

# You know, I mean: A Corpus Study of English Verbs of Cognition as Pragmatic Markers in Spoken Academic English Discourse

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*You know, I mean*: A Corpus Study of English Verbs of Cognition as  
Pragmatic Markers in Spoken Academic English Discourse

Master's Thesis

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## 1. Introduction

This thesis explores different functions and contexts in which pragmatic markers *you know* and *I mean* appear in spoken academic discourse. Since the use of the term *pragmatic marker* is subject to debate, the first part of the thesis is dedicated to terminological issues of the terms *pragmatic marker*, *discourse marker*, and some others, as well as to functions and features of discourse and pragmatic markers. Next, it is discussed why the expressions *you know* and *I mean* have been selected for research from the class of cognition verbs in English and the expressions in which they occur. The examples in the paper are taken from MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), thus the research is based on the examples from the corpus of conversations held in the university in situations such as lectures and consultations, which were later transcribed and rendered searchable. The examples in this thesis were first collected and analysed in terms of contexts and situations in which they occur, and then they were connected to a larger framework based on different classifications found in the literature, meaning that the approach adopted in this paper is bottom-up.

## 2. Terminology – discourse marker vs pragmatic marker

### 2.1 *Discourse marker* as the most widespread term

There has been a lot of debate about the use and definition of the terms *discourse marker*, *pragmatic marker*, *discourse/pragmatic particle*, *connective*, and so on. The term that is most frequently found in the literature is *discourse marker*. For example, Dér states that *discourse marker* is the most widespread of the existing terms for similar notion in the literature in English (2010, 6). In her research, Müller (2005) chooses the term *discourse marker* following Schourup, who states that “[t]he term DM used in this review is merely the most popular of a host of competing terms used with partially overlapping reference” (1999, 228). She investigates four expressions, which she calls *discourse markers*: *so*, *well*, *you know* and *like*. Some authors use the term *discourse marker* because of its wide range and variety, frequent use and subsuming different elements under it, and refer to it as an umbrella term. Some examples are *therefore*, *so*, *after all* (Jucker and Ziv 1998, 2).

### 2.2 Pragmatic markers

Brinton defines pragmatic marker as

a phonologically short item that is not syntactically connected to the rest of the clause (i.e., is parenthetical), and has little or no referential meaning but serves pragmatic or procedural purposes. Prototypical pragmatic markers in Present-day English include one-word inserts such as *right*, *well*, *okay*, or *now* as well as phrases such as *and*

*things like that or sort of* . . . Other parenthetical items of a clausal nature, such as *I mean, I see, or you know*, are also typically identified as pragmatic markers . . . (2008, 1-2)

She studies pragmatic markers which have a clausal origin. These markers can have a variety of formal structures, and relevant for this research are the following: a) first-person pronoun + present-tense verb/adjective: *I mean*, and (b) second-person pronoun + present-tense verb/adjective: *you know*. She refers to them as *comment clauses* and compares them to sentence adverbials: “These are forms which function either as sentence modifiers, or ‘disjuncts’ (e.g., *frankly*), or as connectors, or ‘conjuncts’ (e.g., *moreover*)” (2008, 2-3).

### 2.2.1 Pragmatic marker as an umbrella term

Some authors state that the term *pragmatic marker* has a broader scope, i.e. it is an umbrella term for a variety of expressions with different functions which formally do not have a lot in common. For example, Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberghe say that *discourse marker* is the most commonly used term, but the problem is that it can be used in a narrower sense, while pragmatic markers mark illocutionary force or have some other interactional function, so they function on more levels rather than just on the textual level (2011, 227). Some of the examples of pragmatic markers they enlist are *uhm, erm, please, besides, you know, well, frankly, and in fact*.

Another author who takes this view is Fraser (1988). The importance of Fraser’s classification is its clear distinction between the terms *discourse marker* and *pragmatic marker*: Discourse markers are one type of a larger category of pragmatic markers. The latter encompass diverse elements, and this is suitable in studying expressions with different features and functions, as well as those that do not comply with defining criteria for discourse markers. First, he states that sentence meaning consists of two types of information. One is content, or propositional, meaning, which “captures the state of affairs about which the speaker is talking, . . . it is conveyed by lexical meaning in conjunction with the syntactic structures present, and serves the basis for the message content when the sentence is used in direct, literal communication” (1988, 20-21). The other is pragmatic meaning, which is conveyed through structural, lexical, and phonological pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers form a part of a discourse segment, but do not participate in the propositional content of the message. In addition to lexical items, he includes in pragmatic markers other signals, such as declarative sentence structure, and intonation, which will not be considered here as pragmatic markers since that would make the analysis much more complicated and go beyond linguistic corpus analysis. Fraser (1988) divides pragmatic markers into three main types: basic,

