

Textual Pragmatic Markers in the Speech of Jordanian University Students: A Functional-Pragmatic Approach



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Keywords:

Linguistic adaption, pragmatic function, pragmatic markers, Relevance Theory, textual marker

Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the use of textual English pragmatic markers (PMs) as used by Jordanian university students by adopting a functional-pragmatic approach to explore the functions of these PMs. It also examined the effect of gender on the use of textual PMs. Participants were 10 fourth-year university students (5 males and 5 females) who studied Translation at Isra Private University. Online interviews, storytelling activities, and a short questionnaire were used to elicit data from the participants. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in light of the study's research questions. The study revealed that the functions of textual markers are: marking contrast, elaborating, reformulating and exemplifying, showing temporal sequence, indicating inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries, signaling shifts or transition of discourse and continuation of discourse, and signaling the opening or closing of opening or closing of discourse. In relation to the use of textual PMs, the results showed that there were no significant differences between males and females.

نشانگرهای کاربردی متنی در گفتار دانشجویان دانشگاه اردن: رویکردی کاربردی-عملی

این مطالعه با هدف بررسی استفاده از نشانگرهای کاربردی متنی انگلیسی (PMs) که توسط دانشجویان دانشگاه اردن استفاده می‌شود با اتخاذ یک رویکرد کاربردی-عملی برای کشف عملکرد این PMs انجام شد. همچنین تأثیر جنسیت بر استفاده از PM های متنی را بررسی کرد. شرکت کنندگان 10 دانشجوی سال چهارم (5 پسر و 5 زن) بودند که در دانشگاه خصوصی اسرا در رشته مترجمی تحصیل کردند. مصاحبه های آنلاین، فعالیت های داینامیک، فعالیت های داستان سرایی و یک پرسشنامه کوتاه برای استخراج داده ها از شرکت کنندگان استفاده شد. داده ها با توجه به سؤالات تحقیق به صورت کیفی و کمی مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت. این مطالعه نشان داد که کارکردهای نشانگرهای متنی عبارتند از: نشانه‌گذاری تضاد، توضیح دادن، دوباره‌سازی و مثال زدن، نشان دادن توالی زمانی، نشان دادن روابط و خلاصه‌های استنتاجی یا قطعی، سیگنال‌دهی تغییر یا انتقال گفتمان و ادامه گفتمان، و علامت دادن به باز یا بسته شدن باز یا بسته شدن گفتمان در رابطه با استفاده از PM های متنی، نتایج نشان داد که بین زن و مرد تفاوت معناداری وجود ندارد. **واژگان کلیدی:** انطباق زبانی، کارکرد عملی، نشانگرهای عمل‌گرا، نظریه ارتباط، نشانگر متنی

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Introduction

Talks, conversations, and speeches in English have many lexical items such as *sure*, *so*, and *and*, that are called PMs. Research on PMs has attracted the attention of many scholars, as they affect the interpretation of utterances. PMs, as essential lexical items, have been investigated by many scholars in different languages such as English (e.g., Fraser, 1999; Blakemore, 2002; Schiffrin, 2003; Jucker and Redeker, 2006), Arabic (e.g., Al-Batal, 1994), Hebrew (e.g., Maschler, 1998; Shloush, 1998; Ziv, 1998), Hungarian (Vaskó, 2000), Chinese (e.g., Tsai & Chu, 2015), Swedish (e.g., Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, 2003) and Spanish (e.g., De Fina, 1997).

According to Anderson (2001), there are two types of PMs: textual markers and interpersonal markers. The functions of these types were described by Anderson (2001, pp. 65-66) in the following quote:

A pragmatic marker that has an interactional function describes what the speaker perceives as the hearer's relation to a communicated proposition/assumption (i.e. it is hearer-oriented). Finally, a pragmatic marker with a textual function describes what the speaker perceives as the relation between sequentially arranged units of discourse, for instance between propositions or communicated assumptions in general.

The functions of textual PMs are presented in Table (1) below. According to Ament, Vidal and Barón (2018, p. 64), these functions are a collection from a review of literature by a number of authors and researchers who have investigated the functions of PMs.

Table 1

Functions of Textual and Interpersonal Markers

Functions of Textual Markers
To show causal relationships to show consequence or effect, to mark the link between two clauses
To mark a contrast between two clauses or between two parts of the discourse
To show a continuation of discourse on the same topic, to add additional information
To elaborate, reformulate or exemplify
To signal the opening or closing of discourse or mark the end or beginning of a turn
To show the temporal sequence between clauses or between two parts of the discourse
To signal shifts or transitions of discourse topics, to mark digression from one topic to another, or to return to a previous topic

This study aimed to investigate the use of textual English PMs as used by Jordanian university students. In addition, the study adopted a functional-pragmatic approach to explore the functions of these textual PMs. This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the textual and English PMs used in the speech of Jordanian university students learners?

2. What are the functions of the textual English PMs as used by the participants?

3. To what extent does gender influence the use of textual English PMs?

2. Theoretical background

In this study two theories have been adopted, these theories are Linguistic adaptation theory and Relevance theory. According to Verschueren (2000), "*Adaptability, then, is the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs*" (p.61). According to Sperber and Wilson (2001), "relevance theory yields hypotheses about the way thoughts follow one another, and about the points at which the individual might turn to the environment, rather than to his own internal resources, for relevant information" (p.147). In other words, the speaker tries to attract the hearer toward his or her points or way of thinking.

