

---

**The Impact of Developing the EFL University Students'  
Awareness in the Use of Pragmatic Markers on their Essay  
Writing ability**

**Inst. Walaa' Jabbar Katti'**  
**University of Garmian / College of languages  
and Human Sciences**  
**Department of English Language**  
[walaa.jabbar@garmian.edu.krd.com](mailto:walaa.jabbar@garmian.edu.krd.com)

**Abstract**

Writing is not only employs the procedure of a good written text, but depicts and values the coherence as well as the cohesion, too. Composing a lot of sentences without considering the cohesive ties fails to negotiate the inter-related events intended to be decoded by the reader. Then the presence of text markers is a necessary condition to have a smooth and enjoyable written text. Thus, writing a good essay needs the mastery of choosing the suitable pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers, according to many writers, are a crucial part of learners' strategic competence. However, Pragmatic markers comprise a functional class of linguistic items that do not typically change the propositional meaning of an utterance but are essential for the organization and structuring of discourse, for marking the writer's attitudes to the proposition being expressed as well as for facilitating processes of pragmatic inferences. Pragmatic markers have been seen as set of syntactically diverse linguistic items (for example, *of course, surely, quite frankly, incidentally, thus, well* and so on).

Thus, the essence of this study is to examine the students' performance in the use of the pragmatic markers. It also aims to investigate the effects of developing the pragmatic markers on their essay writing abilities. In addition, the present study intends to answer the following questions: How is the performance of the students in essay writing? What is the difference between the experimental group who will achieve the treatment sessions during the present experiment and the control group who will held back to receive such a treatment? What are the significant relationship between developing students' awareness in the use of pragmatic markers and their essay writing ability?

**1. Introduction**

To understand any discourse and its scope, it is necessary to identify different elements which contribute to the creation of discourse. One of the elements referred to in different literatures is pragmatic markers. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976)

cohesion in English deals with those elements which create cohesion in a text and shape contexts in extended pieces of written or spoken language.

Writing is one of the four skills in language learning and it should be paid more attention. Many devices, such as pragmatic markers, contribute to a discourse's cohesion and coherence. In this regard, creating contexts which is value coherence in pragmatic level and cohesion in semantic level is important. Knowledge about the pragmatic markers, amongst other things, can be used to improve writing skill.

The "pragmatic markers" is a cover term for a range of seemingly heterogeneous forms. According to Fraser (1996: 168), any single that has an effect at the communicative, as opposed to the strictly propositional level, can be considered as a pragmatic marker.

The term "pragmatic marker", has been suggested by Andersen (2001), as a class of short linguistic elements that usually do not have much lexical meaning but serve significant pragmatic functions in conversation. Andersen (2001) also believes that the term "pragmatic" denotes the quality of "low degree of lexical specificity" and a "high degree of context-sensitivity". He proposes that pragmatic markers help readers/hearers "see" the communicative aspects that go beyond the propositional meaning of an utterance. They are called pragmatic because they add an inferential trace to the proposition itself, making the interpretation of the discourse easier and narrowing the contextual background.

Many linguists believed that pragmatic makers (expressions such as *so*, *well*, and *you know*) have been shown to perform a number of important discourse and pragmatic functions in second language speech. In particular, pragmatic markers facilitate the development of language fluency (Hasselgreen, 2004; Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui 1996). They also allow for the communication of speakers' attitudes, how they intend their utterance to be interpreted, and the establishment of intersubjectivity with their interlocutor (Aijmer, 2013; Blakemore, 2008; Overstreet & Yule, 1997). As Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Schiffrin (1987) pointed out in their analyses of L1 pragmatics, pragmatic markers (PMs) are also one of the principal ways that coherent discourse is constructed.

The present paper focuses on the instruction of the pragmatic markers and its effect on learners' essay writing ability. It is hypothesized that pragmatic markers instruction has a significant effect on improving the writing ability of EFL students. To prove this, two groups as control and experimental were chosen from two departments of English- college of languages and human sciences and college of education- in Garmian University. The third year students

of each college were chosen to be the sample of the study. The college of education was chosen to be the control group and the college of languages and human sciences was chosen to be the experimental group.

## 2. Pragmatic Markers

Fraser (1999) also uses the term *discourse markers* but defines these markers differently as “linguistically encoded clues which signal the speaker’s potential communicative intention” (p. 168). Under the name *discourse particles*, they have been identified as particles that “are placed with great precision at different places in the discourse and give important clues to how discourse is segmented and processed” (Aijmer, 2002, p. 1). Alternatively, others such as Hasselgreen (2004) define these expressions as *small words*, which she points out are phrases “occurring with high frequency in the spoken language, that help to keep our speech flowing, yet do not contribute essentially to the message itself” (p. 162).

One of the most problematic aspects of classification deals with the difference between what is referred to as *pragmatic markers* and what others might label *discourse markers*. This terminological confusion arises, according to Romero-Trillo (2012), because some scholars make clear distinctions between the two terms while others use the term *pragmatic markers* to refer to a superordinate category under which discourse markers may be subsumed.

Carter and McCarthy (2006, p. 208) define pragmatic markers as "a class of items which operate outside of the structural limits of the clause and which encode speakers’ intentions and interpersonal meanings." From this definition, the importance of PMs for interpersonal communication is evident. These expressions allow speakers to communicate their intentions, indicate their attitudes towards information that is presented or received, and link their ideas for greater clarity. Accordingly, Carter and McCarthy (2006) have subdivided the class of PMs into discourse markers (including such expressions as *so, well, and anyway*), stance markers (*actually, I think, of course*), hedges (*kind of, maybe*), and interjections (*gosh, wow*). pragmatic markers are classified as grammatical options with social, contextual, and affective functions in spoken English. In other words, as Carter and McCarthy (2006, p: 105) point out, pragmatic markers are "a broad class of items that can provide structure and organization to utterances while indicating attitude, assertiveness, or reactions to discourse".

