

## Discourse Markers used by Non-native Speakers in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*

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### Abstract:

Discourse markers are essential for organizing turn-taking, signaling links between ideas, and expressing complex meanings in spoken discourse. This subject of the study examined the discourse markers utilized by non-native speakers on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to determine the use of discourse markers, revealing the types and their roles. Using the theory of Biber et al. (1999), the data were collected from non-native speakers' utterance to identify the the types and functions of discourse markers. This study's results showed six types of discourse markers: various polite speech, hesitators, response forms, stance adverbials, linking adverbials, and interjections, which serve several functions. The researchers discovered discourse markers, which serve a function as a surprise expression, helping the speaker plan what he wants to say next, signaling an answer to the speaker that the message is being comprehended or received, expressing probability, and indicating the relationship between an utterance. This study has demonstrated how discourse markers manage and organize the non-native speaker's speech in order to help him and the host comprehend the information they wish to share as well as convey as the speaker or listener.

**Keywords:** Discourse marker; Non-native; Talk show

### Abstrak:

Penanda wacana sangat penting untuk menyusun giliran bicara, menandakan hubungan antar ucapan, dan mengekspresikan makna yang kompleks dalam wacana lisan. Subjek penelitian ini meneliti penanda wacana yang digunakan oleh bukan penutur asli bahasa inggris di *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif untuk menentukan penggunaan penanda wacana, mengungkap jenis dan perannya. Dengan menggunakan teori Biber dkk. (1999), data dikumpulkan dari ujaran penutur non-penutur asli untuk mengidentifikasi jenis dan fungsi penanda wacana. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan enam jenis penanda wacana: *various polite speech, hesitators, response forms, stance adverbials, linking adverbials, and interjections, which serve several functions*. Peneliti menemukan penanda wacana yang memiliki fungsi sebagai ekspresi kejutan, membantu pembicara merencanakan apa yang ingin dikatakan selanjutnya, memberi isyarat kepada lawan bicara bahwa pesan yang disampaikan telah dipahami atau diterima, mengekspresikan probabilitas, dan mengindikasikan hubungan antar ujaran. Penelitian ini telah menunjukkan bagaimana penanda wacana mengatur dan



mengorganisasikan ucapan non-penutur asli untuk membantunya dan pembawa acara memahami informasi yang ingin mereka bagikan dan sampaikan sebagai pembicara atau pendengar.

Kata kunci: Penanda wacana; Penutur asing; Acara bincang-bincang

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is part of our daily life; by doing it, we can share, get, and exchange information. Effective communication is a fundamental component of language proficiency. Discourse markers are linguistic elements crucial in facilitating the coherence and flow of spoken and written communication. They help structure conversations, signal relationships between ideas, and guide listeners or readers through the discourse. According to Huo (2023), to acquire the purposes and oral knowledge in communication, speakers use a variety of discourse styles to externalize their communication goals. While native speakers often do not have a problem saying what they want to say in a situation, non-native speakers may encounter challenges when they want to say what they want to say; therefore, consciously or unconsciously, they use discourse markers to combine, manage, and control what they say, write, or express attitude.

A significant aspect of being non-native speaker is the interlanguage pragmatics. According to Kasper (1996), interlanguage pragmatics focuses on how non-native speakers comprehend and produce linguistic acts in the target language and how they learn the target language's pragmatic knowledge. When non-native speaker didn't apply knowledge from their first language (L1) to the target language (L2), it can lead to the use of language in ways that are perceived as unnatural or inappropriate in the target culture. This study clarified the type and function of discourse markers utilized by non-native speakers from the YouTube video content of *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Jimmy Fallon hosts the famous American talk show *The Tonight Show*, well-known for its format that contains musical performances, comedic sketches, and celebrity interviews. In this analysis, the researcher used the video from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, where Jimin appeared as a guest star. Jimin is a singer who performs in the Korean boy group known as BTS. Despite not being a native English speaker, he spends most of the conversation in this talk show using English. This research explained the discourse

markers in the conversation between the host and the non-native speaker. Describing the type and function of discourse markers from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* can help people understand the meaning and how they maintain the conversation, even if they come from different cultural backgrounds and languages.

Based on the phenomena above, there are several previous studies. The purpose of discourse markers has been defined and explained by a number of researchers. Some researchers concentrated on speaking, while others concentrated on writing, either in terms of types or functions, etc. The first previous study was conducted by (Lu, 2023), which focused on writing specifically about types of discourse markers used by non-English majors. (Nur et al., 2023) discovered that an interview with Adele consists of several types and reasons for using discourse markers. (Mohammed & Ahmed, 2018) found in their journal that, as opposed to interacting with other factors like gender and social distance, context is the primary independent factor that influences the choice of DM kinds and the type of functions of DMs. However, despite that, this research not only concentrated on types but also focused on the role of discourse markers in the form the non-native speaker speaks.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Discourse Marker

The researcher analyzed the discourse marker by using the theory of Biber et al. (1999). Discourse markers serve various functions; Biber et al. (1999) classify the type of discourse markers including:

#### 1. Interjections

This type of discourse marker consists of a phrase or series of sounds used as a sudden statement to convey emotion, for instance.:

- *Oh* : Surprise
- *Ah* : satisfaction, recognition
- *Wow* : great Surprise.
- *Yippee* : excitement, delight
- *Ouch* : Ouch, my foot.
- *Ow* : pain

## 2. Greeting and Farewells Expressions

This type of discourse marker occurs in particular positions in a given context and represents standard replies; they can be employed to keep a conversation connected. In general, greeting like "*good morning*," "*good afternoon*," and "*good evening*" might be formal. In informal situations, it can be *hi* and *hello*.