Literature Review

There are many studies that have been conducted on the use of textual English PMs. Erman (2001) considers pragmatic markers to be "monitors" as they monitor verbal communication on three levels: textual, social, and metalinguistic. The use of you know by adults and adolescents was examined to determine if there was a difference in relation to the previously mentioned three levels. Erman found that indeed there was a discrepancy in the way adults employed the marker in their speech compared to adolescents. While adults used you know as a textual monitor i. e. to organize their talk in a coherent way, adolescents tend to use this marker as a social and metalinguistic monitor i. e. as an interactional marker. That is, adolescent discourse you know "is more oriented towards the activity of communicating" (2001: 1356) rather than to building textual coherence as adults do.

Some researchers have investigated the use of a particular PM. For example, Bolden (2009) used conversation analysis methodology to investigate a corpus of recorded conversations collected from daily talk to demonstrate another function of so, i.e., achieving incipient actions.

The analysis primarily deals with so as ‘prefacing sequence-initiating actions. It shows that so is used by speakers to signal an action that is about to take place, calling this status ‘emerging from incipency’ and is not defined by the preceding context. She concludes that so can also be used by speakers to establish certain actions to shape their ‘interactional agenda’. This use of so as a discourse marker is meant to create discourse coherence to achieve understanding (Bolden, 2009, p. 996).

Fung and Carter (2007) examined the use of PMs by native English speakers and learners of English from Hong Kong. In this study, secondary school children in Hong Kong have been compared to the British English corpus of the same age group in order to find differences (if any) in the use of PMs. PMs were categorized based on their functions into interpersonal, referential, sequential, or cognitive. The results showed that there were important differences in how second language learners used PMs compared to native English speakers. The results also revealed that native English speakers used PMs for many functions, unlike second language learners. The study concluded with some pedagogical implications such as the need to strengthen learners’ pragmatic competence in spoken language by improving the use of PMs.

Alshbeekat and algahzo (2021) investigated the use of both textual and interpersonal English pragmatic markers in spoken learner English. The study revealed that the text’s pragmatic markers are more commonly used as compared to interpersonal PMs. It also revealed that there is no significant difference among male and female students in using PMs.

A functional pragmatic approach to the study of PMs

This study is different from other studies because of the use of a functional-pragmatic approach to explore the use and functions of textual English PMs by Jordanian university students following some scholars like Blackmore’s Relevance theory (2001). In this approach, the PM is used as a wide concept and includes both coherence functions and communication signs about the explanation and clarifications that a speaker offers for the interlocutor. Andersen (2001, p.30) stated that:

An utterance can be more or less relevant depending on the strength of the contextual effects achieved and the processing costs required (the greater the contextual effects, the higher the relevance; the greater the processing effort, the smaller the relevance).

According to (Wilson and Sperber, 1993) PMs are the crucial elements that help an interlocutor to understand and recognize both implicit and explicit meanings precisely.

Method

In order to achieve the study's objectives in examining the use of textual English PMs by Jordanian EFL learners, a mixed method approach has been used. That is, the researcher has adopted a qualitative approach to find and analyze the participants' interviews for the use and function of PMs and a quantitative approach using SPSS to find the frequencies and percentages of each textual PM. In addition to that, a T-Test has been used in order to find if there are significant differences in the use of textual PMs by male and female participants.

Participants

The participants were 10 fourth-year undergraduate university students who study Translation at Isra University. It included 5 females and 5 males. Their ages range from 22 and 24. The participants have been chosen after a proficiency test to make sure that all students are at the same level. The Oxford quick placement is the placement test that has been used in this study.

Data Analysis Procedure

After finishing the interviews, the storytelling activity, and the questionnaires, the researcher transcribed the utterances that contain both interpersonal and textual PMs by using EudicoLinguistic Annotator (ELAN), version 4.6.2, which was convenient and freely available online. In the first place, the audio recording of the interviews was transcribed into a storytelling activity. Overall, the transcription of data for analysis amounts to 5 hours and 160 minutes. The participants were identified by a unique code which was given to each participant by the researcher. The participants were 10 students (5 males and 5 females). The numbers from 1 to 5 were given to the males, the and numbers from 6 to 10 were given to the females. Besides the numbers, the capital letter S, was used to refer to the student. For example, code S3 is a male student, while S15 is a female Student. This coding facilitated understanding of who took the turn first, or who used the PM in any particular conversation, and avoided confusion between the participants. The textual PMs have been extracted from the data. After that, the researcher tested the reliability by giving the extraction to three professors in order to make sure that the textual PMs are extracted correctly. The functions of textual PMs have been analyzed qualitatively based on Relevance theory and Linguistic adaptation theory. Moreover, quantitative analysis has also been conducted using SPSS analytical tool to find the frequencies and percentages for each PM. In addition to that, a T-Test has been used in order to find if there are significant differences in the use of textual PMs by males and females participants.

