



The Phenomenon of Pragmatic Markers in Daily Conversations Among University Students

Nagamurali Eragamreddy

Nagamurali.Eragamreddy@utas.edu.om

English Language Unit, Preparatory Studies Center,
University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah Sultanate of Oman

Received: 2024-09-22 Accepted:2024-10-28

DOI: 10.2456/ideas.v12i2.5610

Abstract

This study explored pragmatic markers (PMs) used by college students in casual interactions. Understanding the prevalence, range, frequency, diversity, social context and functions of PMs, were the goals of the study. A qualitative descriptive method was used to examine nine student discussions. Participants were chosen at random from the Faculty of Education, Zuwila, Sebha University, Libya. Conversations in casual environments, such as residences and cafeterias, were discreetly recorded. PMs were found and grouped according to their function and social environment using thematic analysis. The results of the investigation showed that PMs were highly prevalent in all areas, including social interactions, agreement, and admiration. Pupils used a wide spectrum of PMs; the social milieu affected the frequency and variety of use. A greater variety of PMs were utilized in informal contexts for relationship development, emotional expression, and social navigation. The study's overall findings emphasize how important PMs are to student communication. These indicators are more than just filler words; they are vital resources that help students interact with others, communicate clearly, and form relationships. This study adds to a more comprehensive understanding of PM usage in regular student conversations.

Keywords: pragmatic markers, college students, communication, social context, language teaching.

Introduction

In everyday communication, especially among university students, pragmatic markers (PMs)—words or phrases that influence conversation flow and meaning beyond literal expression—play a crucial role (Fraser, 1996; Eragamreddy, 2023). These markers frame conversations, control who takes turns, and convey intent (Huang & Zhu, 2022). Social dynamics, communication styles, and even academic achievement can be revealed by comprehending how they are used in student conversations (Zhan et al., 2021). Current research examines the PMs that student groups choose (Caprario et al., 2022), emphasizing the impact of cultural background and educational environment (Diao & Chen, 2022). Analyzing PMs in interactions among college students provides important insights into this dynamic group's social and intellectual environment.

Research Gap

Due to the exclusive focus on particular settings or types of PMs, there is a study gap regarding the prevalence of PMs in everyday interactions among university students. Studies that have already been conducted frequently focus on formal environments or certain marker groups, ignoring the wide variety of markers that are employed in casual encounters (Matei, 2011; Fuentes-Rodríguez et al., 2016) among college students. Furthermore, although the functions of PMs have been studied in some detail, a dearth of thorough studies have examined the frequency, diversity, and social context of PM use in regular interactions. Gaining insight into how university students manage social interactions, communicate their attitudes, and build connections through language requires an understanding of these factors. Bridging this gap will lead to a more comprehensive knowledge of the function of PMs in university student communication (Arya, 2020), which will improve intercultural communication skills and inform language teaching approaches.

Relevance of the Research

This study fills an absence of information about the role of PMs in daily conversations among university students (Arya, 2020). By examining the prevalence, variety, and social context of PMs in informal interactions, the study provides valuable insights into how students use language to navigate social situations, express attitudes, and build relationships. Understanding these aspects

can enhance our understanding of intercultural communication and language teaching practices, as it sheds light on the nuances of language use among university students. Additionally, the study's findings can have practical implications for educators and language instructors, helping them develop more effective teaching strategies that cater to the diverse pragmatic needs of students in real-life communication scenarios (Derwing et al., 2021).

Research Goals

1. To investigate how prevalent PMs are in college students' day-to-day interactions.
2. To investigate the range of PMs college students employ in informal interactions.
3. To examine how frequently, differently, and in what social context university students utilize PMs in their day-to-day interactions.
4. To comprehend how university students employ PMs to handle social interactions, communicate viewpoints, and form relationships.

Research Questions

1. How common are PMs in college students' everyday conversations?
2. What kinds of PMs are used in everyday conversations among college students?
3. In frequent conversations among university students, how do the frequency, diversity, and social context of PM usage differ?
4. How do college students employ PMs to control language in social situations, communicate their viewpoints, and form relationships?