According to Schourup (1999), there are two characteristics of pragmatic markers which are most often mentioned as criteria to identify a pragmatic marker status: connectivity and non-truth conditionality. Connectivity is considered a necessary criterion for

pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers are used to connect the host utterance with its context locally or globally. They function to ensure the right interpretation of the utterance by guiding the hearer in choice of appropriate context, or to help achieve discourse coherence by making the implicit relationship between discourse units explicit. Non-truth conditionality refers to the belief that pragmatic markers do not contribute anything to the truth-conditions of the proposition expressed by an utterance, that is, they do not affect the propositional content of utterances in which they occur. Considering the second characteristic, pragmatic markers can be removed without influencing either the propositional content or the grammatical structure of the utterances they introduce.

### 3. Types of Pragmatic Markers

According to Fraser (1996) pragmatic markers can be classified into different types. These are: basic markers, commentary markers, parallel markers, and discourse markers. (see diagram 1)

#### 3.1 Basic Markers

Basic pragmatic markers are those structural, lexical, and hybrid forms which signal information about the speaker's basic communicative intentions. Basic markers have representational meaning which means they contribute conceptual information over and above that of the propositional meaning. Specifically, they represent information which signals more or less specifically the force of the direct basic message of the sentence. Basic markers are divided into:

##### 3.1.1 Structural basic markers:

In English, every sentence falls into one of three syntactic types. These are: *declarative, imperative, or interrogative*. Each type signals a general force for the basic message. The declarative structure signals the expression of belief by the speaker that the sentence propositional content represents a true state of the world. For example:

- John slid down the slope.

The speaker in the previous example is committed to express the belief that *John slid down the slope*, although what type of belief- a claim, an assertion, an admission, a confession, or an acknowledgment- is left open. Stylistic variations of the canonical declarative form which retain the sentence propositional content do not alter the speaker's commitment of belief.

In contrast, the imperative structure signals the speaker's expression of desire that the addressee bring about the state of the world described in the propositional content. For example:

- Bring that book over here.

The third type of the structural basic markers is the interrogative mood. In some how is similar to the imperative, it signals speaker

expression of desire, in this case for addressee verbal response and the syntactic variations are distinguishing between YES/NO-questions and WH-questions. For example:

- Can you do that?
- Who are you?

### 3.1.2 Lexical basic markers:

There are many lexical basic pragmatic markers. They can be analyzed into two major groups: *performative expressions*, which essentially refine the force signaled by the sentence mood, and *pragmatic idioms*.

Performative expressions are the most well-known lexical devices for signaling the basic message force specifically, such as *I claim*, *I promise*, and *I request*. For example:

- **I promise** that I will be there on time.

To clarify, the above sentence does not literally mean that the speaker is conveying a promise. Rather, it constitutes a direct report by the speaker of what the speaker is presently doing. As Bach & Harnish (1979) argue, this sentence only indirectly conveys a promise. Nevertheless, the performative expression *I promise (you)* has become standardized, with the result that it is routinely heard not in its reporting sense but in its promising sense. Therefore, the previous sentence is effectively ambiguous. We have two separate meanings, first: an expression of belief that I promise that I will be there on time; and second: a promise that I will be there on time

Pragmatic idioms, on the other hand, are expressions for which there is no plausible inferential path leading from literal, direct meaning to the accepted basic pragmatic signal. In general, pragmatic idioms are divided into: *force idioms*, which signal the intended basic message force, and *message idioms*, which signal the entire basic message.

Force idioms are the expressions *please (kindly)* and *perhaps (maybe)*. When *please* occurs before an imperative structure, it signals that the speaker intends the utterance to be taken as a request, and only as a request. For example:

- Can you **please** help me?
- **Perhaps**, take an aspirin.
- **Let us (Let's)** try it again.
- **If only** John were here now.

In the first sentence, the presence of *please (kindly)*, has the direct basic force of a request rather than any other force for which it might be eligible. Whereas, in the second sentence, *perhaps (maybe)* occurs before an imperative, it narrows the force of the utterance to a suggestion. In the third sentence, on the other hand, force idiom

signals a speaker suggestion. The last sentence represents force idiom that signaling the speaker's intention to express a wish.

In addition, there is a relatively large residue of force idioms signaling a basic message force which don't fit neatly into any category. Some of them don't have a full proposition but merely a noun phrase, and nearly all require a specific form of the proposition. Such as: *In case you didn't hear, Mark my words, I'll be damned if, Where does he get off, etc.*

Message idioms, on the other hand, signal the entire basic message. These message idioms can be divided into: simple expressions, proverbs, and rhetorical questions. For example:

-Get a horse. (Directive to hurry up) = simple expression

-A stitch in time saves nine. = proverb

-Does a snake do push-ups? = rhetorical question

### 3.1.3 Hybrid basic markers:

Hybrid basic markers are markers which involve a specific structure in combination with certain lexical conditions. There are three general types: *declarative-based*, *interrogative-based*, and *imperative-based*. ( see diagram 2)

Declarative-based hybrids represent a declarative followed by a sentence-final interrogative tag which consists of the declarative tense-carrying element with a change of polarity followed by the sentence subject in pronominal form. For example:

- John saw Mary, **didn't he?**

- John didn't see Mary, **did he?**

To clarify, the declarative sentence alone signals a basic message of speaker belief that the speaker intends to convey the claim that John saw Mary, while the presence of the tag renders an entirely different basic message, namely, a request that the addressee confirm that John saw Mary.

Interrogative-based hybrids represent requests for permission, the *May I* has become standardized to signal a polite request, when used with verbs such as *see, have, look at, hold, and touch* which denote a future state of the speaker under the addressee's direct control. For example:

-**May I** see that vase?

-**May I** have the second one from the left?

Interrogative-based hybrids can also be used to represent a speaker request for action. For example:

- **Will (would/won't/wouldn't) you** do that?

- Do that, **can (could/can't/couldn't) you?**

A third interrogative-based form of the interrogative-based hybrids involves a suggestion to do the opposite of the action denoted. For example:

- **Why** take an aspirin now? = **I suggest that** you do not take an aspirin now.

- **Why not** take an aspirin now? = **I suggest** you take an aspirin now.