## 3. Linking Adverbials

This type of discourse marker indicates the connection between a speech and the previous discourse, for instance the initial role of *therefore*, *in conclusion*, *however*, *well*, *besides*, and *after all*.

## 4. Stance Adverbials

This type of discourse marker indicates a lexical item that expresses modality, illocutionary force, and evaluation throughout the sentence by acting semantically as an operator. There are four categories: probability, presumption, usuality, and desirability.

## 5. Vocatives

This type of discourse marker is viewed as noun phrases that relate to the addressee but are separated from the main sentence prosodically, such as calls or summons (Hey you!) and addresses (*Madam*).

## 6. Response Elicitors

These markers are generalized question tags the speaker employs to ask the hearer to agree or produce an agreement. They serve essential communicative functions. Such as *huh?*, *eh?*, and *alright?* And *okay?*

## 7. Response Forms

These discourse markers are straightforward responses to a prior message. They categorize these markers into responses to questions (*yes*, *no*, and their variants), responses to directives (*ok*), responses to assertions (*yes*, *yah*, *I see*)

## 8. Hesitators

This type of discourse marker occurs when individuals do not understand what they will say. It's essential because it lets the listener catch up and helps the speaker prepare what to tell next. For instance, *Erm*, *erm*, and *uh..*

## 9. Various Polite Speech

This type of discourse markers serves to express gratitude, sorrow, and apologies. For instance: *sorry, pardon, thank you, and please.*

## 10. Expletives

This type of discourse markers are indicators, words, or phrases that do not contribute meaning to the text, including taboo expressions like swearwords or "*semi-taboo expressions*," are used as exclamations in intense negative experiences.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopted a qualitative approach. (Kothari & Garg, 2020) states that descriptive research involves the discovery of facts aimed at describing the situation, measuring items, and finding causes even when researchers do not have control over these variables. This research data was audio-visual and taken from a YouTube video. A case study methodology was applied for the research design. By employing case studies, the details of discourse markers can be examined clearly. The data type was a talk show video in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, where the non-native speakers were the guest stars, Jimin of BTS. The process of gathering data involves a few distinct processes. The first step was to watch the video. Then, utilizing the [www.downsub.com](http://www.downsub.com) website, all of the discussions were transcribed. After that, the transcription was reviewed to ensure that it was accurately based on the utterances on the talk show. Furthermore, the written records were analyzed to find the discourse markers uttered by the non-native speaker. The next step was classifying each discourse marker and defining each discourse marker's functions that appeared on the non-native speaker (Jimin BTS). The discourse markers' types and functions included in the talk show were examined using the concepts presented by Biber et al. (1999).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher found 29 discourse markers in the talk show video *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* entitled "BTS's Jimin Talks About His Solo Album Face and Teaches Jimmy How to Dance." The same discourse markers appeared in some of these 29 data. Thus, the 29 data in the talk show video comprises six distinct types of discourse markers. The following 29 discourse markers uttered by the non-native

speaker are **Oh**, that appears four times, **wow** appears one time, **oh**, **no** appears one time, **and** appears six times, **maybe** appears one time, **okay** appears two times, **yeah** appears one time, **uhm** appears four times, **uhh** appears five times, and **thank you** appears four times. Regarding the kind of discourse markers' types stated by Biber et al. (1999), the researcher found six types of discourse markers in the talk show video. These six types are interjections, which cover 6 data, linking adverbials 6 data, stance adverbials 1 datum, response forms 3 data, hesitators 9 data, and various polite speech 4 data. Using the connected theories, the discussion provided answers to two research issues. The first concerns the kinds of discourse markers types, and the next following concerns the discourse markers' functions used during the interview by the non-native speaker using the theory from Biber et al. (1999).

**Tabel I. Discourse markers uttered by the non-native speaker.**

Utterance
Jimin : Thank you.
Jimin : Oh, wow.
Jimin : Thank you. Thank you, Jimmy. Uhm We could be uhh nominated thanks to uhh fans' great support. I appreciate them.
Jimin : Yeah.
Jimin : Ummm. When I was in middle school.
Jimin : Uhm I found interesting dance and since then, it was always my dream to perform onstage.
Jimin : Uhh Chim Chim uh-huh.
Jimin : Oh. [Speaking korean]
Jimin : Ohh, first... Jimmy Fallon?
Jimin : And -- and
Jimin : And Halsey.
Jimin : She has – uh She has a big heart and she has the talent that make anyone starstruck.
Jimin : Oh, no!
Jimin : Uh-hmm.
Jimin : Maybe.
Jimin : Oh, sure.
Jimin : Okay. Stand up. Come on. There. Okay.
Jimin : Touch my hand. And look at the camera. That's it.
Jimin : Thank you.