Literature Review

Definition of Pragmatic Markers

"Pragmatic marker" is a general term that encompasses a variety of seemingly distinct forms. According to Fraser (1996), any indicator that influences the communicative stage rather than the firmly propositional stage may be considered a PM. The term "pragmatic markers" lacks a precise definition, therefore there is disagreement over what term best characterizes the PMs that accompany conceptual and conversational expressions in verbal communications

(Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg, 2011). The diverse roles and properties of the markers led to the use of specific terminology in the literature. According to Furko (2017), PMs are a collection of grammatically diverse linguistic elements that serve a range of behavioral and meta-communicative goals. They are not conceptually meaningful, and in light of the literature on the significance and objectives of PMs, their unique characteristics involve indexicality, situational dependence, and multipurpose use. In the words of Erman (2001), PMs do not have much or any sense in and of themselves and can only be understood by the projection of a perceptual pragmatic sense onto them or by indications in the situation and/or environment. In line with descriptions of PMs that place a greater value on their sociolinguistic, interactive, and extralinguistic components than on their logical connecting characteristics, Beeching (2016) refers to PMs by their name PMs rather than discourse markers to highlight their social meaning.

Theoretical Framework

In verbal conversation, PMs are important since they can be representatives, directives, commissive, expressive words, declarative phrases, and more. Additionally, they can support cultural and social norms like involvement, coherence of discourse, and politeness. A framework for comprehending the roles of PMs is provided by the concept of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) and the Functional Systemic Linguistics (FSL) notion by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013). Perceivable relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986) categorizes PMs as textual and interpersonal categories, which forms the basis for studying PMs. According to relevance theory, PMs help the listener better grasp the speaker's intended meaning by guiding their explanation of a statement.

Role of Pragmatic Markers in Communication

In communication, PMs are essential (Volkova, 2017) because they enable speakers to express meaning that goes beyond what is spoken literally. These indicators convey a variety of messages, including relationships between speakers, manage dialogue, convey politeness, and indicate attitude. In social encounters, for instance, markers such as "please," "thank you," and "excuse me" are used to demonstrate civility and respect. Additionally, PMs facilitate the management of conversation flow (Han, 2011) by indicating agreement or disagreement, signaling topic changes, and taking turns. For this reason, phrases like "you know," "well," and "so" are frequently employed. They also contribute to the conversation's richness and depth by helping to express attitudes, feelings, and ideas. Markers such as "I think," "maybe," and "actually," for example, convey the speaker's

perspective or degree of uncertainty. Furthermore, pragmatic signals might convey information about the closeness, formality, or unity of speakers. Friend, buddy, and guy are a few instances of markers that denote informality or familiarity. In general, PMs greatly aid in efficient communication by guiding speakers through social situations, accurately expressing meaning, and building connections with others. More seamless and meaningful conversations can be facilitated by comprehending and effectively utilizing pragmatic indicators, which can improve communication abilities (Volkova, 2017)

Previous Studies on Pragmatic Markers in Conversations

In language schools, teaching pragmatics—which includes grasping PMs—is crucial, as discussed by Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991). Their work emphasizes the necessity for students to acquire pragmatic awareness for effective communication, even if they are not specifically studying university students. This supports the hypothesis that, as a result of their particular social and intellectual needs, student talks may display unique PM use. Students may find it difficult to participate in conversations or to adequately express themselves if they are unaware of PMs. To improve teaching strategies and give students more voice as communicators, this study highlights the significance of conducting more research on PM use in student communication. PMs in discussions between pupils and first-language speakers are the subject of Aijmer's (2016) investigation. According to the study, pupils and first-language speakers employ PMs in various ways. Similar to the participants in this study, university students may utilize PMs more for communicating doubt or getting beyond communication barriers than for social graces. The frequent usage of "I don't know" implies that rather than looking to PMs for subtle social cues, learners may rely on them to bridge communication gaps. This emphasizes the significance of studying how PMs are used in class discussions to see if they fulfill the same purposes or change to meet the demands of particular students.