Results

After all the data had been collected, the transcription process started. For the 20 interviews and the storytelling activity, the total number of words was 33,975 after the researcher's turn was excluded. The average word count for each interview was 1,698. After transcribing the recordings, all PMs tokens were extracted. Table 1 includes the textual PMs in both the interviews and the storytelling activity.

Table 2

The Textual PMs

Textual PMs	Number of occurrences
So	131
And	121
Because	51
Like	66
Well	3
Yeah	2
Finally	17
Then	29
But	120
However	35
Or	5
Okay	1
Right	13
that' all	11
and then	57
first of all	22
First	45
Secondly	59
I mean	18
that is	89

in the end	22
for example	16
such as	17
After	26
When	41
what about	12
Total	1029

Incidence of using PMs

This part of the analysis aimed to examine the prevalence of using textual PMS among the sample. A total number of 10 interviews were done, 50% (n=5) of the interviews were with male participants, and 50% (n=5) of the interviews were with female participants. Examining the incidence of using textual PMs analysis (table 2) revealed that all participants 100% (n= 10) used the following textual PMs words; “so”; “and”; “like”; “but”; “that is”; and “first”. While the least textual PMs used incident were; “basically” 5% (n= 1); then “totally” 15% (n= 3), and then “for example” 40% (n= 8).

Table 3

Incidence of using PMs related to gender

PMs words		Gender				Total	
		Male		Female		n	%
		N	%	n	%		
So	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
And	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
You know	Yes	7	35	10	50	17	85
	No	3	15	0	0	3	15
In addition	Yes	7	35	9	45	16	80
	No	3	15	1	5	4	20
Like	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100

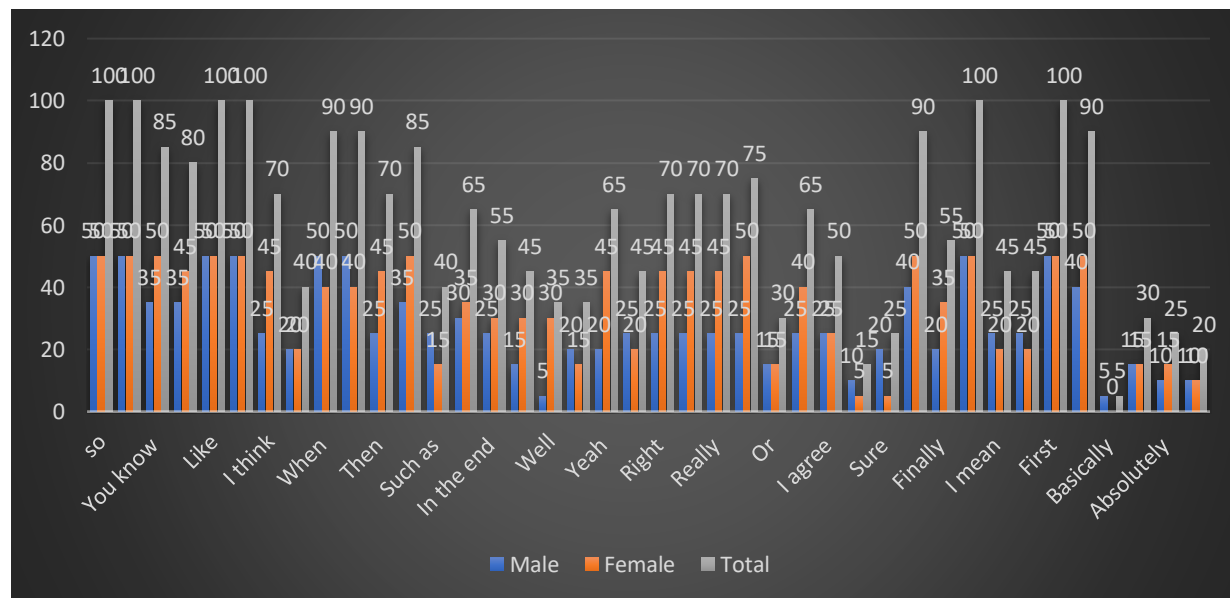
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
But	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
I think	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
For example	Yes	4	20	4	20	8	40
	No	6	30	6	30	12	60
When	Yes	10	50	8	40	18	90
	No	0	0	2	10	2	10
Because	Yes	10	50	8	40	18	90
	No	0	0	2	10	2	10
Then	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
However	Yes	7	35	10	50	17	85
	No	3	15	0	0	3	15
Such as	Yes	5	25	3	15	8	40
	No	5	25	7	35	12	60
After	Yes	6	30	7	35	13	65
	No	4	20	3	15	7	35
In the end	Yes	5	25	6	30	11	55
	No	5	25	4	20	9	45
That's all	Yes	3	15	6	30	9	45
	No	7	35	4	20	11	55
Well	Yes	1	5	6	30	7	35
	No	9	45	4	20	13	65
What about	Yes	4	20	3	15	7	35
	No	6	30	7	35	13	65
Yeah	Yes	4	20	9	45	13	65
	No	6	30	1	5	7	35
I am not sure	Yes	5	25	4	20	9	45