## 1. Interjections

### Datum 1

Jimmy Fallon : The last time you were here was a big deal. It was the first time you were nominated for a Grammy. And I

think, the first time you were on our show, you were like, "I really want a Grammy." Now, you're five-time nominated.

Jimin : **Oh, wow.**

The discourse marker above is part of the interjections. In data 1, the non-native speaker uttered **Oh, wow** when the host, Jimmy Fallon, mentioned that the last time Jimin was on the show was the first time he and his boyband were nominated for a Grammy. And now, it is the fifth time he has been nominated for a Grammy. The utterance functions as a surprise expression

## 2. Linking Adverbials

Datum 2

Jimin : Touch my hand **and** look at the camera. That's it.  
Jimmy Fallon : That's it? Wow!

The discourse marker above is part of the linking adverbial. In data 5, the speaker uttered the word **And** when the host, Jimmy Fallon, asked whether he could teach him to dance. Jimin agreed and then asked him to stand up and follow his instructions. The utterance functions as a marker to show how one utterance relates to a previous conversation.

## 3. Stance Adverbials

Datum 3

Jimmy Fallon: Absolutely. Yeah. And when you have a new song, do you play it for the rest of BTS?  
Jimin : [Speaking Korean] Once the lyrics are done and when it is put to the music, so when it is completed to some extent, that's when we let one another listen to it.  
Jimmy Fallon: And do you listen to anyone else?  
Jimin : Uh-hmm.  
Jimmy Fallon: Yeah, a little bit? A little bit.  
Jimin : **Maybe.**

The discourse marker above is part of the stance adverbial. In data 4, Jimmy Fallon asked whether he let the members of BTS listen to the song before he released it to the public. Jimin answered and explained in Korean that he would let the member

listen to it when the music was done. The host continued to ask whether Jimin let anyone else outside the members of BTS listen to it. Then Jimin, the non-native speaker, uttered **Maybe** which means he probably let anyone else listen. The utterance functions as an operator over the entire sentence in order to convey probability.

#### 4. Response Elicitors

Datum 4

Jimmy Fallon : I have a question for you. This is an honest question. I didn't prepare this, but I have this problem and I want to know if you can help me. I go to a concert and I feel like I'm too old to go to a show. I just don't know. Well, here, help me out. I have a problem. I go to a concert, I don't know how to dance at a concert and I was wondering if you could maybe teach me a dance that could be -- I could do anywhere.

Jimin : Oh, sure.

Jimmy Fallon : You could?

Jimin : **Okay**. Stand up. Come on. [ Screaming and applause ] There. **Okay**.

The discourse marker above is part of the response elicitors. In data 4, the speaker uttered **Okay** when the host, Jimmy Fallon, asked whether Jimin could teach him to dance that he has fantastic fans who come to the studio cheering and applauding for him. The utterance functions as a response to assertions or a reaction to claims, letting the speaker know their message has been received and comprehended.

#### 5. Response Forms

Datum 5

Jimmy Fallon: Yeah. I will say you have the greatest fans.

Jimin : **Yeah**.

The discourse marker above is part of the response forms. In data 3, the speaker uttered **Yeah** when the host, Jimmy Fallon, mentioned that he has fantastic fans who come to the studio cheering and applauding for him. The utterance functions as a response to assertions or a reaction to claims, letting the speaker know their message has been received and comprehended.

#### 6. Hesitators and Various Polite Speech

Datum 6

Jimmy Fallon: Congratulations!

Jimin : **Thank you. Thank you, Jimmy. Uhm...** We could be **uhh...** nominated thanks to **uhh...** fans' great support. I appreciate them.

The discourse marker above is part of the various polite speech and interjections. In data 2, the speaker uttered **Thank you. Thank you, Jimmy**, when the host, Jimmy Fallon, congratulated him and his boyband for being nominated for Grammy. The utterance functions as a sense of gratitude toward the host's interactive nature of the conversation. The utterances **Uhm** and **Uhh** are indicated as a type of hesitator because, as illustrated in the dialogue, A pause of hesitation occurs when Jimin speaks English, signaling that he is thinking about the conversation or sentence he will convey next. The utterance functions as a help to the speaker to organize the following speech uttered by him.

## CONCLUSION(S)

This research study revealed that non-native speakers of The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon employed six different kinds of discourse markers: various polite speech, hesitators, response forms, stance adverbials, linking adverbials, and interjection, which have various functions. The researcher discovered the functions of the discourse markers as a surprise expression, helping the speaker plan what he wanted to say next, letting the speaker know that their message has been received and understood, expressing probability, and indicating the relationship between an utterance. Additionally, Jimin used discourse markers to effectively handle and arrange the subject matter of his speech, in order to drive him and the host comprehend what information they wanted to share whether they were the speaker or the listener, in addition to convey themselves. Overall, this helps Jimin and the host have a meaningful, easy-going, and genuine conversation.

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