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硕 士 学 位 论 文

A Functional Approach to Pragmatic Markers in Verbal Communication

言语交际中语用标记语功能分析

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Synopsis

Pragmatic markers are so pervasively used in daily language that the proper use and interpretation of them consist of a considerable part of pragmatic or communicative competence. The study of this linguistic phenomenon thus bears both theoretic and practical significance. In the past ten years, the study of pragmatic markers turned into a growing industry in linguistics. However, researches on PMs, though rich and fruitful, are far from being homogeneous and complete, that is, the study of PMs does not constitute a unitary approach.

While these researches have investigated pragmatic markers from different perspectives, thus causing unavoidable disagreements regarding such fundamental issues as their terminology, definition, classification and functions, it is generally accepted that such expressions do not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance. The fact that taking a pragmatic marker away from the host discourse segment it is attached to does not affect the sentence's grammaticality judgments or its propositional content but does affect the pragmatic appropriateness and interpersonal adaptation on the social level indicates that their employment is not syntactically or semantically oriented but pragmatically motivated (Schourup, 1999).

Through reviewing previous studies of PMs, we argue that the most influential approaches to PMs include coherence-based perspective, syntactic-pragmatic perspective, cognitive-pragmatic perspective. On the basis of the previous studies on PMs, this thesis attempts to combine the three prominent analytical framework in the study of the pragmatic multi-functions of PMs in verbal communication, aiming at more comprehensive descriptions and explanations of PMs' functions. Of course, in the present study, the theoretical emphasis is put on the multi-facets of interpersonal communication and on the contributions of pragmatic markers as linguistic and contextual clues to meaning production and interpretation in interaction, and also on the multifunctionality of pragmatic markers, which are elusive in meaning and ready for new senses or functions in interactive discourse. Then some vital issues relevant to PMs are explained, including interpretative orientation of PMs; inference of explicatures and implicatures and PMs; conceptual and procedural meaning of PMs

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and PMs' constraints on implicature. On the basis of the preceding analyses, we put forward three main functions of PMs in interactive communication, that is, PMs function as textual management, social management and metalinguistic monitor.

In addition, by virtue of cases study, the thesis provides a more comprehensive account of PMs' properties and multi-functions, confirming the assumption that the use and functions of pragmatic markers are closely related to the multiple goals on different discoursal levels in interpersonal communication. In sum, PMs serve to achieve discourse coherence, organize information, enhance interpersonal relationship and index communicative strategies as well. The meanings and functions of pragmatic markers are constrained by the contextual factors involved in communicative situations.

Key words: Pragmatic marker; Multi-functions; Verbal communication

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摘 要

语用标记语(pragmatic markers)在日常语言使用中几乎无处不在，对其得体的使用和恰如其分的理解是语用能力中很重要的一个方面。因此，对语用标记语的研究有着重要的理论价值和实践意义。最近十多年来，人们对于语用标记语的研究兴趣越来越浓厚。语用标记语的研究成了语言研究中发展迅猛的一个领域。然而，尽管语用标记语的研究成果颇丰，但在很多方面却未达成一致。如现有的研究未能形成统一的研究方法，其重要分歧表现在语用标记语的名称、定义、分类、特点及功能方面。

尽管如此,大多数人一致认为语用标记语不影响话语的真值条件。把语用标记语从其所依附的话语中去掉并不影响该话语的语法正确性也不影响其命题内容，但却影响其语用得体性和社会层面上的人际适应关系。这一事实表明，语用标记语的使用不是出于句法或语义上的需要，而是出于语用方面的因素(Schourup，1999)。

以往语用学界对语用标记语的研究主要从连贯理论、句法-语用和认知-语用的角度进行。基于已有的语用标记语研究，为了能更全面地分析语用标记语在言语交际中的功能，本文将尝试着把这三种研究视角、方法结合起来同时应用于语用标记语的语用功能分析。当然，本文的研究重心还是从语用学的角度论述语用标记语的意义不确定性及其在具体交际语境中的多重功能。在对与其功能密切相关的一些问题包括语用标记语对话语的解释性、语用标记语与话语显意和会话含义的推导、语用标记语的概念性含义和程序性含义以及语用标记语对话语含义的限制进行阐述后，本文提出了语用标记语在言语交际中的三种主要的功能，即语篇管理、社交管理和心理认知监督。