Imperative-based hybrid marker is the third type of the hybrid basic markers. In general there are two kinds of imperative-based hybrids. The first one represents an order could be heard as a suggestion. This suggestion is usually followed by a declarative stating the consequences for not complying with the directive. When the speaker is the subject of the statement, the declarative is usually heard as a threat. For example:

-Eat up, or you'll be hungry. =If you don't eat up, you'll be hungry.

The second type of the imperative-based hybrids, on the other hand, represents that the imperative does not signal speaker desire but signals that a conditional interpretation is required and the declarative here takes on the force of a strong claim, which may or may not be adversely interpreted. For example:

-Smile, and the world will love you. = If you smile, the world will love you.

### 3.2 Commentary Pragmatic Markers

The commentary pragmatic markers are lexical expressions which have both a representational meaning specifying an entire message, and a procedural meaning signaling that this message is to function as a comment on some aspect of the basic message. Such as: frankly, stupidly, reportedly, etc.

Commentary pragmatic markers can be classified into: *Assessment markers, evidential markers, emphasis markers, Hearsay markers, Manner-of-speaking markers, Mitigation markers.* ( see diagram 3)

#### 3.2.1 Assessment markers

Assessment markers signal the speaker's evaluation of the state of the world represented in the proposition. These assessment markers are primarily adverbs, such as: *artfully, astonishingly, cleverly, conveniently, cunningly, curiously, delightfully, disappointingly, disturbingly, foolishly, hopefully, ideally, importantly, incredibly, inevitably, ironically, tragically, (un)luckily, (un)expectedly, (un)fortunately, (un)happily, (un)reasonably, (un)remarkably, understandably, wisely, wrongly, etc.* For example:

- **Fortunately**, he is covered by medical insurance.

- **Sadly**, Mary arrived 5 minutes too late to meet the deadline.

#### 3.2.2 Manner-of-speaking markers

Manner-of-speaking markers are markers with which the speaker can signal a comment on the manner in which the basic message is being conveyed. Adverbials falling into this group such as: *bluntly, briefly, candidly, confidentially, crudely, fairly, frankly,*

*generally, honestly, ironically, metaphorically, objectively, personally, precisely, roughly, seriously, simply, strictly, truthfully, etc.* in addition, there are many elaborations and idiomatic phrases function as manner-of-speaking markers such as *rephrased, worded plainly, stated quite simply, off the record, quite frankly, speaking frankly though not as frankly as I'd like to, in the strictest confidence, to be quite blunt about it, etc.* For example:

- **Frankly**, you need to stop now.

In the previous example, there are two messages. The basic message is the addressee need to stop now. The second message is informing the addressee that the message is being conveyed in a frank way.

### 3.2.3 Evidential markers

Evidential markers are adverbs which signal the degree of confidence, positive or negative, weakly or strongly, held by the speaker about the truth of the basic message. For example:

- **Indeed**, I promise to be on time.

- **Undeniably** I blame you for all my troubles.

However, those evidential markers, such as *certainly, indeed, undoubtedly, undeniably, no way, and clearly*, which do occur with some but not all performative, are those reflecting a strong degree of confidence, positive or negative, while markers with a less strong degree of confidence such as *possibly, conceivably, evidently, and supposedly* never occur with a performative. Evidential markers such as: *assuredly, certainly, clearly, conceivably, decidedly, definitely, doubtless, evidently, incontestably, incontrovertibly, indeed, indisputably, indubitably, (most/ quite/ very) likely, obviously, patently, perhaps, possibly, presumably, etc.*

### 3.2.4 Hearsay Markers

Hearsay Markers, in contrast to evidential markers, which signal the speaker's confidence in the truth of the basic message content, hearsay markers, are comments about the type of source of the speaker's information. Hearsay markers such as: *I have heard, it appears, it has been claimed, it is claimed, it is reported, it is rumored, it is said, one hears, purportedly, allegedly, reportedly, they allege, they say, they tell me, etc.* For example:

- **Allegedly**, the justice system in the U.S. has improved over the years.

In the above example, the speaker is sending two messages: first, a basic message, a claim about the U.S. system of justice, and second, a comment on this claim that reports that the source of the information was allegation.

### 3.2.5 Mitigating markers

A fifth type of commentary pragmatic markers are markers of mitigation, which signal the speaker's desire to reduce the face loss associated with the basic message (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1991). According to Fraser(1991), commentary pragmatic markers can express 'pseudo-conditionals' , such as: *If I may interrupt, If it's not too much trouble, If you don't mind, Unless I misunderstood you/Unless I'm hearing it incorrectly*. Despite their appearance, these are not conditional sentences. Rather, they constitute a basic message with a mitigating comment on it. For example:

- **If you don't mind**, bring it to me about 7 this evening.

Mitigating markers can also express another variation which includes the following expressions, all ending with *but*, such as: *I don't mean to pressure you but, I see your point but, I'm no expert but, I'm sorry to have to ask you this but, That may be true but, You have a point but, You're entitled to your opinion but, etc*. For example:

- **That may be true, but** you still have to clean up your room before you go out.

In the previous example, the basic message that follows the mitigation marker is typically disadvantageous to the addressee and thus susceptible to mitigation.

### 3.2.6 Emphasis Markers

Emphasis Markers are the final group of commentary markers in which it has the function of emphasizing the force of the basic message. This group is illustrated by expressions such as: *by no means, by no stretch of the imagination, definitely, DO VP, I cannot too often point out that, I emphasize (strongly) that, I insist that, if I ever heard one, indeed, mark my words, on earth, really, etc*. Some of these markers are performative-like expressions (*I insist*), but they are not true (illocutionary) performative since they are not used here to signal the speaker's basic communicative intention, such as would be done with *I promise*, but rather to signal an emphasis on the basic message. For example:

- **I insist** that you stop it this instant.

