

## Joe Biden's Speech: Anatomizing Discourse Markers

Nur Laila Luthfia

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia  
[190511100093@student.trunojoyo.ac.id](mailto:190511100093@student.trunojoyo.ac.id)

Afiifah Al Rosyidah\*

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia  
[afiifah.rosyidah@trunojoyo.ac.id](mailto:afiifah.rosyidah@trunojoyo.ac.id)

Received 2 September 2023; Revised 30 September 2023; Accepted 1 Oktober 2023

\*Corresponding Author

### Abstract

Discourse markers are linguistic devices that help convey meaning, structure conversations, and foster coherence in speech. The aim of this study is to explain and discuss the classes of discourse markers and the functions of discourse markers in Joe Biden's speech about America's economic progress that was live streamed on January 27, 2023. This study applies Schiffrin's (1987) theory to analyze and identify the types and functions of discourse markers found in Joe Biden's speech. The study uses a qualitative research design. The results of the study show that there are four classes of discourse markers and six functions of discourse markers that were used by Joe Biden during the delivery of America's economic progress. Additionally, it is also found that the most used markers are connectives and their functions.

**Keywords:** discourse markers, classes, functions, Joe Biden's speech

### Abstrak

Penanda wacana adalah perangkat linguistik yang membantu menyampaikan makna, membangun percakapan, dan memperkuat kohesi dalam pidato. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menjelaskan dan membahas kelas-kelas penanda wacana dan fungsi-fungsi penanda wacana dalam pidato Joe Biden tentang kemajuan ekonomi Amerika yang disiarkan langsung pada 27 Januari 2023. Penelitian ini menerapkan teori Schiffrin (1987) untuk menganalisis dan mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis dan fungsi-fungsi penanda wacana yang ditemukan dalam pidato Joe Biden. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat empat tipe penanda wacana dan enam fungsi penanda wacana yang digunakan oleh Joe Biden saat menyampaikan kemajuan ekonomi Amerika. Selain itu, juga ditemukan bahwa penanda wacana yang paling sering digunakan adalah penghubung dan fungsi-fungsinya.

**Kata kunci:** penanda wacana, tipe, fungsi, pidato Joe Biden

## INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in our daily lives as it facilitates communication among individuals. It serves as a fundamental tool that allows us to exchange information, express our emotions, share ideas, and convey thoughts to others. Jufrizal (2011) explains that language operates as a symbolic system where words conventionally link to objects, ideas, and actions. Within the realm of language, there exists an important field called Discourse Analysis, which individuals unconsciously utilize during communicative interactions to derive meaning from sentences. Schiffrin (1994) emphasizes that Discourse Analysis focuses on exploring how language is utilized to convey meaning, purpose, and coherence within specific contexts and among participants.

One aspect of Discourse Analysis is the study of discourse markers, which serve as indicators of the purpose and context of language. Rini (2019) highlights that discourse markers contribute to enhancing coherence in communication and interactions. They are not only found in spoken communication but also play a role in written texts. Additionally, Yulianto (2021) explains that discourse markers are terms or expressions that assist in managing the flow and structure of discourse. Their primary function lies at the discourse level and they are largely independent of grammar, meaning they do not typically alter the conditional meaning of a sentence.

Discourse markers naturally emerge in the language used by individuals. In line with Schiffrin's (1987) classification, discourse markers encompass a variety of linguistic expressions from different word classes. These include conjunctions (e.g., *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *because*), interjections (e.g., *oh*, *well*), adverbs (e.g., *now*, *then*), and lexicalized phrases (e.g., *y'know*, *I mean*).

This study uses Joe Biden's speech with the theme America's economic progress since Joe Biden as the president in front of the audiences. The speech that Biden delivers to the conference is interesting to analyze because when he delivered his speech to the audiences, he frontally used any words that can be analyzed through discourse marker.

Some previous researches have been conducted similar with this study. Marbun (2017) conducted research entitled "An Analysis of Discourse Markers in Donald Trump's Speeches". The study found that three speeches by Donald Trump had three types of discourse markers. They are (1) markers of connectivity (as discourse coordinators, as units of continuation of the speaker, in service to more general points), but also (2) markers of cause and effect (cause/reason etc.) and (3) marking adverbs of time (then and now). Meanwhile, Inayah (2020) with her research entitled "The Use of Discourse Markers in "The Kid Who Would Be King" Movie" showed that each function of discourse markers response markers can be of different types, such as there can be three types discourse markers that is, connect adverbs, postural adverbs, hesitation. another example in other words, temporary adverb markers contain two kinds of discourse markers. Attitude adverbial and explicit markers. The recent study is different from the previous ones, the aims of the recent study are to analyse and identify classes and functions of discourse markers in Joe Biden's speech about delivers remarks on America's economic progress.

## METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design. Descriptive qualitative research is commonly used when the research does not rely on numerical data and aims to describe and interpret the subject of study. Creswell (2009) asserts that qualitative research is a method of investigating and understanding the meanings that individuals or groups attribute to social or human issues. The data source for this study is Joe Biden's speech, which was downloaded from the White House YouTube channel. Specifically, the data analyzed in this study consist of phrases and sentences from Joe

Biden's speech that contain discourse markers. To collect the data, the researchers employed content analysis. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as a research technique used to make replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful materials) in relation to their context of use. The data were collected by marking the discourse markers used by Joe Biden's speech in the transcript of the speech, with the marked data being presented in bold.

The researchers performed several steps in analyzing the data, drawing on Miles and Huberman's theory (2014). These steps include data condensation, which involves focusing on and simplifying the data extracted from Joe Biden's speech about America's Economic Progress. The second step is data display, which entails presenting the data contained in Joe Biden's speech in a clear and understandable manner. Finally, the researchers drew conclusions and verified the findings based on the research problem and the discourse markers used by Joe Biden, aligning them with relevant theoretical perspectives.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Classes of Discourse Markers Found In Joe Biden's Speech

Classes of discourse markers that found in this study based on Schiffrin (1987), stated that discourse markers has four types, they are markers conjunction, markers interjection, markers adverb and markers lexicalized phrases.

#### *Markers of conjunction*

According to Schiffrin (1987), markers of conjunction *and*, *but*, *or*, *because* are coordinate conjunctions link items which are members of the same word class or sentence constituent, e.g. nouns can be conjoined with nouns but not with verbs, clauses can be conjoined with clauses but not with nouns. In other hand, it can say that markers of conjunction is the coordinate or subordinate of the sentence grammar.

“I said take a seat, everybody. **And** there wasn't single chair in the place.”

The word *and* in the data above categorized in marker conjunction because *and* here to connecting the previous idea of talk to the next idea unit of talk. Also, *and* indicates that to continue Biden's previous sentence that he wanted to everybody in hall to have a sit and there was no single chair empty. As it can see in the sentence that spoken by Biden, the position of word *and* is in the middle of last the sentence and the first sentence. It indicates that word *and* is categorizing in the conjunction markers that has a sign to connected two sentences and it has function connective markers. Schiffrin (1987) stated that *and* can connect ideas locally within both of the functionally differentiated sections of an argument.

“They want to pass legislation to do the following things. **And** I've been saying this no one believed it until they started to introduce this stuff.”

The use of word *and* above the author can analyze and explain that use of *and* in the middle of the sentence and this categorized as the marker conjunction and has a meaning that the word and here

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give a sign continues the speaker's action or the continues of Biden's previous sentence about anyone who wants to pass the legislation have to do the following things. Schiffrin (1987), stated that *and* marks a speaker's definition of what is being said of continuation of what had preceded. The used of *and* in this sentence clearly showed that the way to continue the previous statement by using the word *and* as the conjunction between two sentences. The word *and* here categorized in the type markers of conjunction and its function connective markers.

**"But** the fear doesn't start – didn't start with the pandemic. For decades, the backbones of America, the middle class has been being hollowed out."

The word *but* has meaning disagreement. Because when he used *but*, in his sentence, it indicates that he disagrees about the fear start when the pandemic comes. The word *but* in the sentence of talk in his speech is positioning in the beginning of the sentence that indicates the word *but* is referring to the marker of conjunction and it has function markers of connectives as a sign of disagreement with the previous sentence. This word of *but* categorized as the marker conjunction.

**"But** think about it, folks. When jobs moved overseas, factories at home closed down. Once-thriving cities and town become shadows."