Discourse markers, a subset of PMs, are examined by Arya (2020) in discussions between university pupils in Thailand and speakers of another language. This investigation emphasizes how common DMs are in student English and pinpoints their main purpose as conversation flow management (e.g., turn-taking, topic shifting). Although it doesn't specifically address PMs utilized for interpersonal communication or speaker attitude, it does provide a starting point

for more research. student discussions represent their social dynamics and intellectual needs, exhibiting a broader range of PM functions beyond simple turn-taking. This study raises questions about how exactly PMs are used and implies that they are involved in student communication. Thang (2021) looks into how students of English majors feel about pragmatics. Nonetheless, the results somewhat validate the notion that PMs are significant to college students. Students' comprehension of the value of pragmatics in communication, especially the distinction between first and fourth years, points to a growing understanding of language use that goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. This is consistent with the idea that as students' social dynamics and communication demands evolve, their conversations may take on distinctive PM usage patterns. Thang's study emphasizes the necessity to investigate how PMs work in student discussions to comprehend this possible evolution.

Troshchenkova & Blinova (2020) concentrate on everyday communication in Russia, their study of speakers imitating each other's PM usage, or alignment in PM usage, provides a basis for examining this phenomenon in student conversations. Frequent engagement could lead to the development of distinct PM preferences among student groups. This study raises the possibility of PM alignment and encourages further research into its existence and role in student communication. Although Al-Saidat et al. (2024) concentrate on a particular term ("mayyit") in Jordanian Arabic, their research provides insightful information for examining PMs in conversations among university students. The study emphasizes how context can give a single word several interpretations, highlighting the significance of pragmatics in interpreting student communication. Similarly, according to the social dynamics and academic context of the discussion, PMs used by students may have different meanings. It would be essential to comprehend these sophisticated applications to analyze pupil conversations and how important PMs play in them.

Method

A qualitative investigation was executed out to look at the phenomenon of pragmatic markers in regular discussions among university students. When employing a qualitative description technique, investigators must be extremely precise about their disciplinary association, how they reached at the query, and their preconceptions about the topic matter. The methodologies employed for data collection and analysis must align with the philosophical, theoretical, and methodological presuppositions supporting the investigation (Bradshaw et al.,

2017). The goal of this qualitative descriptive examination (Down et al., 2024) is to comprehend the phenomena of PMs in university students' everyday discussions and to accurately and methodically describe the usage of PMs in everyday interactions.

Participants

Students in their seventh and eighth semesters participated in the study carried out at the Faculty of Education, Zuwila, University of Sebha, Libya. Eighteen students participated in the study; two students took part in each of the nine conversations that were examined. Since the study's primary criterion was not the quantity of pupils, participants were chosen at random.

Data Sources

Recorded discussions between college students in casual settings, such as cafeterias, dorms, and common areas, serve as the study's data source. The variety of PMs in these interactions led to their selection. University students from a variety of fields are among the data sources.

Data Collection

To capture genuine interactions, conversations are captured in an unobtrusive way utilizing audio recording equipment. Written materials are created by verbatim transcription of the recorded conversations. To provide readers full picture of the discussions, transcriptions incorporate pauses and nonverbal indications. The relevance of the conversations to the study's PM emphasis is taken into consideration. The frequency and variety of pragmatic indicators employed in the discussions are among the selection criteria. A detailed description of the chosen conversations is given, emphasizing the individuals, the setting, and the particular pragmatic indicators that were employed. Based on the examination of the chosen dialogues and the identification of trends and patterns in the use of PMs, conclusions are made. The researcher and external experts in linguistics go through many phases of evaluation to confirm the validity of the data.

Data Analysis Technique

PMs are found in the discussions by analyzing them. Based on their purpose and significance within the discussion, these markers are divided into several categories. A thorough description of the recognized pragmatic indicators is provided, together with information on their form, purpose, and social context of usage. Analysis is done on the connections between various pragmatic indicators

and how they affect the dynamics of the discourse as a whole. To comprehend PMs' place in communication, their roles in expressing attitudes, feelings, or social relationships are examined. Based on their syntactic and semantic characteristics, PMs are categorized, offering a thorough picture of their usage patterns. To derive relevant conclusions on university students' everyday usage of PMs in conversation, the data analysis is analyzed.

Results And Discussion

Between two students in the cafeteria

Conversation 1

Student A: Hello, are you aware of our new Semantics professor?

Student B: I did, in fact! I've heard that she has a strong enthusiasm for the subject.

Student A: Completely! To be honest, I'm excited about her classes.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"I did, in fact!" is Student B's reaction, which is a PM of affirmation and agreement. "Completely!": Student A's comment also functions as a PM that expresses fervor and emphatic agreement.