### 3.3 Parallel Markers

The third type of pragmatic marker is the parallel marker, whose function is to signal an entire message in addition to the basic message. Parallel markers have many types such as: *vocative markers, speaker displeasure markers, solidarity markers, focusing markers*. ( see diagram 4)

#### 3.3.1 Vocative markers

Vocative markers are those markers which include: Standard Titles such as: *John, Mr. President, Colonel, Mom, Your Honor, Father Brown*; Occupation Name such as: *waiter, doctor, nurse*,

*driver, judge*; General Nouns such as: *brother, boys, guys, ladies and gentlemen, man, young lady*; Pronominal Forms such as: *you, somebody, everyone, anyone*. For example:

- **Mr. President**, what position are you taking today?
- **Waiter**, please bring me another fork.

To clarify, the speaker is explicitly sending the message that the addressee of this message is Mr. President or the waiter.

### 3.3.2 Speaker displeasure markers

Speaker displeasure markers are the second group of parallel markers. They signal the speaker's displeasure. In this case, the parallel marker signals a message of the speaker expressing annoyance, but it is not usually clear whether the addressee or the situation is the target of the anger. This group of markers includes: *damned, damn well, for the love of God/Mike, for the last time, how many times have I told you, in blue blazes, in God's name, in heaven's name, on me, right now, the hell, the devil, and the heck*. For example:

- Sally. Come over here right now!
- How many times have I told you to fix the engine?

### 3.3.3 Solidarity markers

Solidarity markers are the third subclass of parallel markers, which indicate solidarity. Solidarity markers includes: *my sweetie, my friend, one guy to another, her superior...etc.* for example:

- My sweetie, have to get your stuff.
- As her superior, I am authorized to tell her that she has been selected to go to attend the conference.

### 3.3.4 Focusing Markers

Focusing Markers, on the other hand, is the final subclass of parallel markers signals focusing or refocusing on the topic at hand. Focusing Markers, such as: *alright, here, listen, look (here), now, so, well...etc.* for example:

- I think you should be concerned. **Now**, take a look over here for a minute.
- Alright, what do we have here? (on entering the room and seeing a mess)

### 3.4 Discourse Markers

The discourse marker is the fourth and final type of pragmatic marker. This type of pragmatic markers signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse. According to Schiffrin, 1987; Blakemore, 1987, 1992; Fraser, 1990, 1996, in contrast to the other pragmatic markers, discourse markers do not contribute to the representative sentence meaning, but only to the procedural meaning: they provide instructions to the addressee on how the utterance to which the discourse marker is attached, is to be interpreted.

Schiffrin (1987) refers to different type of discourse markers which are to some extent similar to Halliday and Hassan (1976) conjunctives. Discourse markers can be divided into four main categories, these are: topic change markers, contrastive markers, elaborative markers, and inferential markers. These connective elements represent the generalized types of connection which are recognized as holding between sentences. As Halliday and Hassan (1976) believed these connections are not logical but textual.

In general, discourse markers can be divided into four types, these are: *topic change markers, contrastive markers, elaborative markers, inferential.* ( see diagram 5)

#### **3.4.1 Topic change markers**

Topic change markers are these markers, which indicate that the utterance following constitutes, in the speaker's opinion, a departure from the current topic. Topic change markers include: *back to my original point, before I forget, by the way, incidentally, just to update you, parenthetically, returning to my point, that reminds me.* For example:

- I think we can go next week. It's our anniversary. Incidentally, when is yours?

#### **3.4.2 Contrastive markers**

The second group of discourse markers is the contrastive markers, in which are signaling that the utterance following is either a denial or a contrast of some proposition associated with the preceding discourse. Contrastive markers include: *all the same, anyway, but, contrariwise, conversely, despite (this/that), even so, however, in any case/rate/event, in spite of (this/ that), in comparison (with this/that), in contrast (to this/that), instead (of doing this/that), nevertheless, nonetheless, (this/that point) notwithstanding, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather (than do this/that), regardless (of this/that), still, that said, though, yet.* For example:

- John is here. However, he isn't going to stay.

#### **3.4.3 Elaborative markers**

Elaborative markers constitute the third class of discourse markers and signal that the utterance following constitutes a refinement of some sort on the preceding discourse. Elaborate markers include: *above all, also, alternatively, analogously, besides, correspondingly, equally, for example/instance, further(more), in addition, in any case/event, in fact, in other words, in particular, indeed, likewise, more accurately, more precisely, more specifically, moreover, on that basis, on top of it all, otherwise, similarly, what is more.* For example:

- She did it. What is more, she enjoyed doing it.

### 3.4.4 Inferential markers

The last category of the discourse markers is the inferential discourse markers. Inferential markers are expressions which signal that the force of the utterance is a conclusion which follows from the preceding discourse. Inferential markers are included: *accordingly, after all, all thing considered, as a consequence, as a logical conclusion, as a result, because of this/that, consequently, for this/that reason, hence, in this/that case, it can be concluded that, it stands to reason that, of course, on this/that condition, so, then, therefore, thus.* For example:

- Mrs. Smith went home. After all, she was sick.

Diagram (1)

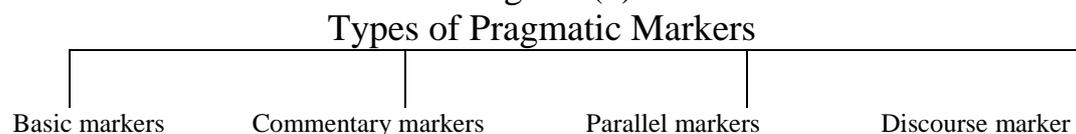


Diagram (2)

#### Basic markers

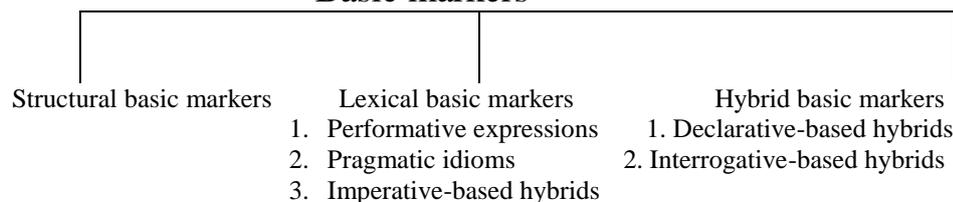


Diagram (3)