The word *but* in the sentence that spoken by Biden has meaning discourse coordinator in a contrasting way. Because the used of word *but* indicates that Biden pointed his statement about jobs moved overseas and factories at home closed down then once-thriving cities and towns become shadows. It can see that the word *but* gives a sign pointed the coordinate ideas of the sentence. The word *but* is categorizing as conjunction markers and has function markers of connectives. The used of word *but* here as the beginning of Biden's talk that indicates that the sign that used of *but* is to coordinate the main idea that the idea between the previous talk and the current talk is have contrast idea. But the used of *but* itself is to connect the two talks or utterances. This word categorized as the marker of conjunction.

"Every child in America can turn on a faucet at home and drink clean water without fear damage to their brain **or** something else happening to them."

The word *or* here categorized in marker conjunction and has meaning speaker's provision an option to hearers. Schiffrin (1987), stated that the word *or* offers inclusive option to hearer. More specifically, *or* represents a speaker's effort to elicit from a hearer a stance toward an idea unit, or to gain a response of some kind. This sentence that includes the word *or* is in a middle of the sentence between the first idea unit of talk that utterance by Biden and the second idea that given by Biden in his speech. This showed that the word *or* give an option to the audience, they would drink the water without any fear damage or there is something that happen to them if they are not drinking water because the pipe of water already replaces to 10 million homies and 400,000 schools and childcare centers. The word *or* here is categorized as marker of conjunction and its function connective markers that connect between two sentences in Biden's speech.

## **Marker of Interjection**

According to Schiffrin (1987), marker of interjection *oh* is traditionally viewed as the exclamation or interjection. When marker *oh* used alone without the syntactic support of the sentence, *oh* indicates a strong emotion like a surprise, fear etc. *oh* has a role in information state transition because *oh* marks is focus of speaker's attention which then also becomes candidate for hearer's attention.

**"Oh**, there you are. Thanks for the passport into town."

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The word *oh* here categorized as the marker interjection and has meaning that he gives an information to the audience that he already found the congressman. The position of *oh* is in the beginning of the sentence, it means that *oh* refers to the specific individual participation framework. Because the sentences said “Where’s the congressman? He’s around here somewhere.” And the audience answer “Right here!” then Biden said “**Oh**, there you are. Thanks for the passport into town.” It clearly that when Biden used word *oh* in the beginning of his talks after he tried to find the congressman and the audiences help him to find or pointing where the congressman sits, he automatically replied with the word *oh* as the information to the audiences. The word *oh* categorized in interjection markers.

## **Markers of Adverb**

According to Schiffirin (1987), adverb *now* and *then* is time deictic because they convey a relationship between the time at which proposition is assumed to be true, and the time at which it is presented in utterance. In other words, *now* and *then* are time deictic because the meaning of both markers depends on the parameter of the speech situation or the real time of the speaking.

“**Then**, in a bipartisan way, actually passed the CHIPS and Sciences Act that I pushed.”

The used *then* here to tell that there is upcoming talk. As it can see that after the word *then* Biden continue his speech and tell anyone in the hall that they passed the CHIPS and Sciences Act that Biden already passed in bipartisan way. That point showed that the used of *then* is references temporal time. *Then* is categorized as markers of adverb and the function is temporal adverb.

“**Now**, we have to make sure we’ve ever – on it every single day. Not a joke. Implementing it so people can see what we’ve delivered and give it to them directly.”

This unit of talk categorized as the marker of adverb because the word *now* is reference to the time, which means that includes in markers adverb. The word *now* in Biden speech gives a reference time now that they have to make sure that in every single day they are not joking, it is not joke and implements of the work so that the people can see they have delivered and gave to them directly without secondhand. It clearly that indicates of adverb of time through Biden’s unit of talk in his speech.

“**Now**, it’s real. You’re not kidding, these guys. Because if you are, you’re fired. So, folks, thank you, thank you, thank you. Keep doing what you’re doing. And remember it ain’t labor, it’s union. Union.”

By using the word *now* in this sentence of talk or unit of talk is giving a sign to the audiences about what time the fact that stated by Biden in his speech. The indicate of time that stated by Biden in his speech that now they are not kidding about the progress, all they heard about what Biden said is real, then Biden said thank you to everyone because of their hard work and asked them to keep doing what they want to do. Biden also emphasize that they are union not a labor. The used of word *now* here as a marker to reference time.

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## *Markers of Lexicalized Phrases*

Markers of lexicalized phrases *you know* and *I mean* according to Schiffrin (1987), marker *Y'know* is a marker that give a sign as the transitions in information state which that relevant to the participation frameworks, and marker *I mean* is a marker of speaker orientation toward own talk like the modification of ideas and interactions.