Descriptive Analysis

Short, colloquial phrases, both PMs are often employed in everyday English speech. They function to reaffirm and strengthen the speakers' mutual understanding of the new lecturer.

Relational Analysis

Between Students, A and B, the use of these PMs fosters understanding and a sense of camaraderie. It sets a good tone for the discussion and shows that both students are excited about the new professor's lectures.

Functional Analysis

These PMs convey a sense of agreement and mutual excitement. They contribute to keeping the conversation moving along smoothly and show

enthusiasm for the subject being discussed.

Classification

"I did, in fact!" and "Completely!" are two examples of agreement markers that show agreement on facts or beliefs.

Interpretation

The conversational interaction is improved and becomes more expressive and engaging via the usage of these PMs. They show the speakers' common interest in the subject and add to the conversation's overall good vibe.

Conversation 2

Student A: I believe that the deadline for the project is too close.

Student B: Really? It makes sense to me, honestly.

Student A: Hmm, I think our viewpoints on this are different.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"Really?" - This PM is used to convey astonishment or incredulity while requesting more information or justification. "Honestly": This marker highlights how sincere or accurate the speaker's statement is.

Descriptive Analysis

The topic of the chat is a project deadline, which suggests that Student A and Student B have different opinions. "Really?" is used by Student B to express shock or astonishment at Student A's claim that the deadline is approaching too quickly. The word "Honestly" used by Student B highlights how sincerely they agree with the existing deadline.

Relational Analysis

By asking "Really?" in response to Student A's point of view, Student B is establishing a conversational dynamic that allows for explanation or negotiation. Student A and Student B's divergent points of view add to a relational dynamic of discord or difference in opinion.

Functional Analysis

"Really?" adds to the flow and dynamism of a discussion by expressing surprise or asking for an explanation. "Honestly" serves to highlight Student B's agreement's sincerity or veracity, supporting their position on the matter.

Classification

The discourse marker "really?" is used to show astonishment or ask for clarification. "Honestly" can be categorized as a pragmatic signal that highlights sincerity or veracity.

Interpretation

The conversation demonstrates the use of PMs like "Really?" and "Honestly" to navigate and communicate disagreement in a tasteful and sophisticated way. By expressing the relational and emotional dimensions of Student A and Student B's connection, the usage of these markers deepens the discussion.

Conversation 3

Student A: In preparation for the upcoming test, I'm considering starting a study group.

Student B: What a fantastic thought! We can split up the subjects among us.

Student A: That's right! We will be able to cover greater areas more effectively.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"What a fantastic thought!" is a PM that conveys appreciation or praise. "That's right!" is a PM that indicates agreement or confirmation of the preceding remark.

Descriptive Analysis

The phrase "What a fantastic thought!" is a PM that conveys excitement and support for the concept of forming a study group. "That's right!" is used to confirm that the prior claim about more successfully covering larger areas was valid.

Relational Analysis

The phrase "What a fantastic thought!" conveys a favorable outlook on the concept of a study group, which can foster a cooperative and encouraging environment. "That's right!" reaffirms the notion that dividing up the topics among group members will result in a more thorough review of the materials.

Functional Analysis

"What a fantastic thought!" serves to express agreement and support, encouraging the pupils to engage in constructive conversation. "That's right!" demonstrates the study group's collaborative spirit and supports the plan's credibility.

Classification

Since both of the PMs in this conversation indicate favorable opinions of the suggested study group, they can be categorized as markers of agreement and acceptance.

Interpretation

The discussion exemplifies how to use PMs to foster a cooperative and encouraging environment among students as they get ready for an exam. These PMs show a readiness to cooperate to achieve a common objective and add to the conversation's typically optimistic spirit. The discussion concludes by demonstrating how PMs can be used to express agreement, excitement, and praise, facilitating productive dialogue and teamwork among college students.

Between two students at the residence

Conversation 4

Student A: Hello, will you help me explain the concept of implicature?

Student B: Sure, I'd be pleased to help!

Student A: Many thanks! It's been difficult for me for some time to understand this concept.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"Sure, I'd be pleased to help!" is a polite way of saying "I'd be happy to help," while "Sure" is a PM expressing acceptance or willingness.

Descriptive Analysis

The conversation's pragmatic indicators are mostly employed to convey willingness and appreciation. Student A thanks Student B for the support, and Student B indicates that they are willing to assist.