#### Commentary markers

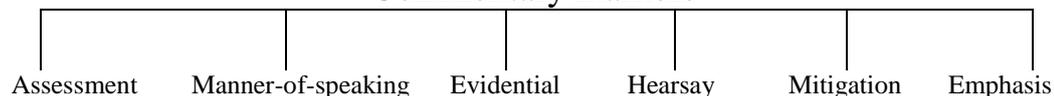


Diagram (4)

#### Parallel markers



Diagram (5)

#### Discourse markers



#### 4. Previous Studies

Pragmatic markers, in general, have been investigated by many linguists. Romero-Trillo (2002) found the use of a set of pragmatic markers by native and non-native speakers of English in his study. However, Hasselgreen (2004) at her study addressed the issue of proficiency level in relation to a large set of pragmatic markers. She also found a complex pattern of learners using different markers than native speakers to perform various communicative functions. In addition, she determined that the frequency with which native speakers used pragmatic markers was significantly higher than that of both nonnative speaker groups. These findings are also supported by Müller's (2005) investigation of the use of *so*, *like*, *well*, and *you know* by native speakers and German learners of English. Analyzing data from a paired silent film retelling, she found overall significant underuse of these markers by the learners.

Fung and Carter (2007), on the other hand, compared a corpus of elicited classroom data from intermediate- advanced learners of English in Hong Kong with the British English corpus. They found that non-native speakers largely underuse pragmatic markers in comparison to native speakers. Analyzing corpora of spoken data from Spanish native and non-native learners of English, he determined that native speaker adults used markers such as *you know*, *I mean*, or *you see* at a significantly higher rate than non-native speaker adults.<sup>4</sup>

Hellermann and Vergun (2007) also examined the interaction of proficiency level with PM use, although they limited their analysis to a small set of expressions. They investigated video recordings of classroom interaction and interviews of 17 adult learners of English with no previous formal English language instruction. Focusing on the PMs *well*, *you know*, and *like*, they analyzed the interaction of PM use and proficiency level. Their findings were indicated that the use of PMs for *well*, *you know*, and *like* went up with each proficiency level.

In fact, these previous studies focus on analyzing the pragmatic meanings and functions of individual pragmatic markers like *well* and *you know* as well as pragmatic markers in general. Their research has showed that pragmatic markers work as a linguistic structure that does not exert any effect on the truth-value of the utterance, but expresses attitudinal and procedural meanings. They reflect the adaptation made by language users to contexts; meanwhile, they help language users construct discourse and perform different pragmatic functions to facilitate communication. In this connection, pragmatic markers may be classified into three categories: (1) markers indicate that the present utterance and the previous one are semantically or logically related; (2) markers that are mostly hedges and show that the utterance introduced by pragmatic markers has no necessary logical relation

with the previous or the following utterance in discourse progressing; and (3) markers that signal the introduction of the following utterance without positing its logical connection with the previous one.

As a matter of fact, these previous studies as well as the present research paper will equip the syllabus designers with principles to determine the learning goals of the variety of pragmatic functions and include activities in which the students can participate actively, as well as communicative, cooperative tasks that allow the use of pragmatic markers. If the materials developers are aware of the importance of the pragmatic markers, they will include pragmatic components in their textbooks in an explicit way. The raised consciousness of pragmatic markers may be an advantageous beginning for the learners to acquire the pragmatic functions, especially the pragmatic functions which have been underused in the sequential and rhetorical structures.

### **5. Factors that Affect Pragmatic Markers**

The previous studies have shown that EFL learners have not succeeded in acquiring the use of pragmatic markers in comparison with the native speakers, In addition, EFL learners showed obvious differences in pragmatic marker use. Since the use of pragmatic markers can contribute to naturalness and interactivity of speech, this deficiency in pragmatic marker use results in an unnatural and awkward speech patterns. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), pragmatic markers encode procedural meaning and cannot be brought to consciousness. For this reason it is often difficult to notice or to acquire pragmatic markers. But this is only one explanation for the learners' difficulty in acquiring pragmatic markers. Hence, there are other possible factors contributing to the learners' acquisition of pragmatic markers such as: noticing of pragmatic markers, instruction on pragmatic markers, and processing of pragmatic markers.

#### **5.1 Noticing of Pragmatic Markers**

Schmidt (1990) believed that the process of learning can occur only when the noticed input can become an intake. Therefore, a degree of awareness is important before input can be incorporated into a developing interlanguage system.

Theoretically speaking, the more frequent a pragmatic marker is in the input stream, the more likely it is to be noticed and then become integrated into the interlanguage system. Thus, it is suggested that, in order to facilitate their acquisition of pragmatic markers, the learners must be exposed more to spoken discourse and be instructed on the use of pragmatic markers. Subsequently, the more a pragmatic marker stands out in the input stream, the more likely that it will be noticed. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), pragmatic markers express procedural information and cannot be brought to consciousness. In

other words, pragmatic markers are not perceptively salient because they do not express conceptual meaning. Therefore, there is slim chance for pragmatic markers to be noticed and acquired by the learners.

Accordingly, the lack of frequent input as well as perceptive salience and instruction may lead to the learners' failure to acquire pragmatic markers. To ensure their acquisition of pragmatic markers, formal instruction should be adopted so that pragmatic markers are frequent and prominent enough to be noticed then acquired. Formal instruction should take processing capacity and the current state of the learners' interlanguage into consideration, as well task difficulty. As a result, this will serve: on one hand, it encourages learners to compare their expectations of native-speaker English and the reality of native-speaker English, and on the other hand, it encourages learners to compare their words with what native speakers would say.