	No	5	25	6	30	11	55
Right	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
Great	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
Really	Yes	5	25	9	45	14	70
	No	5	25	1	5	6	30
You know what	Yes	5	25	10	50	15	75
	No	5	25	0	0	5	25
Or	Yes	3	15	3	15	6	30
	No	7	35	7	35	14	70
Yes	Yes	5	25	8	40	13	65
	No	5	25	2	10	7	35
I agree	Yes	5	25	5	25	10	50
	No	5	25	5	25	10	50
Totally	Yes	2	10	1	5	3	15
	No	8	40	9	45	17	85
Sure	Yes	4	20	1	5	5	25
	No	6	30	9	45	15	75
And then	Yes	8	40	10	50	18	90
	No	2	10	0	0	2	10
Finally	Yes	4	20	7	35	11	55
	No	6	30	3	15	9	45
That is	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
I mean	Yes	5	25	4	20	9	45
	No	5	25	6	30	11	55
First of all	Yes	5	25	4	20	9	45
	No	5	25	6	30	11	55
First	Yes	10	50	10	50	20	100

	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Secondly	Yes	8	40	10	50	18	90
	No	2	10	0	0	2	10
Basically	Yes	1	5	0	0	1	5
	No	9	45	10	50	19	95
Exactly	Yes	3	15	3	15	6	30
	No	7	35	7	35	14	70
Absolutely	Yes	2	10	3	15	5	25
	No	8	40	7	35	15	75
Okay	Yes	2	10	2	10	4	20
	No	8	40	8	40	16	80

Figure 1

Incidence of using textual PMs related to gender



Frequency of using PMs

This part of the analysis aimed to examine the frequency of each used textual PMs among the sample. In general, the most frequent used words were; “and” a textual PMs by 8.1% (n=121); then “so” a textual PMs by 8.8% (n= 131); then “but” a textual PM by 8.1% (n= 120). While the

least frequent used PMs were; “yeah” a textual PMs by 0.1% (n=2); then “well” a textual PM by 0.2% (n= 3). Within textual PMs the most frequent used word was; (n= 121); “so” by 12.4% (n= 131); then “and” by 11.7% then “but” by 11.3% (n= 120).

Table 4

The frequency of each used textual PMs among the sample

Textual PMs			
Words	N	% of total	% of textual PMs
So	131	8.8	12.4
And	121	8.1	11.7
Because	51	3.4	4.8
Like	66	4.4	6.2
Well	3	0.2	0.3
Yeah	2	0.1	0.2
Finally	17	1.1	1.6
Then	29	1.9	2.7
But	120	8.1	11.3
However	35	2.3	3.3
Or	5	0.3	0.5
Right	13	0.9	1.2
That all	11	0.7	1
And then	57	3.8	5.4
First of all	22	1.5	2.1
First	45	3	4.2
Secondly	59	4	5.6
I mean	18	1.2	1.7
That is	89	6	8.4
In the end	22	1.5	2.1
For example	16	1.1	1.5
Such as	17	1.1	1.6
After	26	1.7	2.5

When	41	2.8	3.9
What about	12	0.8	1.1

Figure 2

Frequency of textual PMs within total

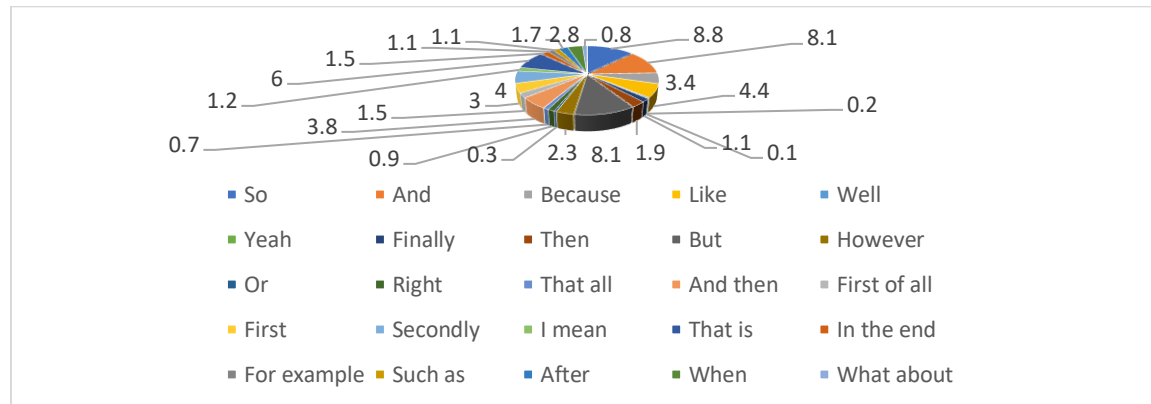
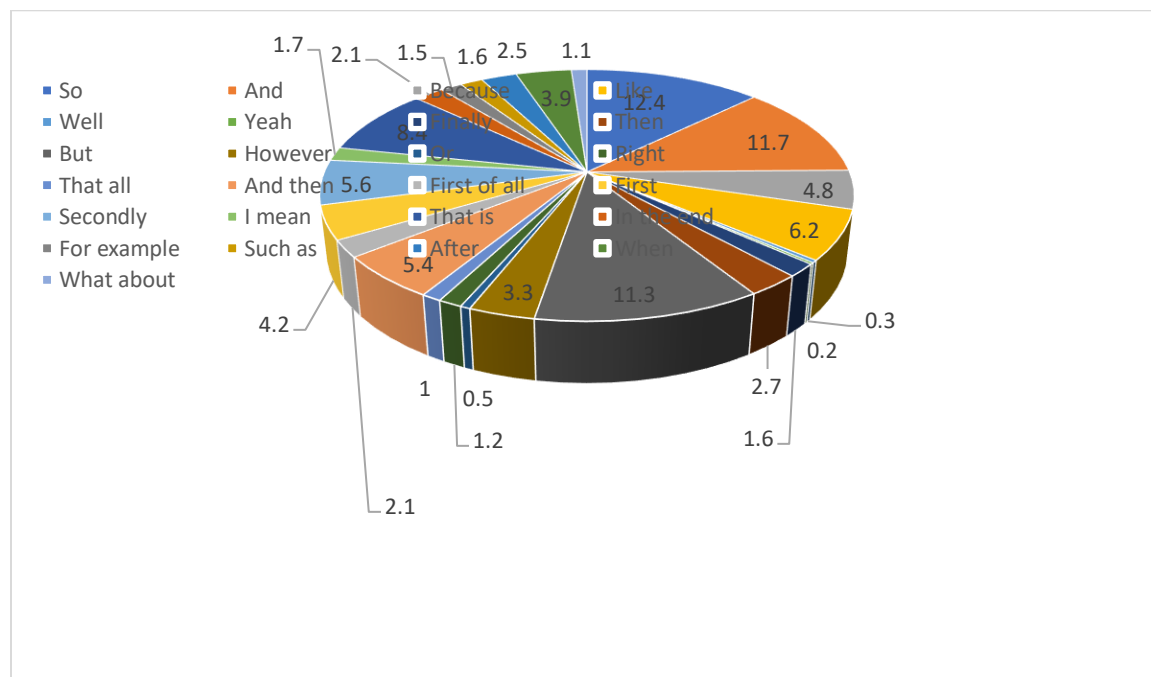