Relational Analysis

The discussion takes on a more favorable and collaborative spirit when these PMs are used. A positive environment is created for talking about the idea of implicature by Student B's eagerness to assist and Student A's appreciation.

Functional Analysis

The purpose of the PMs is to uphold respect and facilitate efficient conversation. They aid in maintaining the respectful and cordial tone of the discussion.

Classification

The pragmatic indicators used in this conversation can be categorized as expressions of thankfulness ("Many thanks!") and readiness ("Sure").

Interpretation

The two students' contact is cooperative and encouraging, as seen by the usage of pragmatic signals in their conversation. These markers foster a supportive and encouraging learning environment, which aids in the facilitation of the idea of implicature elucidation.

Conversation 5

Student A: I'm anxious about the presentation that I have tomorrow.

Student B: You'll succeed, so don't worry! Just give it one or two more tries.

Student A: I'll give it an attempt, thanks!

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"You'll succeed, so don't worry!" - The PM "so," which is utilized to give an explanation or basis for the assurance, is employed in this statement. "Just give it one or two more tries." To make the advice more gentle and courteous, the PM "Just" is employed. "I'll give it an attempt, thanks!" - "I'll give it an attempt" contains the helpful word "thanks," which is used to convey appreciation.

Descriptive Analysis

Student A, who is feeling apprehensive about an approaching presentation, receives comfort and support from the PMs employed in this interaction. The discussion takes place in a relaxed and encouraging social setting, most commonly with friends or peers.

Relational Analysis

The PMs "so" and "Just" contribute to the establishment of a helpful tone in the discourse by fostering understanding and empathy. The PM "thanks" is used after the conversation to show that Student A values Student B's confidence and encouragement.

Functional Analysis

Through confidence and encouragement, the pragmatic indicators in the discussion help to control Student A's emotional state. Additionally, they help to keep the two pupils' interactions constructive and encouraging.

Classification

Given that they are employed to reassure and uplift Student A, the pragmatic indications in this exchange can be categorized as indicators of encouragement and confidence.

Interpretation

This conversation's application of PMs highlights the need for empathy and support in interpersonal communication, especially when it comes to assisting people in controlling their emotions and navigating difficult circumstances. The conversation illustrates a typical social interaction among college students, in which classmates frequently offer encouragement and support to one another.

Conversation 6 (In classroom)

Pupil A: I overlooked bringing my course book to the class today.

Pupil B: It's too sad. Can you get someone else's, perhaps?

Pupil A: Yeah, I'll inquire around, for sure. I wish I had remembered it.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"It's too sad." This expression of sorrow or sympathy shows that the other person understands the circumstances and shares the unhappiness. "Can you get someone else's, perhaps?" This query expresses a readiness to assist or offer guidance while also suggesting a fix for the issue.

Descriptive Analysis

The marker of pragmatics "It's too sad." is a compassionate statement that expresses remorse or disappointment for Pupil A's fault. The suggestion to find a solution, "Can you get someone else's, perhaps?" shows an approachable nature and a willingness to offer assistance.

Relational Analysis

The inclusion of the empathetic phrase "It's too sad." fosters an environment of understanding and support in the dialogue, which encourages Pupil A to communicate their emotions and worries. The query "Can you get someone else's,

perhaps?" demonstrates a relational side of helping out and demonstrates Pupil A and Pupil B's cooperative and collaborative involvement.

Functional Analysis

The purpose of "It's too sad." is to acknowledge Pupil A's circumstances and reflect a common sense of sadness while also evoking empathy and compassion. "Can you get someone else's, perhaps?" serves to make a recommendation, lend support, and demonstrate a willingness to assist in solving the issue.

Classification

"It's too sad." is a PM that may be used to express sympathy and is one of the ways that people express emotions and attitudes in a discourse. The question "Can you get someone else's, perhaps?" belongs to the PMs used to give guidance or answers and can be categorized as a recommendation or an offer of aid.

Interpretation

By utilizing these pragmatic cues, Pupil A and Pupil B demonstrate a cooperative and helpful engagement, with Pupil B demonstrating comprehension and a willingness to assist in fixing the situation. The discussion serves as an instance of how PMs are crucial for effectively and meaningfully facilitating connections between people by expressing emotions, attitudes, and intentions in communication.

Conversation 7 (At Common Place)

Student A: Hey, what's up this weekend?