### **5.2 Instruction on Pragmatic Markers**

Instruction can be conducted in various ways. It can be directed at cognitive goals, for example, focusing on drawing the learners' attention to the pragmatic markers used by native speakers and allowing them to acquire the pragmatic use of pragmatic markers and thus developing their communicative competence. Instruction can also be directed at metacognitive goals, attempting to train the learners to use effective learning strategies. It is more desirable for the learners to acquire the pragmatic use of pragmatic markers in carefully designed tasks that can produce (pseudo)-natural foreign language context. The design of the tasks for instruction should balance the chance for a focus on both the form and functions of pragmatic markers in communication to maximize the efficiency of the acquisition process of pragmatic markers. Within given information-processing capacities, the tasks should be less demanding, for less attention will be channeled for task transaction and more attention can become available for a focus on pragmatic markers. In short, through attention-manipulation in formal instruction on pragmatic markers, more attention will be available to focus on pragmatic markers in communication, yielding a more effective acquisition process of pragmatic markers. As a result, the product of such acquisition can facilitate the use of pragmatic markers.

### **5.2 Processing of Pragmatic Markers**

Since pragmatic makers do not express conceptual meaning, they cannot be processed before content words. Additionally, there is a lack of exposure to the use of pragmatic markers in the input material, as can be seen from the data analysis presented earlier in the present study. So it is even less likely for the learners to process pragmatic markers. Meanwhile pragmatic markers cannot be seen as

non-meaningful, for they do express procedural meaning. Only when the learners are able to process the content without extra attention resources is it possible for pragmatic markers to be processed, due to the learners' limited processing capacity.

According to Skehan (1998) the processing approach asserts that it is useful to train language learners in effective processing and to make them more aware of the relevant cues in the language input so that form-meaning links are more likely to be addressed. However, VanPattern(1996)'s model of processing and acquisition, instruction on the input processing of pragmatic markers should be focused on the input-to-intake stage; where the input is processed to make the form of pragmatic markers more relevant in order to encourage learners to deliberately attempt to focus on them. Such instruction can maximize the efficiency of this stage in the processing of pragmatic markers so that the process of acquisition can work more effectively.

#### **6. How Pragmatic Markers Should be Taught? Some Effective Teaching Suggestions**

Over the past two decades, researchers have established that a foreign language learner's development of various aspects of pragmatic competence may be facilitated by the instruction of pragmatic routines and strategies in the foreign language classroom (Kasper, 1992). When such instruction is explicit, it appears to be particularly beneficial since it enables learners to develop an awareness and understanding of the differences between L1 and L2 or FL pragmatic preferences.

Explicit teaching will strengthen EFL learners' pragmatic competence in spoken and written language by incorporating the use of pragmatic markers into the language curriculum to improve their use of pragmatic markers, to enhance natural and fluent conversation, to help avoid misunderstanding in communication, and essentially, to provide learners with a sense of security in FL.

McCarthy and Carter (1995) have proposed the "Illustration-Interaction-Induction-Internalization" approach, to teach pragmatic markers in EFL classroom. It is an appropriate strategy to provide interpretive clues to the interlocutor as to how the upcoming discourse should be interpreted. "Illustration" refers to the presentation of authentic data of pragmatic marker use in the relevant context. "Interaction" suggests introducing learners to discourse-sensitive activities which are designed to raise the awareness of the interactive properties of pragmatic marker use through observation and class discussion. "Induction" is to encourage learners to draw conclusions about the pragmatic functions of a given pragmatic marker and the capacity of noticing the differences. "Internalization" refers to the capacity to use markers such as *well, you know, I mean, and actually*

appropriately. In addition, they also believe that the use of activities like language observation, problem-solving, and cross-language comparisons, can be more helpful in bringing out the meaning and usage of various pragmatic markers in a natural manner, since pragmatic markers interact with the discourse environment and convey meaning which cannot be straightforwardly brought to consciousness.

Teachers should make it clear to students that incorrect or inappropriate use of pragmatic markers can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in establishing a coherent interpretation of discourse as well as limiting the extent to which interpersonal relations can be effectively expressed. Teachers should also clarify various pragmatic functions of pragmatic markers to the students, especially the pragmatic functions in the rhetorical structure and the sequential structure, which have been underused significantly by EFL learners. However, one of the most effective ways to teach the use of pragmatic markers is to ask students to infer the correct marker from the context by means of some exercises specially designed to challenge students. Teachers can have students observe how pragmatic functions are conveyed within the context of the dialogue by means of these pragmatic markers. According to Kasper (1992), teachers can help expand students' pragmatic competence by raising their awareness of what is and is not appropriate in given contexts.

## **7. Methodology**

### **7.1 Procedures**

In order to achieve the aim of the present study ' the pre-post test- design ' has been used, in which two equivalent groups were chosen randomly. One of them was chosen to be a control group and the second one was chosen to be an experimental group.

### **7.2 Population and Sample Selection**

Generally, population is the group to which a researcher would like the results of the study to be generalized. Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a number of individuals for any study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected (Gay, 2010:128).

Population of the present study is the students of the two departments of English- college of languages and human sciences and college of education- in Garmian University. The third year students of each college were chosen to be the sample of the study. The college of education was chosen to be the control group and the college of languages and human sciences was chosen to be the experimental group. The total number of the sample of the subjects is 68 each section consisted of 34 students.

**Table 1**  
The Sample of the Study

Group	Section College	Types of Treatment	Subjects No.
Control	Languages and human sciences	treatment sessions with pragmatic markers	34
Experimental	education	held back to receive such a treatment	34
Total			68

### 7.3 Equivalence of the Sample Subjects

Before starting the experiment, the two groups of students (the experimental group and the control group) have been equalized in some variables, such as: the students' gender, age, the academic level of the mothers, the academic level of fathers and students' achievement in reading comprehension in the previous stage may play an effective role and make a difference in their achievement in English (Good and Colin, 1976:366).

#### 7.3.1 Gender Variable

The gender variable has been calculated by applying the Chi-square formula. it has been found out that there is no statistically significant differences between the two groups since the computed  $X^2$  value which is (0.629) is lower than the critical  $X^2$  value which is (5.99) at (2) degree of freedom and at (0.75) level of significance.