Figure 3

Frequency of textual PMs within textual PMs



Results from the first research question support Fung and Carter's (2007). They stated (2007.p.433) that the use of textual PMs; " reflect the unnatural linguistic input ESL learners are

exposed to and the traditional grammar-centered pedagogic focus which has been geared towards the literal or propositional (semantic) meanings of words rather than their pragmatic use in spoken language." In other words, it can be noticed that because of the focus is mainly on prepositional content rather than on pragmatic use of the PMs, the textual PMs are employed by the Jordanian EFL learner.

A suggested justification for this use is the context of learning and teaching English as indicated by Ament and Barón (2018). The context of learning and teaching English is an academic setting, where textual PMs are probable to appear at much higher frequencies than interpersonal PMs. Ament (2011.p.82) claimed that the focus on " the functions of textual PMs such as to structure discourse, mark openings, and closings, emphasis, and shift topics, to name a few, we can see a parallel between these PMs and the types of pragmatic functions lecturers employ when delivering their courses and therefore, which PMs are available in the input." In other words, the use of textual PMs more that t can be referred the influence of instructor's language on the students at the university as the students are exposed more to the language of their instructors. Results from the learner profile questionnaire supported this justification as it revealed that 100% of the participants were Jordanian. No students reported studying through English medium instruction before entering university. All participants reported English as a second language and Arabic is the used language inside their homes. Which means that all students are influence by the language of their instructors. The mean age of participants was twenty-three, age is one of the significant factors to study when examining the PMs (Blyth & Wang, 1990; Muller, 2005; Stubb& Holmes, 1995; Trillo, 2002), but because the age range of the participants in this study is 20–24 years, which is quite narrow, the age factor is not considered.

Both Flowerdew and Tarouza, (1995) and Jung (2003) examined the effect of PMs on second language comprehension and argued that textual markers are more salient and more critical to the understanding. To sum up, the importance of the occurrence of textual PMs in the spoken language in addition to the frequent use of textual PMs in academic discourse may illustrate the reason for producing the textual PMs at high frequencies.

This result is in line with Firth (1996) who stated that if a linguistic term is not crucial for communication it is frequently ignored as it does not reflect essential information. This result highlights House's (2003) results, who stated that the students should not mark their relation to a proposition, and, also, should not pay any attention to the hearer's relation to the proposition.

Difference in using PMs related to gender

In order to examine the difference in using textual PMs related to gender, independent t test was used, setting significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 3) revealed that there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “but” ($t = 0.06, p = 0.04$), with mean for females ($M = 7.5, SD = 2.8$) higher than the mean of males ($M = 4.6, SD = 2.8$). Which means that females are more likely to use the word “but”. Also, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “well” ($t = 2.3, p = 0.03$), with mean for females ($M = 1.1, SD = 1$) higher than the mean of males ($M = 0.2, SD = 0.6$). Which means that females are more likely to use the word “well”. Moreover, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “you know what I mean” ($t = 3.5, p = 0.001$), with mean for females ($M = 4.5, SD = 1.5$) higher than the mean of males ($M = 1.6, SD = 1.8$). Which means that females are more likely to use the word “you know what I mean”. In addition, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the word “when” ($t = 2.6, p = 0.02$), with mean for males ($M = 2.8, SD = 1.5$) higher than the mean of females ($M = 1.3, SD = 0.9$). Which means that males are more likely to use the word “when”.