“**You know**, congressman Beyer you’ve been doing a great job for this district and you’re one of the best in the country. You really are.”

It can see that the sentence of the talk that utterance by Biden in his speech means that Biden gives a sign to the speaker a information that the congressman have been doing great tolead the district and also Biden said that the congressman is the best in the country. It clearly that the used of word *Y'know* here as the information to the hearer and the position of the word *Y'know* is in the beginning in the sentence of speech. That the information state that given by Biden in his sentence of speech is to gain the interaction between him and the audiences in the hall.

“There was real pain for these – these people. **I mean**, for real. Some of you remember it.”

It clearly stated by Schiffrin that the used of marker *I mean* here as the participation framework to make the interaction between Biden and the audiences. Not only the used of word *I mean* here as the participation framework to build the interaction between Biden and the audiences, but also as the marks of Biden’s upcoming modification meaning of his idea unit of talk that delivered to the audiences in the hall.

“by the way, these factories are multiples size of football fields. **I mean**, they’re multiple football fields, each of them.”

The used of word *I mean* indicates the function of discourse marker participation framework from Biden to the audiences because the position of the word *I mean* is in the beginning of the sentence of unit talks. Datum 28 stated “by the way, these factories are multiples size of football fields. **I mean**, they’re multiple football fields, each of them.” means that the participation framework in this sentence of talk is when Biden said that those factories are multiples size of football fields used the word *I mean* as a mark of the upcoming meaning of his speech to build the interaction between the audiences. Also, when Biden used the marker, *I mean* means that this refers to clarification from the previous sentence of talk and misinterpretation, so after the used of word *I mean* Biden said “they are multiples football fields, each of them.” it is referring the clarification through the sentence “by the way, these factories are multiples size of football fields.”

## *Functions of Discourse Markers Found in Joe Biden’s Speech*

According to Schiffrin (1987), six functions of discourse markers are markers of connectives, markers of information management, markers of temporal adverb and markers of information and participations.

## *Markers of Connectives*

The first functions are as markers of connectives. Schiffrin (1987) stated that corresponding to the special purpose and functions of discourse marker conjunction in the communication further the content elements that can be acquired by sentence or utterance connectives on the basis of the



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conversation formulation and connected sentences.

“**But** I’d like to look ahead at what’s to come, what we’re going to be doing. Just this morning.”

Word *but* in the beginning of the sentence of talk. The function of the word *but* here as the connective marker. Because the word *but* is connecting this unit of talk from the previous sentence of talk with the new coordinate unit idea.

“**And** inflation has fallen every month for the last six month while take-home pay for workers has gone up.”

The function of word *and* above is marker connectives. Even this word in the beginning of the sentence, but the role of this marker is connected between the previous sentence of talk with the utterance “**And** inflation has fallen every month for the last six month while take-home pay for workers has gone up”. This word *and* gives a sign that the new coordinate idea unit of the sentence that utterance by Biden in his speech.

## **Markers of Information Management**

The second function of discourse marker of interjection is marker of information management based on Schiffrin (1987), that marker information management *oh* marks shifts in the speaker’s orientation which occur as speakers and hearer manage the flow of the information that have been produced and received during discourse.

“**Oh**, there you are. Thanks for the passport into town.”

In the previous sub-chapter this sentence of talk has been done analyzed and discussed by the writer about which type of this marker. Furthermore, in this datum the marker *oh* that used by Biden in his sentence of speech have a function. The function of the word *oh* here is a marker of information management. Because *oh* gives information to the audiences that Biden have been found what he looked for.

## **Markers of Temporal Adverb**

Schiffrin (1987) stated that markers of temporal adverbs mean that this function refers to the reference time of the idea unit of talk.

“I am sorry. But look were moving in right direction. **Now**, we’ve got to protect those gains.”

Word *now* in this datum refers to the temporal time and this marks have a function marker of temporal adverb, because *now* in utterance “I am sorry. But look we are moving in right direction. **Now**, we’ve got to protect those gains.” Refers to the temporal time from Biden. Biden used word *now* in his speech refers to the temporal time.

“**Then**, in a bipartisan way, actually passed the CHIPS and Sciences Act that I pushed.”

