

EXPLORING PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN LINGUISTICS

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10397483>

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Annotation

This article delves into the realm of pragmatic markers, providing a nuanced examination of their key aspects, functions and cross-cultural implications. The introductory section sets the stage by defining pragmatic markers and highlighting their pivotal role in communication. The article systematically unpacks the multifaceted functions of pragmatic markers, emphasizing their significance in conveying speaker intentions, managing discourse, and shaping social interactions.

Introduction: Pragmatic markers are linguistic devices that play a role in shaping communication during conversation. They provide additional meaning and assist in conveying the speaker's intentions, attitudes, and emotions. This article is dedicated to understanding the concept of pragmatic markers and their significance in speech analysis. We will explore their functions, classifications, and provide examples to illustrate how they are used and influence communication.

Definition and functions of pragmatic markers: Pragmatic markers are linguistic elements, often words or expressions, that play a crucial role in signaling the speaker's attitude, intention, or the pragmatic context of an utterance. Unlike words with specific semantic content, pragmatic markers primarily serve a discourse or communicative function. Pragmatic markers are not components of propositional content but rather words, phrases, or expressions used as tools for pragmatic functions.[2]

Their roles can be described as follows:

1. Initiating or concluding conversations: pragmatic markers are used to signal the beginning or end of a conversation. For example, "So, as I was saying..." or "Well, that's the end of that".
2. Expressing thoughts and pointing: they serve to express thoughts, convey emphasis, or draw attention. Examples include "I mean" and "You know".

3. Indicating and reinforcing: pragmatic markers are employed to indicate, emphasize, or reinforce points in speech – “Look, let me explain it to you”.

4. Starting or continuing a discussion: they assist in initiating or continuing a discussion. Words like “Anyway” or “To be honest” are examples.

5. Providing details: pragmatic markers aid in elaborating on or clarifying interpersonal communication. Examples include “In other words” or “For instance”.

6. Clarifying speech or expressing honesty: they contribute to making speech clearer or expressing honesty. Examples include “Actually” or “To be specific”.

7. Explicitly expressing or emphasizing: pragmatic markers help express or emphasize specific points – “You see” or “Actually”. [3]

Classification of pragmatic markers involves categorizing these linguistic elements based on their functions and roles in communication. There are different ways of classifying pragmatic markers based on their form, function, or origin. According to Laurel J. Brinton, one possible classification is: [1]

- Discourse markers: Pragmatic markers that relate utterances to each other and indicate the speaker’s perspective on the discourse. Examples are well, so, anyway, you know, I mean, etc.

- Modal particles: Pragmatic markers that modify the illocutionary force or mood of an utterance and express the speaker’s attitude, emotion, or expectation. Examples are just, really, actually, indeed, perhaps, etc.

- Hedges: Pragmatic markers that weaken the strength or certainty of an utterance and show the speaker’s politeness, deference, or uncertainty. Examples are kind of, sort of, maybe, I think, I guess, etc.

- Boosters: Pragmatic markers that strengthen the force or confidence of an utterance and show the speaker’s commitment, emphasis, or assurance. Examples are definitely, absolutely, surely, I know, I’m sure, etc.

- Response tokens: Pragmatic markers that indicate the listener’s feedback, agreement, or involvement in the conversation. Examples are yeah, right, uh-huh, okay, wow, etc.

- Interjections: Pragmatic markers that express the speaker’s spontaneous emotion, reaction, or evaluation. Examples are ouch, oops, yuck, wow, oh, etc.

Some examples of pragmatic markers and their analysis are:

Well: This marker can be used to introduce a topic, signal a change of topic, express hesitation, show contrast or concede a point. For example: Well, I

think lesson will start now. (introducing a topic) Well, that's another story. (changing the topic) Well, who knows?. (expressing hesitation) Well, Chanel belt is trendy, but it costs an arm and leg... (showing contrast) Well, Tony might be right. (conceding a point)

Just: This marker can be used to soften a request, mitigate a criticism, emphasize a point or indicate precision. For example: Could you just turn off the radio for a moment? (softening a request) It's just that I don't like it. (mitigating a criticism) I just obsessed with this necklace (emphasizing a point) It's just 5 minutes to leave. (indicating precision)

You know: This marker can be used to seek agreement, check understanding, show involvement or fill a pause. For example: It's so complicated, you know? (seeking agreement) You know what I just said? (checking understanding) You know, I respect your parents. (showing involvement) it was so realistic , you know, I couldn't stop staring at it (filling a pause)

Pragmatic markers are widely used in spoken language, but they can also be found in written texts, especially in informal ones. They may vary depending on the context, expressiveness, and the peculiarities of the language. For instance, some pragmatic markers are specific to British English, such as 'whilst' or 'innit,' while others are more common in American English, like 'like' or 'you guys.[1]

The use of pragmatic markers is considered an interesting and important aspect of language, as they reflect how people communicate and interact with each other. They also contribute to creating a natural and engaging style of speech or writing. However, it is essential for us to use them correctly, as an excessive use of pragmatic markers can make speech or writing unclear or unprofessional.

Pragmatic markers in cross-cultural communication. Pragmatic markers can play a crucial role in facilitating or complicating cross-cultural communication, as they may reflect various cultural values, norms, and expectations. Depending on the context and interlocutors, pragmatic markers can have different functions and implications, leading to misunderstandings, incorrect communication, or even conflicts. Therefore, cross-cultural communicators need to be aware of the pragmatic functions and impact of the markers they use and adjust their usage based on different situations and audiences. For instance, certain markers may be accepted as friendly or cooperative in some cultures but considered rude or intrusive in others. Conversely, some markers might be used to express curiosity or willingness to engage in one culture but perceived as confrontational or intrusive in another. Hence, understanding the pragmatic functions and effects of the markers allows cross-cultural communicators to tailor their usage to specific situations and

audiences. An example of a linguistic difference in pragmatic markers between American and British English is the use of the word "quite." In American English, "quite" is often employed as an intensifier, conveying a strong or absolute meaning, as in "She is quite beautiful." However, in British English, "quite" tends to be used as a softener, indicating a moderate or somewhat meaning, as in "She is quite beautiful" meaning "she is rather beautiful." Consequently, an American speaker might inadvertently convey a stronger compliment to a British person, while a British speaker might soften their praise when using "quite" with an American audience.[1] This illustrates how cultural differences in pragmatic markers can impact the interpretation and reception of communication

Conclusion. The exploration of pragmatic markers reveals their crucial role in shaping effective communication. Pragmatic markers, as linguistic devices, go beyond the surface level of language by influencing the social dynamics, intentions, and emotional nuances in discourse.

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