This finding aligns with the finding of many studies which show that there are many differences in the use of certain textual PMs between men and women for example, Erman (1992) argued that there are gender-specific differences in the use of textual PMs. Erman (1992. P, 217) stated that " women tended to use pragmatic expressions between complete propositions to connect consecutive arguments, whereas the men preferred to use them either as attention-drawing devices or to signal repair work.". Erman (1992) showed that the use of PMs based on if the talk occurs in a same-sex or in a mixed-sex atmosphere, thus they tend to be used more meanly in mixed-sex as compared to same-sex interaction.

Similarly, Lakoff (1973. P.45) stated that, In appropriate women's speech, strong expression of feeling is avoided, expression of uncertainty is favored, and means of expression in regard to subject-matter deemed 'trivial' to the 'real' world are elaborated. Speech about women implies an object, whose sexual nature requires euphemism, and whose social roles are derivative and dependent in relation to men.

Many studies of PMs in both western (Zimmerman and West 1975; West and Zimmerman 1983; Fishman 1983; Holmes 1983, 1984, 1986; Coates 1988b; Nordenstam 1992) and non-western (P. Brown 1980; Ide 1982; Smith 1992) cultures presented that men are more likely than

women in employing PMs for confrontational devices and women are more likely than men in employing PMs for facilitative devices in their speech. These forms have been illustrated as signifying that women are more sensitive to the social state that the men it could be said that they are 'politer', They choose a style of speech that show their identities. Therefore, these explanations pinpoint the basis of the differences in gender.

Similarly, several studies focus on the differences between men and women in using textual PMs for example Bazzanella (1990) stated that Italian male and female speakers may exhibit sex-preferential choice of particular phatic connectives. Holmes (1984) clarified that New Zealand women are more likely to use *I mean* deliberately, expressing certainty, while New Zealand men are more likely to use it tentatively, and expressing uncertainty. Holmes (1986) claimed that New Zealand women tend to use *you know* facilitatively, while men are more likely to use it to express uncertainty.

Wouk (1999) stated that there is a gender difference in using the PMs in Indonesian. She stated that differences arise much less frequently than has been the case in these other studies. So this finding cope with the findings of abovementioned results and show that there is a difference among male and female Jordanian EFL learners in using PMs.

Table 5

Difference in using PMs related to gender

PMs words	t test		Gender			
	t	P	Male		Female	
			M	SD	M	SD
You know	0	1	2.2	1.7	2.2	3.5
In addition	1.3	0.2	3.1	2.9	1.8	1.4
I think	-0.7	0.5	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.8
For example	0	1	0.8	1.3	0.8	1
When	2.6	0.02	2.8	1.5	1.3	0.9
Because	-0.7	0.5	2.3	1.2	2.8	2
Then	-0.5	0.7	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.2
However	0.5	0.6	2	2.1	1.6	1.2
Such as	1.7	0.1	1.4	1.7	0.4	0.7

After	0.7	0.5	1.5	1.6	1.1	1.7
In the end	-0.3	0.7	1	1.3	1.2	1.3
That's all	-1	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7
Well	-2.4	0.03	0.2	0.6	1.1	1
What about	1	0.3	1.3	2.3	0.5	1
Yeah	0.2	0.8	1.5	2.8	1.3	0.8
I am not sure	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.7	0.7	1.3
Right	-0.3	0.8	1.8	2	2	1.2
Great	-1	0.3	1.7	1.9	2.4	1.2
Really	0.5	0.6	1.6	1.8	1.3	0.8
You know what	-4.1	0.001	1.6	1.8	4.5	1.3
Or	0	1	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5
Yes	0.7	0.5	1.9	2.1	1.4	0.8
I agree	0.8	0.5	1.4	2.3	0.8	2
Totally	0.9	0.3	0.4	1	0.1	0.3
Sure	2	0.1	1.1	1.5	0.1	0.3
And then	-1	0.4	2.2	2	3.5	3.8
Finally	-0.9	0.4	0.6	1	1.1	1.4
I mean	-1	0.4	1.4	1.7	2.2	2
First of all	0.6	0.6	1.3	1.7	0.9	1.4
Secondly	0.5	0.6	3.3	4	2.6	1.4
Basically	1	0.3	0.1	0.3	0	0
Exactly	0.6	0.6	1	1.9	0.6	1
Absolutely	0.7	0.5	0.8	2.2	0.3	0.5
Okay	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.4

Difference in using textual PMs related to gender

To examine the difference in using textual PMs related to gender, independent t test was used, setting significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 4) revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in using the word textual PMs ($t = -0.14$, $p = 0.9$). These

results align with the findings of Escalera (2009) claimed that there are no significant gender differences when discourse marker use is examined within a given activity context. Role-play context is the exception to this general finding.

Freed and Greenwood (1996) found very similar result; they stated that differences between male and female uses of PMs were slight when the two genders were engaged in same activities. Such remarks propose that the basis of 'gender variation' in talk depends on the type of interaction and role involved, with these tending to be connected with one or the other of the two genders.