Student B: Yeah, I'm not planning anything, Why?

Student A: I suggested that we go trekking. The weather is expected to be pleasant.

Student B: That sounds like a fantastic idea! I'm on board.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

"Hey, what's up this weekend?" Using "Hey" as a greeting practically conveys

warmth and informality. "Yeah, I'm not planning anything. Why?" is an example of a PM used to indicate agreement or confirmation. "That sounds like a fantastic idea! I'm on board." Saying something like "That sounds like a great idea!" in reaction to something nice is a practical way to show that one is enthusiastic and in agreement.

Descriptive Analysis

The usage of the greeting "Hey" and the conversational tone suggest that the interaction is friendly and informal. The topic of weekend plans comes up in the conversation, indicating a close friendship between the speakers.

Relational Analysis

Student B's "Yeah" indicates that s/he agrees with and is receptive to Student A's suggestion. "I'm on board," is Student B's reaction, expressing enthusiasm for the proposal and a willingness to join.

Functional Analysis

In the present discussion, the PMs show agreement, enthusiasm and maintain the pace of the conversation. They also aid in creating a welcoming and enthusiastic atmosphere among the speakers.

Classification

Saying "Hey" is both a greeting and an informal indicator. "Yeah" falls into the category of affirmative markers. The statement "That sounds like a fantastic idea!" is a sign of agreement and excitement.

Interpretation

The discussion illustrates how university students employ pragmatic indicators in casual talks to convey agreement, excitement and to keep a friendly tone. By using these cues, speakers can build rapport and communicate more effectively with one another.

Conversation 8 (At Common Place)

Student A: In our physics class, I'm having problems grasping this subject.

Student B: You know; I recall having trouble with it as well. Let's discuss it as a group.

Student A: Thank you so much for your assistance.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

The reply from Student B The PM "You know" in "You know, I recall having trouble with it as well." engages the listener and anticipates a statement. Additionally, it has a hedge ("I recall"), a PM that denotes a certain amount of reluctance or uncertainty. The courteous phrase "thank you so much" in Student A's response, "Thank you so much for your assistance," serves as a PM to convey thanks.

Descriptive Analysis

"You know" is a PM that can be used to highlight a point or indicate a shift in topic while also assisting in keeping the conversation flowing. "I recall" adds dimension to Student B's remark by acting as a hedge, suggesting that they are recalling something personally rather than stating it as fact. "Thank you so much" is a courteous way to express gratitude, and PMs are frequently employed in social situations for this purpose.

Relational Analysis

Student B's usage of "You know" establishes a connection with Student A and signals that they are going to discuss a similar experience, which promotes fellowship. In response to Student B's invitation to have a group discussion on the topic, Student A expressed gratitude ("Thank you so much"), which strengthened their bond and reinforced the cooperative aspect of the encounter.

Functional Analysis

"You know" is used as a marker of discourse to indicate that speakers have shared knowledge and to keep the conversation moving along. "I recall" serves as

a barrier to soften the claim and convey a level of reluctance or uncertainty. "Thank you so much" is an example of how PMs are frequently used in social interactions as a courteous way to convey gratitude.

Classification

One could classify "you know" as a PM. One could classify "I recall" as a barrier. "Thank you so much" is a sign of gratitude as well as a courteous statement.

Interpretation

To promote good social connections and information sharing between the speakers, pragmatic indicators are used in this conversation. Student B fosters a collaborative and helpful learning environment by validating Student A's struggles and offering support by mentioning their common experience ("I recall having trouble with it as well"). Overall, this discussion demonstrates how PMs are employed in regular conversations among college students to develop rapport, preserve conversation flow, and share information.

Conversation 9 (At Common Place)

Student A: You know what? The study abroad program accepted me!

Student B: What amazing news!! congratulations!

Student A: Thanks! I can't wait to explore a new culture.

Identifying Pragmatic Markers

The PM "You know what?" denotes the start of a fresh discussion or information sharing. An expression of joy and astonishment the PM "What amazing news is!" indicates. "Congratulations!" is a PM that expresses gratitude and compliments. "Thanks!" is a practical way to show appreciation. A practical indication conveying eagerness and expectation is "I can't wait to explore a new culture."

