

# Use of “in fact” in University of Burundi Learners’ Writing

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## Abstract

Research has shown that foreign language learners have a number of challenges in the use of connectors in writing. This paper investigates how students from the Institute of Applied Pedagogy at the University of Burundi use *in fact* in argumentative writing, with focus on frequency and accuracy level. Adopting a corpus linguistic approach, the study is based on essays which written by first, second- and third-year students in response to two writing tasks. The size of the corpus amounts to 622 essays totaling 306, 664 word-tokens. This corpus was searched using Antconc tool on the basis of a list of 95 connectors classified into 6 categories. This list was obtained by considering several connector frameworks. The results of this study indicate that *in fact* is one of the most frequently used connectors in the targeted students’ writing. Another discovery is that *in fact* is, in most cases, used at the initial position, whether at sentence or paragraph level. It is rarely used in medial position and never in final position. Moreover, the study shows that the students investigated used *in fact* to introduce the first supporting paragraph of their essays which is inaccurate given that the function of *in fact* is to add more detailed information to a point. Finally, the study reveals that most learners are aware of the fact that *in fact* has to be followed by a comma. Based on these results, a few recommendations are made for teaching as well as for future research.

**Keywords:** argumentative writing, connector, EFL learner, frequently used, misuse