Table 6

Difference in using textual PMs related to gender

PMs words	t test		Gender			
	t	P	Male		Female	
			M	SD	M	SD
textual PMs	-0.14	0.9	52.4	9.2	53.1	12.6

According to SPSS, the most frequent used words were; “and”, then “so”; then “but”. While the least frequent used PMs were; “basically”; then “yeah”; then “well”. Within interpersonal PMs the most frequent used word were; “you know what I mean”; then “you know”; then “great”. In relation to gender differences in employing PMs. It can be noticed that there is a significant difference between males and females in using the PMs. For example, the results revealed that females are more likely to use the PMs “but”, “well” and “you know what I mean” than men. In addition, there was a significant difference between males and females in using the PM “when” which means that males are more likely to use the word “when”. In relation the use of textual PMs the results revealed that there is was no significant difference between males and females.

The Functions of the textual English PMs used by Jordanian EFL learners.

The functions of the textual English PMs that are used by the EFL learners are one of the main concerns of this study. Table 7 presents functions of textual PMs and examples of items from the data.

The functions of the textual English PMs that are used by the EFL learners are analyzed in the following section. (A) refers to the interviewer and (B) refers to the students.

Table 7

Functions and examples of items from the data Functions of Textual Markers Items found in the data Functions of Interpersonal Markers Items found in the data

Functions of Textual Markers	Items found in the data
To mark contrast	But, however, and,
To Elaborate, Reformulate and exemplify	I mean, like, that is, for example
To show temporal sequence	First, firstly, secondly, next, then, finally, now, first of all
To indicate an inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries	Because, so, and
To signal shifts or transition of discourse and continuation of discourse	So, well, and then, and, but, what about
To signal the opening or closing of discourse	Okay, so, yeah, that's it, that's all

Functions of textual pragmatic markers based on Relevance theory and Adaptation theory

1-To mark Contrast

Marking contrast is one of the functions of the textual PMs that has been found in the speech of EFL learner. In this function, the PMs are normally used to show a denial or a contrast of a message connected with another message in the foregoing discourse. For example:

(19) In that film the mother tried to make her son happy and forget every bad moment he felt when she was away from him, *but* the son couldn't forget.

In Example (19), *but* is a linguistic choice made by the students to signal that the coming utterance is being contrasted. With this marker, the student decreases the processing effort of the hearers in interpreting the utterance and helps them achieve the Cognitive effect.

(20) The first girl wanted to leave the dog and go home, *however*, her friend insisted on her situation and refused to leave without the dog.

2- To Elaborate, Reformulate, and exemplify

The textual markers can be used for elaborative functions which refer to add more information in order to make a statement clearer for the receptor. In other words, it provides the hearers with

an indication, that what comes is an explanation and illustration for what has been mentioned before, for example:

(25) In that film the judge claimed that the daughter was found innocent, she didn't kill her friend, that is to say, the court couldn't conduct her legally.

In example (2), the textual PM, *that is to say*, has an elaborative function it has been used in the below example to introduce more details that are added to the preceding discourse, in example (2) "the court couldn't conduct her legally" is added to the previous discourse "In that film the judge claimed that the daughter was found innocent, she didn't kill her friend". So, the use of, *That is to say*, is employed to add more details and information in the preceding file and help the hearers produce cognitive effects and achieve the communicative purpose.

3-To show temporal sequence

The textual PMs have a temporal function. They can be used to express temporal sequence and arrangement of events in other words they play a vital role in achieving coherence in the discourse and establishing links among the idea of the discourse. Let's see the following example:

(26) **Before** I reached my house, I decided to phone my friend so I went to my car to get the phone.

Example (26) is extracted from the talk of one of the students he was describing the worst moment in his life. The student has chosen the textual PM before to indicate that the coming discourse is the time when things in the previous discourse happened from the perspective of the relevance theory the use of *before* decreases the hearers' processing effort in determining the time of the event and interpreting the speaker's utterance.

Temporal markers are used commonly in talks, especially in storytelling and narrating activity as these kinds of activities require an arrangement of events. They work as signs to give an account of a series of events in a speech, presenting the time of a current event or a past event and the sequence of a series of events. These markers give listeners an idea about what goes first, and what comes next. Consequently, offering a strong thread for a better explanation of the speaker's utterances.

4-To indicate inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries

Indicating results is one of the most well-known functions of *so* (Anping, 2002; Blakemore, 1988; Buysse, 2012; Fraser, 1990; Fraser, 1999; Müller, 2005; Schiffrin, 1987). *So*, Example (30) shows obviously that the upcoming part of the discourse is the consequence that results from the

proposition of its previous discourse that "all my cousins passed the tawijihi exam and I failed the exam. I was depressed and sad." On one hand, the use of *so* shows in this context that the student wants to guide the hearer towards this interpretation. On the other hand, *so* works as an indication that helps the hearers to arrive at this interpretation. In the following example *so* plays the same role.

(31) Many students were better than me in English so I tried to be better than them or learn from them.

In the above-mentioned example, the student employed the textual PM while she was describing her academic status as part of her discourse about her first day at the university. So, this context has been used to reflect that the upcoming segment which is "I tried to be better than them or learn from them" is a result of the prior mentioned discourse which is "Many students were better than me in English".

