relevance of Reformulations, *Language and Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1993, pp. 101-120.
- [7] K. Aijmer, Analyzing Discourse Markers in Spoken Corpora: Actually as a Case Study, In P. Baker, T. McEnery, *Corpora and Discourse Studies: Integrating Discourse and Corpora*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 88-110.
- [8] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- [9] R. Carter, M. McCarthy, *Cambridge Grammar of English*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- [10] E. D. Milne, The Pragmatic Role of Textual and Interpersonal Metadiscourse Markers in the Construction Attainment of Persuasion: A Cross-linguistic Study of Newspaper Discourse, *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 40, 2008, pp. 95-113.
- [11] J. Zienkowski, J. Östman, J. Verschueren, *Discursive Pragmatics*, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2011.
- [12] A. O'Keeffe, Media Discourse Analysis, In Gee, J. & Handford, M. (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 441-454.
- [13] L. B. Jauro, G. G. Teneke, I. Bitrus, I. V. Moses, An Evaluation of the Use of Discourse Markers in Nigerian Newspapers, *New Media and Mass Communication*, Vol. 23, 2014, pp. 25-29.
- [14] O. Kookhaei, M. Amerian, A Study of Proficient in the Use of Discourse Markers in Iranian EFL Learners' Writing, *Journal of Advances in Linguistics*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2014, pp. 107-113.
- [15] Hyland and Tse, 2004.
- [16] E. A. Escalera, Gender Difference in Children's Use of Discourse Markers: Separate Worlds or Different Contexts? *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 41, 2006, pp. 2479-2495.
- [17] J. A. Fatalaki, A Sociopragmatic Study of Discourse Markers' Use across Different Genders: Case Study of Iranian EFL Learners, *The Iranian EFL Journal*, Vol. 11, 2015, pp. 382-402.
- [18] T. A. Pasaribu, Male and Female Students' Use of Textual Discourse Markers in Writing Academic Essays, *Journal of Language and Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2017, pp. 74-81.
- [19] M. Halliday, R. Hasan, *Cohesion in English*, London: Longman, 1976.
- [20] L. Schourup, *Common Discourse Particles in English Conversation*, Garland: New York, 1985.
- [21] G. Redeker, Ideational and Pragmatic Markers of Discourse Structure, *Journal of Pragmatics*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1990, pp. 367-381.
- [22] A. Knott, R. Dale, Using Linguistic Phenomena to Motivate a Set of Coherence Relations, *Discourse Processes*, Vol. 18, 1994, pp. 35-62.
- [23] D. Blakemore, *Semantic Constraints on Relevance*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- [24] Y. Maschler, Mitigating and Discourse Markers in Bilingual Conversation, *Language in Society*, Vol. 23, 1994, pp. 325-366.

- [25] M. M. Hansen, *The Function of Discourse Particles: A Study with Special Reference to Spoken Standard French*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998.
- [26] L. J. Brinton, *Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996.
- [27] A. H. Jucker, Y. Ziv, *Discourse Markers: Introduction*, In A. H. Jucker, Y. Ziv, *Discourse Markers: Descriptions and Theory*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 1998, pp. 1-12.
- [28] L. Fung, R. Carter, *Discourse Markers and Spoken English: Native and Learner Use in Pedagogic Settings*, *Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2007, pp. 410-439.
- [29] M. Tavakoli, A. Karimnia, *Dominant and Gender-specific Tendencies in the Use of Discourse Markers: Insights from EFL Learners*, *World Journal of English Language*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2017, pp. 1-9.
- [30] M. Halliday, *An Introduction to Function Grammar* (2nd ed), London: Edward Arnold, 1994.
- [31] D. Schiffrin, *Discourse Markers: Language, Meaning and Context*, In Schiffrin, D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publisher, 2001.
- [32] K. Hyland, *Metadiscourse: Exploring Interaction in Writing*, New York: Continuum, 2005.
- [33] C. M. C. Castro, *The Use and Functions of Discourse Markers in EFL Classroom Interaction*, *Profile Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2009, pp. 57-77.
- [34] H. Kim, B. Kang, *Gender and Usage of Discourse Markers in Spoken Korean*, *Proceedings of the 16th Conference of Pan Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011, pp. 30-31.
- [35] M. Alami, M. Sabbas, M. Iranmanesh, *Gender and Discourse Difference: An Investigation of Discourse Markers in Persian Male-female Casual Conversation*, *Archives Des Sciences*, Vol. 65, No. 7, 2012, pp. 202-223.
- [36] H. V. Koczogh, B. P. Furkó, *Gender Differences in the Use of the Discourse Markers You Know and I Mean*, *Argumentum*, Vol. 7, 2011, pp. 1-18.