**Table ( 2 )**

The Statistics of the Equalization of the two Groups according to the Gender Variable

Group	No.	Female	Male	Computed $X^2$ -Value	Critical $X^2$ -Value	d.f	Level of Significant
Experimental	34	22	12	0.629	5.99	2	0.05
Control	34	32	11				
Total	68	54	23				

**Table ( 3 )**

The Mean, Standard Deviation and "T" value of the Subjects' Age According to their Gender in the Experimental and Control Groups

Gender	Group	No.	Mean	Variance	Slandered Deviation	d.f.	T.V.		Level of significant at 0.05
							Computed	Critical	
Total Sample Subjects	Exp.	68	5079	9775.2	98.87	134	0.208	1.96	Not Significant
	Cont.		5076	9531.6	97.63				
Female	Exp.	22	5055	9802.9	99.01	66	0.372	0.998	Not Significant
	Cont.	23	5064	9535.52	97.65				
Male	Exp.	12	5104	9631.46	98.14	66	0.164	1.998	Not Significant
	Cont.	11	5088	9395.42	96.93				
Female and Male	Exp.	34	5055	9802.98	99.01	66	1.676	1.998	Not Significant
	Cont.	34	4104	9631.46	98.14				

### 7.3.2 The Academic Level of the Mother Variable

The Chi-square formula was used to calculate the academic level of the mother variable. It is found that there is no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group at the academic level of the mother variable since the computed X<sup>2</sup> value which is (0.865) is lower than the critical X<sup>2</sup> value which is (9.488) at (4) degree of freedom and at ( 0.05) level of significance see Table (4).

**Table (4)**

The X<sup>2</sup> Statistics of the Equalization of the Two Groups at the Academic Level of the Mother Variable

Gro up	N o.	Prima ry	Intermed iate	Preparat ory	Univers ity	Compu ted X <sup>2</sup> - value	Criti cal X <sup>2</sup> - value	d. f.	Level of signific ant at 0.05
Exp.	34	14	10	8	6	0.865	9.488	4	Not significant
Cont.	34	9	9	5	7				
Total	68	23	19	13	13				

### 7.3.3 The Academic Level of the Father Variable

By applying the Chi-square formula, it is also found out that there is no statistically significant difference among the experimental group and the control group at the academic level of the father variable since the computed  $X^2$  value which is (0.44) is lower than the critical  $X^2$  value which is (2.06) at (4) degree of freedom and at (0.05) level of significance. See Table (5).

**Table (5)**

The  $X^2$  Statistics of the Equalization of the Two Groups at the Academic Level of the Father Variable

Group	N	Primary	Intermediate	Preparatory	University	Computed $X^2$ -value	Critical $X^2$ -value	d. f.	Level of significant at 0.05
Exp.	34	7	9	12	7	0.44	2.06	4	Not significant
Cont.	34	6	5	14	8				
Total	68	13	14	26	15				

### 7.4 The Experimental Procedures

To achieve the aim of the present study, both groups were asked to write an essay about one topic. The researcher has analyzed the misuse and inappropriateness of PMs occurring in their writing at the pre-test. Then treatment sessions were conducted for experimental group while during that period, control group held back to receive such a treatment. After the treatment sessions the researcher has investigated the relevant and suitable application of PMs appearing in the experimental group writing at the post-test.

### 7.5 The Results

In general, there is deficiency in the students' performance in the essay writing. However, they unfortunately lack the ability to write a cohesive, meaningful, and good essay. Therefore they definitely in need to have intensive treatment to enhance their writing ability. Accordingly, the results of the present study reveal the effectiveness of teaching pragmatic markers to students in enhancing their awareness and sensitivity of discourse and consequently raising their writing levels. Finally, the researcher has recommended that teaching pragmatic markers to learners should be paid more attention.

Results obtained from the achievement test indicate statistically significant better achievement of the experimental group than the control group. This is represented by the statistical indicators of means, Standard Deviation, Variance, and T-Value shown in Table (6).

**Table (6)**

The Mean, Standard Deviation and " T " value of the Subjects' of the Experimental and Control Groups in the post test

Group	No.	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Computed T-value	Critical T-value	d.f.	Level of significant at 0.01
Exp.	34	28.265	41.958	6.478	3.363	2.657	66	significant
Cont.	34	22.382	62.122	7.882				

Results presented in the table ( 6 ) prove that developing the students' awareness of the importance of pragmatic markers has a positive effect on the achievement of students. The results have revealed that there are statistically significant differences between the mean score of the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group in their achievement on the post test.

### **8. Recommendations**

One of the aims of learner training is to help learners become independent in the learning process and become more confident with writing task of language learning. Therefore, learners who can become more educated can better composing of cohesion text. It is also believed that during English teaching, especially during English writing teaching, pragmatic markers should be paid attention.

It is believed that when we are planning to write a well-organized essay, cohesion and coherence must be taken into consideration. The organization of the sentences of any text or a written discourse is not like putting up bricks one upon one, there are some relationship between those sentences. Halliday and Hassan have defined a text as “not just a string of sentences. It is not simply a long grammatical unit, something of the same kind as a sentence, but differing from it in sizes a sort of super sentence, a semantic unit“(1976:291).Therefore, using pragmatic markers lead to proper communication and organization, not just in speaking but also in writing.

Schiffrin (1987: 67) believes that pragmatic markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties (e.g. semantic and pragmatic meanings, source, functions) of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of markers are so broad, any and all analyses of markers-even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion their uses-can teach us something about their role in discourse. Thus, there is an urgent need for enhance the learners awareness in

developing their ability in the use of pragmatic markers correctly during their essay writing. It is also recommended that:

1. Raising learner awareness about the importance of the pragmatic markers in writing.
2. Teaching pragmatic markers to learners should be paid more attention.
3. Encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use the pragmatic markers during their essay writing.
4. Providing the learners with models of the use of certain the pragmatic markers during their essay writing.
5. Highlighting cross-cultural differences in the pragmatic markers use.
6. Teaching the pragmatic markers by using different techniques.
7. Providing opportunities for the learners to practice the use of the pragmatic markers during their essay writing.