最后本文通过例证分析进一步描述了语用标记语的特征和功能，说明其功能多样性和交际目标的多面性密切相关。总之，语用标记语有助于语篇连贯和组织，有利于改善人际关系以及调整交际策略。语用标记语的功能和作用受制于交际中不同语境因素的制约。

关键词：语用标记语；多功能性；言语交际

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 An Overview of Pragmatic Markers

It is true that most languages in the world comprise a subset of linguistic expressions which neither belong to any of the major syntactic categories nor affect the propositional content of utterances in which they occur. An extensive body of pragmatic and linguistic research deals with this functionally related group of expressions, most often referred to as pragmatic markers (henceforth PMs).

Broadly speaking, the term pragmatic marker covers a wide range of expressive means used as functional clues to the manifestation and interpretation of the speaker's communicative intentions. It refers to linguistic, paralinguistic, or non-verbal elements that signal the speaker's communicative messages as well as his/her communicative attitudes. The pragmatic markers examined in this paper are primarily expressions capable of being morphologically represented, such as sentential conjunctions, parenthetical adverbials, fillers, interjections, for the sake of convenience.

The last 30 years has witnessed a booming study on pragmatic markers in the field of linguistics, pragmatics and allied fields as well. The Pragmatic markers—expressions like *oh, well, and, but, so, ok, you know, I mean*, etc., are abound in segments of verbal communication. These expressions are grouped together functionally and are usually thought not to "affect the propositional content of utterances in which they occur" (Schourup, 1999:227). As the following examples show:

(1) Sheila is rich *but* she is unhappy.
(2) Ben is a New Zealander. *After all* he loves rugby.
(3) A: You take the first turning on the left.
B: *So* we don't go past the university.
(4) I'm just, *well,* fed up with all this.
(5) *Frankly,* I find this color unappealing.

All of the italic words and expressions above are PMs, which do not contribute to

the truth-condition of the sentence in which they occur. It is not difficult to see that all these PMs have pragmatic meaning rather than semantic meaning or syntactic meaning because their absence from the utterances they attach to will not necessarily lead to any grammatical mistake or propositional incompleteness.

Many linguists have studied pragmatic markers from various perspectives and within different frameworks relating to divergent goals of research. Generally speaking, more and more people are interested in the multi-functions of pragmatic markers in speech and writing. Some researches deal with the whole range of pragmatic markers, while most others focus on individual items. Some studies examine the data from written literature in a language, while more recent studies center upon recorded data of conversations in media and actual interactions. As a matter of fact, the expanding study of pragmatic markers has turned into a "growth industry in linguistics" (Fraser, 1999:932).

Despite the fact that researchers have widening interests, they have not come to an agreement upon the definition of the term pragmatic marker. In fact, the problem lies not only with consistence of the term, but also with difficulty in knowing whether these different terms are describing the same set of phenomena. A careful investigation will reveal the divergences between different labels. For example：

Schiffrin (1987:31) defines discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk", such items are found in her rough list of analysis: *oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, I mean, you know, anyway, however*. Blakemore uses the term "the discourse marker"(2002) and "the discourse connective"(1987,1992) to refer to expressions which "impose constraints on relevance in virtue of inferential connections they express"(1987:147),or which "must be broadened to include constraints on all aspects of inferential processing". She claims "if the term 'discourse markers' does indeed refer to a particular class of expressions, then they must have a property which distinguishes them from other discourse operators. This property is generally considered to be their function of marking relationships or connections among units of discourse" (2002:2). She has discussed such markers respectively as *and, after all, although, you see, but, nevertheless, however, moreover, furthermore, so, well.* Andersen(1998,2000,2001:39) uses the term pragmatic marker to "describe a class of short, recurrent

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