THE ROLE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract: *This thesis looks at how discourse markers and other interaction tools are used in social media conversations. It focuses on how people use language and extra cues, like emojis and reactions, to manage conversations, organize information, and build social connections online. Platforms like Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, and TikTok have changed the way we communicate, especially with new features like likes, emojis, tags, and reactions, which affect how messages are structured and understood. The study shows how words and phrases like "as well," "so," "like," "actually," "anyway", as well as digital tools like emojis, hashtags, and abbreviations, help people connect ideas, express opinions, show politeness, take turns in conversation, and present their online identity.*

Key words: *Discourse markers; social media discourse; interactional features; digital communication; pragmatics; multimodality; online interaction; discourse analysis*

Introduction

New forms of communication that combine oral, written, and visual modalities have been brought about by the quick development of social media. In addition to serving as venues for material sharing, social media platforms like Instagram, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok also serve as interactive settings where users negotiate meaning, build relationships, and express their identities. Social media interactions take place asynchronously[11], publicly, and multimodally, in contrast to conventional face-to-face communication. In these settings, linguistic resources like discourse markers and interactional aspects become essential for preserving coherence and controlling social interaction.

According to Gao, discourse markers (DMs) are statements that help the reader or listener understand how an utterance fits into the larger discourse without altering its propositional meaning[12].

They give a signal: Transitions; topic; changes; elaboration; emphasis; position; kindness; agreement or disagreement; mitigation; coherence.

DMs have the same functions on social media, but they take place in a digital, multimodal setting.

On social media, people use several types of discourse markers, such as:

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[11] Hiltz, S. R., & Wellman, B. (1997). Asynchronous learning networks as a virtual classroom. *Communications of the ACM*, *40*(9), 44-49.

[12] Gao, Y. (2023). Analyse the Function of Discourse Markers Using in Naturally Occurring Discourses and Planned Speeches. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 179, p. 01027). EDP Sciences.

a) textual markers are used to organize information and structure interactions in social media conversations. They help guide readers through a post or comment, showing connections between ideas or signaling shifts in the discussion. Common examples include *so*, which indicates a conclusion or continuation; *well*, used to show a response or hesitation; anyway, which signals the end of a topic or a return to the main point; and *and*, *but*, or *or*, which serve as connective markers. For instance, *"So I finally tried the new update… honestly, it's not bad."* Here, the marker *so* connects the statement to previous conversation or context, helping readers follow the thought clearly.

b) interpersonal markers are used to express attitudes, emotions, or personal stance in social media conversations. They help the writer convey feelings, clarify points, or show their perspective while interacting with others. Common examples include *actually*, used for correction or emphasis; *like*, which softens statements or shows approximation; *I mean*, which provides clarification; and *you know*, which assumes shared knowledge with the reader. For example, a user might write: *"I mean, the movie was good but not as good as people said."* Here, *I mean* clarifies the user's opinion, while maintaining a conversational and friendly tone.

c) Cognitive and hesitation markers are used in social media conversations to show uncertainty, thinking processes, or to hedge statements. They help users express doubt or soften their opinions, which can prevent conflict or reduce the risk of offending others in public threads. Common examples include *uh* and *um*, which may appear in typed form as *uhhh* or *ummm*, as well as phrases like *kind of*, *maybe*, and *sort of*. For instance, a user might write: *"Umm, I don't think this is a great idea…"* Here, the use of *umm* and the hedging phrase *don't think* signals uncertainty while keeping the tone polite and non-confrontational.

Conclusion

Social media communication is greatly influenced by interactional elements and discourse markers. A rich, hybrid discourse system is produced by the interaction of traditional linguistic indicators with digital

This thesis highlights the need for linguists to view social media discourse as a unique and dynamic linguistic environment where meaning is co-constructed through multimodal and interactional resources. Future research may focus on platform-specific discourse, algorithmic mediation, and cross-cultural differences in digital interaction.

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