

THE ROLE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN COMMUNICATION

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Annotation: *This thesis explores the linguistic and pragmatic functions of discourse markers in communication. It focuses on how elements such as 'well, so, you know, and' help speakers construct meaning, manage turns, express politeness and maintain coherence in various discourse situations. Using theories in pragmatics, discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics, the research investigates how these markers reflect cultural norms, social roles and conversational strategies across contexts.*

Key words: *discourse markers, pragmatics, communication, coherence, politeness, interaction, linguistics.*

Аннотация: *В данной работе исследуются лингвистические и прагматические функции дискурсивных маркеров в общении. Внимание уделяется таким элементам, как 'ну, так, знаешь, вообще-то', которые помогают говорящим строить смысл, управлять очередностью, выражать вежливость и поддерживать связность речи. С использованием теорий прагматики, анализа дискурса и когнитивной лингвистики, исследование рассматривает, как эти маркеры отражают культурные нормы, социальные роли и коммуникативные стратегии.*

Ключевые слова: *дискурсивные маркеры, прагматика, коммуникация, связность, вежливость, взаимодействие, лингвистика.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu tadqiqot diskurs markerlarining lingvistik va pragmatik funksiyalarini tahlil qiladi. 'Xo'sh, demak, bilasizmi, aslida' kabi birliklarning muloqotda qanday ma'no yaratishi, so'z navbatini boshqarishi, muloyimlikni ifodalashi va nutqning bog'liqligini saqlashi o'rganiladi. Pragmatika, diskurs tahlili va kognitiv lingvistika nazariyalariga asoslangan holda ushbu markerlarning madaniy me'yorlar, ijtimoiy rollar va suhbat strategiyalaridagi o'rni tahlil qilinadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *diskurs markerlari, pragmatika, muloqot, bog'liqlik, muloyimlik, interaksiya, tilshunoslik.*

Discourse markers - those seemingly insignificant elements like *well, so, actually, and, you know* - play critical roles in everyday speech and structured discourse. While they may appear as mere fillers, their functions are central to

organizing ideas, managing turn-taking, mitigating face-threatening acts and expressing a speaker's stance. Their frequent usage across languages and settings suggests they are integral to natural communication rather than dispensable elements.

D. Schiffrin's foundational work highlights discourse markers as indicators of relationships between ideas, shifts in topic or speaker attitude [8; 22]. B. Fraser expands on this, categorizing them into contrastive (but), elaborative (and), and inferential (so, therefore) markers that signal logical connections between utterances [7; 31]. L. Brinton points out their role in expressing politeness, marking hesitation or confirming understanding [4; 11].

For instance, a speaker might say: "*Well, I don't think that's entirely true*". Here, *well* softens disagreement and prepares the listener for a divergent opinion [8; 24]. In another example: "*So, what do we do next?*" - *so* indicates both conclusion and invitation for collaborative decision-making [3; 60].

In polite discourse, markers like *kind of*, *I mean*, or *you know* are used to hedge opinions or involve the listener in constructing meaning. Saying "*I kind of think we could revise this part*" is much less direct than simply stating "*We need to revise this,*" which can come off as commanding. P. Brown and S. Levinson view such strategies as positive politeness - a way to maintain harmony in communication [5; 19].

These markers also regulate the flow of conversation. Words like *okay*, *right* and *anyway* serve to open or close discourse segments. They help manage who speaks when, especially in group discussions or classroom settings. For example: "*Anyway, moving on...*" is not just a phrase but a social signal of topic transition [3; 62].

Discourse markers also vary cross-culturally. The English *well* is often translated into Russian as *ну* or into Uzbek as *demak*, which carry similar discourse functions, but are embedded in different cultural and pragmatic norms. Misunderstandings may arise in intercultural communication if these markers are not interpreted appropriately [4; 17].

Furthermore, gender and social roles influence the usage of discourse markers. D. Tannen argues that women use more rapport-focused language with relational markers like *I mean*, while men tend to favour outcome-oriented discourse with markers like *so* and *anyway* [9; 86]. However, D. Cameron challenges the rigidity of such views, suggesting that individual experience and context often outweigh gendered patterns [6; 56].

From a neurological perspective, S. Baron-Cohen notes that women tend to show higher activity in language-processing areas, potentially explaining a more frequent and strategic use of discourse markers in managing social interaction and multitasking [1; 88].

It is also important to acknowledge the cognitive role of these markers. D. Blakemore discusses how they function not just socially, but cognitively - guiding the

listener's inferential process and helping disambiguate the speaker's intentions [2; 44]. Thus, they serve both interpersonal and informational goals.

To conclude, discourse markers are indispensable tools in natural communication. They enrich spoken and written language by structuring interaction, signalling attitudes, managing politeness and enhancing coherence. Though often overlooked in formal grammar, their presence reflects the nuanced, dynamic, and highly social nature of human interaction. Understanding and analysing these markers allows for more effective, empathetic, and culturally sensitive communication across contexts.

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