5-To signal shifts or transition of discourse, continuation of discourse

Signaling shifts or transitions of discourse is one of the functions that textual PMs have. Sacks et al (1974) state that '[o]nce a state of talk has been ratified, cues must be available for requesting the floor and giving it up, for informing the speaker as to the stability of the focus of attention he is receiving' (1974, p. 697).

According Lam (2010). "Socan indicates the speaker is willing, or more directly, encouraging the addressee to take the floor" (Lam, 2010, p. 670).

The following example is taken from the storytelling activity and it shows how the textual PM is used to signal transition.

(34) B: both ladies are thinking about what they should do yeah.

A: mmm

B: because you know *yeah* (erm), the situation is difficult

A: it is

B: *yeah*, one of the ladies took that dog, it was raining: *yeah* (erm) what else (erm) *yeah*

A: then what happened?

B: she fed it and it slept.

In example (34), the students describe what the ladies are doing in the storytelling activity. It looks like the student didn't have much to say. He uses the lengthened *yeah* at the end of his turn to inform the interviewer that he is willing to exit the turn and give the interviewer the floor. In

this example the textual PM *yeah* has not been used only to notify the interviewer that the student has nothing to say but also to notify the interviewer that he is now awaiting her to take the turn. The interviewer's turn "then what happened?" comes as verification that *yeah* has done its job of marking transition.

6-To signal opening or closing of a discourse

The textual PMs can be used to open or close discourses. In the following example *that's all* has been used by many students to indicate that they are done with their ideas. Let's see the following example:

As it is mentioned before that PMs have an opening function in other words, they can be used to initiate a discourse that following examples are taken from the storytelling activities and interviews with the Jordan university students.

(36) *Okay*, I can see in these pictures two ladies and they are walking in the rain they are happy.

In example (38), the students used the Textual PM *okay* to show that she will start her discourse so the use of this PM adopts the linguistic and communicative text as it provides with the receptor that the speaker will start her discourse.

Discussion

This section revisits the research questions of this thesis and suggests how this research contributes to the study of various aspects of PMs.

RQ1. What are the textual and interpersonal English PMs used in the speech of Jordanian EFL learners?

In order to find out the answer of the first question, the PMs have been extracted from the interviews storytelling task, then they have been classified into textual and interpersonal based on their function in the context. Table 6 includes the classification of PMs into textual and interpersonal. The findings of this study reveal that textual PMs are more easily to be used and acquired compared to interpersonal PMs.

RQ2. What are the functions of the textual and interpersonal English PMs as used by the participants?

The functions of the textual and interpersonal English PMs that are used by the EFL learners are one of the main concerns of this study. This study presents functions of both textual and interpersonal PMs and examples of items from the data. The functions of PMs used by Jordanian

students are extracted from the interviews and storytelling activities conducted with students. (See table 13). The functions of textual and interpersonal PMs have been explained by using Linguistic adaptation theory and Relevance theory.

RQ3. To what extent does gender influence the use of English PMs?

The SPSS revealed that there was a significant difference between males and females in using some PMs (See table 11), however, to examine the difference in using textual and interpersonal PMs related to gender, an independent *t-test* was used, setting a significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 12) revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in using the word textual PMs ($t = -0.14, p = 0.9$).

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions as presented in chapter four, there are three major findings that can be stated.

The first finding introduces the PMs that are used by Jordanian EFL learners. The second is about the functions of textual and interpersonal PMs used by the students. The third finding is about the difference between males and females in using PMs. Further details are explained below.

The first conclusion is meant to find out the PMs used by EFL learners, it shows that the PMs that are used by Jordanian EFL learners are as follows: so, and, you know, in addition to, like, but, I think, for example, when, because, then, however, such as, after, in the end, that's all, well, what about, yeah, and then, finally, that is, I mean, first of all, first, secondly, basically, exactly, absolutely, I'm not sure, right, great, really, you know what I mean, or, yes, I agree, totally, sure, kind of, okay. These PMs have been classified into textual and interpersonal based on the contexts so it can be noticed that some PMs occur as textual in some contexts and in other contexts as interpersonal such as " and " and "Okay".

The second conclusion is meant to elicit the function of textual and interpersonal PMs used by Jordanian students. The functions of textual markers are marking contrast, elaborating, reformulating, and exemplifying, showing temporal sequence, indicating inferential or conclusive relationships and summaries, signaling shifts or transition of discourse and continuation of discourse, and signaling the opening or closing of the opening or closing of discourse. The functions of interpersonal markers are signaling receipt of Information, showing support to the interlocutor, adding more information and making the statement more clear, stimulating

interaction, hesitating or showing repair, denoting thinking Processes, assessing the interlocutor's knowledge, acting as a hedging device, indicate attitudes and opinion.

The third conclusion is meant to reveal that according to SPSS, the most frequently used words were; “and”, then “so”; then “but”. While the least frequently used PMs were; “basically”; then “yeah”; then “well”. To examine the difference in using textual and interpersonal PMs related to gender, an independent *t*-test was used, setting a significant point at $\alpha < 0.05$. Results (table 12) revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females in using textual and interpersonal PMs.

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