Descriptive Analysis

The practice of PMs such as "You know what?" and "What amazing news!!" gives the discussion importance and an expressive tone. "Congratulations!" is used to demonstrate support and acknowledgment for Student A's accomplishment. In

answer, Student A said, "Thanks! "I'm excited and grateful for the opportunity to learn about and experience a new culture," the speaker says.

Relational Analysis

The conversation is made more positive and inspirational by the employment of these PMs. Since Student B's answer demonstrates sincere excitement for Student A's news, they contribute to creating a connection between the speakers.

Functional Analysis

When introducing fresh information or signaling a shift in subject, pragmatic indicators such as "You know what?" are useful. Both "What amazing news!" and "Congratulations!" are effective ways to show encouragement and convey feelings. "Thanks!" appreciates Student B's favorable answer and conveys gratitude. An expression of enthusiasm and expectation for the future is "I can't wait to explore a new culture."

Classification

Discourse markers, which serve to structure speech and express attitudes and feelings, can be applied to these PMs. Since they are employed to demonstrate a positive attitude and encouragement during the discussion, they can also be categorized as supportive markers.

Interpretation

By using these pragmatic cues, Student A and Student B can connect more effectively, which fosters a positive and motivating environment. They show how important PMs are in expressing attitudes, feelings, and interpersonal interactions in university students' day-to-day discussions.

Discussion

This study looks at nine conversations between college students, analyzing the social context, frequency, range, and prevalence of PMs. It seeks to comprehend how these markers work in students' conversations and support social dynamics, idea exchange, and relationship development.

Research Question 1 - Prevalence of Pragmatic Markers

All topics covered in the conversations exhibit a high frequency of PMs, including talking about projects and classes (conversations 1, 2, 3), asking for assistance (Conversation 4), providing support (Conversation 5), reflecting sadness, evoking empathy and compassion (Conversation 6) and organizing social events (Conversation 7). This implies that PMs play a crucial role in college students' daily interactions.

Research Question 2 - Range of Pragmatic Markers

Students' employ several kinds of PMs is evident in the interactions. These markers fall under the following general categories:

<i>Agreement markers:</i>	"Completely!" (Conv. 1), "That's right!" (Conv. 3), "Yeah" (Conv. 7)
<i>Appreciation markers:</i>	"What a fantastic thought!" (Conv. 3), "Many thanks!" (Conv. 4), "Thanks!" (Conv. 5, 9)
<i>Encouragement markers:</i>	"Sure, I'd be pleased to help!" (Conv. 4), "You'll succeed, so don't worry!" (Conv. 5)
<i>Empathy markers:</i>	"It's too sad." (Conv. 6)
<i>Greeting markers:</i>	"Hey" (Conv. 7)
<i>Response markers:</i>	"Really?" (Conv. 2), "Honestly" (Conv. 2)
<i>Hedging markers:</i>	"I recall" (Conv. 8)
<i>Topic openers:</i>	"You know what?" (Conv. 9)
<i>Expressions of enthusiasm:</i>	"That sounds like a fantastic idea!" (Conv. 7), "What amazing news!" (Conv. 9)

Research Question 3 - Frequency, Diversity, and Social Context

Depending on the social setting of the interaction, PMs can differ in frequency and diversity.

Formal vs. Informal: Compared to informal contexts like interactions between friends, formal settings like classrooms (Conversation 6) typically have a lower frequency and diversity of pragmatic signals (Conversations 7, 8, 9).

Task-oriented vs. Social Interactions: Discussions centered around activities such as researching (Conversation 3) or addressing problems (Conversation 6) may employ agreement markers ("That's right!") or clarification queries

("Really?"). Social interaction indicators connected to greetings ("Hey"), empathy ("It's too sad"), or enthusiasm ("That sounds like a fantastic idea!") may be employed in social encounters aimed at establishing rapport (Conversation 7) or conveying emotions (Conversation 5).

Research Question 4 - Functions of Pragmatic Markers

The conversations demonstrate the numerous purposes PMs have in student communication, including:

Managing Social Interactions: A pleasant conversational flow can be maintained by using markers such as greetings ("Hey") and expressions of gratitude ("Thanks!").

Communicating Points of View: Discussions and opinion expressions are made easier with the use of markers such as agreement ("Completely!") and reaction ("Really?").