Word *then* as the marker adverb. In the previous discussion this unit of talk above have been done by the writer for the kind or type of discourse marker, but in this discussion, the writer concludes that

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the use of word *then* in this sentence of talk Refers to the time for upcoming new idea unit of talk. Word *then* has a function based on Schiffrin (1987) theory that the function of it is marker of temporal adverb. Temporal adverb indicates the reference time of the unit talk as Biden's utterance in his speech.

## **Markers of Information and Participation**

The last function of discourse markers is markers of information and participation. Based on Schiffrin (1987), the function of discourse markers *You know* and *I mean* is the markers of information and management, which mean these marks refers to the information and participation from the speaker to the hearer.

“It's not possible – **you know** the best trains, plains, airports, and the like. You can't do it.”

Word *You know* in the beginning of the utterance “It's not possible – **you know** the best trains, plains, airports, and the like. You can't do it.” The function of word *you know* here is markers information and participation because *you know* gives information that the best public transportations and infrastructures are impossible to make it if the economy not in the first place in the world or the strongest in the world. Biden's intonation little bit raised when he said *you know* as the participation in the interactional between Biden and the audiences.

“**I mean**, they're multiple football fields, each of them.”

The previous sub-chapter this sentence of talk has been discussed by the writer about the kind or type of discourse marker. Word, *I mean* in this discussion have a function. The function of this word is marker information and participation. It can see in utterance “**I mean**, they're multiple football fields, each of them.” *I mean* gives participation from Biden to gains the attention from audiences.

## **Markers of Response**

Marker response according to Schiffrin (1987), that *well* have function in the participation framework of discourse. More specifically that marker *well* is a response marker.

“Look around press. **Well**, guess what? They're paying between 400 and 1,000 bucks a month.”

Word *well* in sentence of talk above contains to the function of marker response. Because in Biden's utterance “Look around press. **Well**, guess what? They're paying between 400 and 1,000 bucks a month.” Word *well* as a response of the request the clarification to the hearer and asked them to guess how much they have to pay a month. The used of word *well* also can build the interactional between Biden and the audiences, because the response *well* that used by Biden in his utterance is to request the clarification to the audiences.

## **Markers of Cause and Result**

According to Schiffrin (1987), markers cause and result *so* and *because* mark idea units, information framework, and actions, their functions are straightforward realizations of these properties and marks cause and result of the idea unit of talk.

“**Because** when you do that, the poor have a chance to climb up a ladder, the middle class do well, and the wealthy still do very well.”

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The word *because* means that this word marks the cause from what they are doing right now. As the Biden said “**Because** when you do that, the poor have a chance to climb up a ladder, the middle class do well, and the wealthy still do very well.” *Because* marks the effect that would they received when they keep doing that, the poor get chance to climb up, the middle doing well as they usually doing and the wealthy still doing very well as usual or can be better. However, word *because* here as the subordinate idea units of the utterance from Biden’s speech.

“Let me say it again: the highest of any country in the world. **Because** other countries don’t allow that to happen.”

The unit of talk above contains word *because* that the function of *because* as the marker cause and result, in utterance “Let me say it again: the highest of any country in the world. **Because** other countries don’t allow that to happen.” but *because* here refer to the cause effect. The cause of America is the highest pay for prescription drug prices of any country is other countries don’t allow that kind of pay prescription drug prices happen in their country.

“**So**, I made a decision, and I was very blunt about it. It’s caused some stir around the world, not just here.”

Word *so*, the writer can explain that this word have a function marks result of the previous unit talks. *So* preference to the result that auto manufacturers in America can’t make cars because they don’t make chips in this country, so that the result is Biden made a decision when he was very blunt about the auto manufactures that can’t make chips, because it’s not only stir in America but also stir around the world.

## CONCLUSION

The findings reveal the presence of various discourse markers in Joe Biden's speech on America's economic progress. Specifically, there are 5 instances of conjunction markers, 2 instances of interjection markers, 2 instances of adverb markers, and 2 instances of lexicalized phrase markers. Additionally, the researchers identified several functions of these discourse markers, including 5 instances of connective markers, 1 instance of an information management marker, 2 instances of temporal adverb markers, 2 instances of information and participation markers, 1 instance of a response marker, and 2 instances of cause and result markers.

The conjunctions "and" and "but" are predominantly used by Biden as connectors between sentences, linking them to the preceding sentence. Furthermore, the lexicalized phrase marker "Y'know" is used frequently, with 12 instances, in Biden's speech to provide information framework and engage the listeners' attention.

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