## **9. Conclusion**

Writing skill is one of the important and difficult tasks to learn. However, learning to write well of course is a matter of art, inherited in some people by nature; learners are required to be equipped with some knowledge as well one of the useful elements is to be familiar with text binding devices, among them pragmatic markers. Writing not only employs the procedure of a good written text, but depicts and values the coherence and cohesion, too. Composing a lot of sentences without considering the cohesive ties fails to negotiate the inter-related events intended to be decoded by the reader. A good writing is not only grammatical, but also cohesive and coherent (Feng, 2010). Then the presence of pragmatic markers is a necessary condition to have a smooth and enjoyable written text.

Pragmatic markers are an adaptive device helping to manage and maintain the on-going interaction in verbal communication. In context, it serves as a meta-knowledge indicator and its function of calling attention leads to the increase of shared knowledge between the participants. It has been concluded that the use of pragmatic markers appears as a result of adaptation to the context in communication. In addition, the speakers use pragmatic markers not only to organize discourse and attract hearers' attention, but also to express speakers' attitude and maintains discourse coherence.

It is has been concluded that the question of pragmatic markers can be one of basic process in developing of writing ability, and learners profit from it and use it in an efficient way. Pragmatic markers have main role in cohesion of text, and should hold a central place in teaching writing. The results of the present study have revealed the effectiveness of teaching pragmatic markers to students in

enhancing their awareness and sensitivity of discourse and consequently raising their writing levels.

### References

- Aijmer, K. (2002). *English Discourse Particles: Evidence from a Corpus*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Aijmer, K. (2013). *Understanding Pragmatic Markers: a Variational Pragmatic Approach*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Andersen, G. (2001). *Pragmatic Markers and Sociolinguistic Variation: A Relevance-Theoretic Approach to the Language of Adolescents*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Bach, K & R. Harnish. (1979). *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*. MIT Press.
- Blakemore, D. . (1987) *Semantic Constraints on Relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blakemore, D. (1992). *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Blakemore, D. (2008). Discourse Markers. In R. L. Horn & G. Ward (Eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics* (pp. 221-240). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Brown, P & S. Levinson (1987) *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Carter, R., & McCarthy, M. (2006). *Cambridge grammar of English: A comprehensive guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Feng, L. (2010). Discourse Markers in English Writing. *Journal of International Social Research*, Vol. 3/11, Spring 2010.
- Fraser, Bruce. (1990). An approach to Discourse Markers. *Journal of linguistics* 14.
- Fraser, Bruce. (1991). Perspectives on Politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14.
- Fraser, Bruce. (1996). Pragmatic Markers. *Pragmatics* 6 (2): 167–190.
- Fraser, B. (1999). What are Discourse Markers? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 931-952.
- Fung, L., & Carter, R. (2007). Discourse Markers and Spoken English: Native and Learner Use in Pedagogic Settings. *Applied Linguistics*, 28, 410-439.
- Gay, L. R. & Geoffrey E.M. (2010) *Educational Research. Competencies for Analysis and Application*. Columbus: Prentice Hall.
- Good, Thomas L. and Colin N. Power (1976). The Effect of Teaching: an Optimistic Note. *The Elementary School Journal*. Vol. 76, No. 6.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Hellermann, J., & Vergun, A. (2007). Language Which is not Taught: The Discourse Marker Use of Beginning Adult Learners of English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 157-179.
- Hasselgreen, A. (2004). *Testing the Spoken English of Young Norwegians: A study of test validity and the role of "smallwords" in contributing to pupils' fluency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kasper, G. (1992). *Pragmatic Transfer*. *Second Language Research*, 8(3), 203-231.

McCarthy, M. J., & Carter, R.A. (1995). Spoken Grammar: What is it and How Can We Teach it? *English Language Teaching Journal*, 49(3), 207-218.

Müller, S. (2005). *Discourse markers in native and non-native English discourse*.

Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Overstreet, M., & Yule, G. (1997). Fostering Pragmatic Awareness. *Applied Language Learning*, 10(1), 1-14.

Romero-Trillo, J. (2002). The pragmatic Fossilization of Discourse Markers in non- Native Speakers of English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 769-784.

Romero-Trillo, J. (2012). Pragmatic Markers. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*.

Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, R. (1990). The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11(2), 120-158.

Schourup, L. (1999). Discourse Markers. *Lingua*, 107(3-4), 227-265.

Skehan, P. (1998). *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Towell, R., Hawkins, R., & Bazergui, N. (1996). The Development of Fluency in Advanced Learners of French. *Applied linguistics*, 17, 84-119.

VanPattern, B. (1996). *Input Processing and Grammar Instruction: Theory and Research*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

### ملخص البحث

ان عملية الكتابة لا تتضمن فقط كتابة نص جيد، وانما تتضمن ايضا اهمية وجود تماسك وتناسق للنص المكتوب. فأن أنشاء نص مكون من مجموعة من الجمل بدون أخذ الروابط التماسكية بعين الاعتبار، يؤدي الى الفشل في اىصال الرسالة المرجوة من النص المكتوب. وعليه فأن وجود العلامات النصية هو شرط اساسي في جعل النص المكتوب اكثر سلاسة. ولذلك، فان كتابة اي مقالة تتطلب الاتقان والدقة في اختيار العلامات الواقعية النصية. فهذه العلامات، في اعتقاد الكثير من الكتاب، تعد جزء مهم من كفاءة المتعلمين واستراتيجيتهم في الكتابة. ان وجود مثل هذه العلامات في نص يعمل على دعم وتقوية النص ولا يغير من معنى النص. فالعلامات الواقعية مثل: بالطبع، بالتأكيد، حسنا... الخ. تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى اختبار اداء المتعلمين في استخدام العلامات الواقعية. وتهدف ايضا الى التقصي عن اثر تطوير هذه العلامات عندهم على تحسين قابليتهم في كتابة المقالة. وسيجيب البحث ايضا عن الاسئلة الآتية: كيف هو اداء المتعلمين في كتابة المقالة؟ ما هو الفرق بين المجموعة الضابطة والمجموعة التجريبية؟ هل هنالك علاقة ذات اهمية بين تطوير قابلية المتعلمين باستخدام العلامات الواقعية وبين تحسين قابليتهم في كتابة المقالة.