Building Relationships: Empathy markers ("It's too sad.") and encouragement markers ("Sure, I'd be pleased to help!") are examples of markers that help create a supportive learning environment.

The investigation as a whole emphasizes how important pragmatic cues are to college students' communication. These indicators are more than just "filler words"; they are vital resources that help pupils communicate their thoughts, navigate social situations, and establish relationships with others.

Implications of the Findings

The significance of PMs in regular conversations between college students is shown by this study. Knowing these markers can help researchers and educators

create communication skills programs that meet students' real-world needs. Understanding the social context, diversity, and frequency of pragmatic indicators allows teachers to adapt their pedagogy to close gaps in cultural understanding and improve students' performance in a range of social contexts (AlShraah et al., 2024).

Comparison with Previous Studies

Previous studies have examined PMs in formal contexts or emphasized PM groups. In contrast, a larger variety of markers utilized in casual student talks are examined in this study. Examining the interaction of frequency, diversity, and social context in PM usage, deepens our understanding.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

The theoretical knowledge of PMs in student communication is advanced by this work. It also has claims because it influences how languages are taught (Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2024). Through the integration of PM training in a variety of social circumstances, educators can enable students to develop their communicative skills and intercultural competency.

Limitations of the Study

The research excludes the possible impact of students' linguistic backgrounds on PMs usage and restricts the generalizability of findings to a larger student group by focusing only on PMs in nine English discussions. The particular university culture and social conventions may have an impact on the study's conclusions, making it harder to generalize the results to other scenarios, such as presentations (Alkhawaja et al., 2023). The perception of PMs may be impacted by nonverbal cues (Eragamreddy, 2024) and contextual information that is not captured by using audio recordings for data gathering.

Suggestions for Future Research

A more comprehensive knowledge of university students' use of PMs may be obtained by doing comparable research in various cultural and language situations. Studies that monitor students' use of PMs over an extended period may be able to identify patterns and trends in their communication styles. A more thorough understanding of PM usage may be possible by combining qualitative studies with quantitative techniques like surveys or experimental experiments (Gillespie et al., 2024). Examining PMs within the framework of interactional sociolinguistics may

help to understand how they are employed in certain contexts to accomplish particular interactional objectives.

Conclusion

This study looked into how college students used PMs in regular interactions. All themes, including agreement, praise, encouragement, and social contacts, had a high prevalence of PMs, according to the study of nine conversations. Pupils used a wide range of PMs, their frequency and diversity changing according to the social situation. Informally, people were able to express emotions, establish rapport, and control social interactions in a greater variety of ways than in formal contexts. The study's overall findings emphasize the critical role PMs play in student conversations, serving as vital instruments for conveying ideas, navigating social settings, and fostering relationships. This study fills a knowledge gap about pragmatic signals in typical student conversations (Zhan et al., 2021). Previous studies frequently concentrated on formal environments or particular marker groups (Matei, 2011; Fuentes-Rodríguez et al., 2016). This study offers a more complete picture by looking at a larger variety of indicators used in casual encounters. In addition, the present study explores the interaction between frequency, diversity, and social context, expanding our knowledge of how students deliberately employ PMs to achieve particular communication objectives.

The study's conclusions provide insightful information about how to teach and learn languages. Through an awareness of the social context, variety, and regularity of PMs employed by students, teachers can adjust their teaching methods to close gaps in cultural knowledge and improve students' communication skills. With an emphasis on multiple social contexts (Llopis Cardona et al., 2024), incorporating PM training into language classes can enable students to grow in their ability to communicate and negotiate a range of social interactions. Role-playing games that mimic real-world situations, such as group discussions (Alkhawaja et al., 2023; Nakijoba & Kawalya, 2024), presentations, or casual encounters with peers, might be a part of this strategy. Along with pronunciation and intonation issues, language instructors can explicitly teach students about the purposes of PMs and their appropriate use in various settings. By including PM training in language instruction, teachers may offer pupils the

skills they require for interacting efficiently in both professional and social contexts.

Acknowledgments

I want to sincerely thank the research specialist for so kindly lending his knowledge and time to assess and appraise the state-of-the-art research techniques and results. His wealth of knowledge in the field has been quite helpful in ensuring the data's accuracy and consistency. I sincerely appreciate his careful review and perceptive criticism, which have substantially raised the standards of my present work. I appreciate all that he has done to help with the project.

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