commentary, and parallel pragmatic markers. Basic pragmatic markers signal the speaker's basic communicative intention and force of the sentence in direct communication, i.e. its literal message, for example, the declarative sentence structure. All sentences must include at least one basic pragmatic marker, whereas the other two types are optional. Commentary markers signal a separate message which contains the speaker's comment on the basic message. Parallel pragmatic markers signal a separate message, but one that is concomitant with the basic message, for example *Sir*, or vocatives. According to this view, discourse markers belong to commentary pragmatic markers. "They are distinguished from other commentary markers in virtue of the fact that they, alone, signal a comment specifying the type of sequential discourse relationship that holds between the current utterance – the utterance of which the discourse marker is part – and the prior discourse" (21-2). Discourse markers are lexical adjuncts to the sentence. Leaving a discourse marker out of a sentence does not make it ungrammatical; it rather removes a clue about the speaker's comment and attitude towards the relationship between the current utterance and prior discourse. Müller points out that it can be spoken of optionality in terms of grammatical wellformedness, while in pragmatic terms, discourse markers cannot be left out of an utterance without changing it (2005, 6), and Dér maintains that optionality cannot make sense pragmatically, only grammatically (2010, 14). Examples of discourse markers are *well*, *anyway*, *so*, and *and*, while examples of other commentary pragmatic markers are *frankly*, *apparently*, *regrettably*, and so on. Fraser draws attention to what he excludes from the class of discourse markers: single word sentences, interjections, vocatives, pause markers, and, most importantly, *you know* and *I mean*. He claims that *you know* does not signal a comment on the current utterance and its relationship to the prior context, but it signals a request that the hearer accepts the speaker's point of view. *I mean* is excluded for similar reasons (1988, 25-7).

Erman (2001) says that speaker and addressee(s) at the same time create and monitor a speech situation via discourse. Pragmatic markers have little or no [conceptual] (added by M. B.) meaning, but their function is monitoring discourse and conversation. They do not participate in the propositional meaning of the utterance, they occur outside the syntactic structure, and are restricted to spoken language. The author divides the functions of pragmatic markers into three domains: textual, social, and metalinguistic monitors. By using pragmatic markers as textual monitors, speakers organise their discourse into a coherent text, so this function is focused on the text. The most common markers in this domain are discourse markers, which are used for structuring discourse: for example, *and then*, *anyway*, *however*.

From this, we can see that Erman is one of the authors who consider discourse markers a subgroup of pragmatic markers. Discourse markers functioning at the textual level are concerned with the organization of discourse rather than with the addressee's decoding. The markers at the textual level mark transitions between independent elements and in this way, they guide the addressee toward the appropriate interpretation. As social monitors, the function of pragmatic markers is negotiating the meaning and managing discourse, and to ensure that the communication channels are open for interlocutors. Some examples are *wouldn't it*, *ok*, and *right*. The author explains the use of social monitors as follows: "The fact that negotiating signals of this kind are a prevalent feature of communication is only natural, since one of the strongest driving force behind our engaging in conversation is to socialise with one another and to convey our attitudes to and understandings of phenomena around us and in the world. Hence these signals are here called social monitors" (2001, 1345). Their most important role is ascertaining or eliciting audience involvement. Moreover, the speaker ensures that the message was properly understood, and that the addressee agrees with the speaker's understanding of a certain part of text. Social monitors function outside the text proper. Pragmatic markers in the metalinguistic domain are focused on the message. They serve as comments on the implications of the propositional content and on the speaker's intended effect with these propositions. By using metalinguistic monitors, the speaker informs the addressee about their commitment to the truth of the proposition or gives a value judgment on what is being communicated. This makes their overall function modal. Some of the examples are *I think*, *sort of*, and *all that*. The three most important subgroups in this domain are emphasizees, hedges, and approximators, which will be dealt with in the analysis. Together with social monitors, markers in this domain function outside the text. It is important to note that these functional domains do not have clear boundaries. Rather, a certain marker in a given context belongs to one domain more than in the other. Moreover, all these domains have functional subgroups.

### **2.3 Major terminological issues**

Some authors admit to the fuzziness of existing different terms for similar categories. For example, Fox Tree and Schrock comment on the indeterminacy of the term *discourse marker*: "the indeterminacy of function can be seen as a hallmark of their overarching category, discourse markers. Virtually every discourse marker has been described as serving a wide range of functions, such as aiding in language production or comprehension, aiding in turn management, and aiding in creating a congenial interpersonal atmosphere" (2002, 727-8).

Dér also writes about the difficulty of dealing with this linguistic category: “The investigation of discourse markers is an intriguing task for the linguist: on the one hand, this group of items seems to defy all attempts to account for its membership in terms of parts of speech or individual formal properties (rather than in terms of function); on the other hand, . . . their functional description is not unproblematic, either . . .” (2010, 4).

Apart from *discourse marker* and *pragmatic marker*, frequently used terms are also *discourse particle* and *pragmatic particle*. According to Dér (2010), the main objection to the term *particle* is that it is widely used as a syntactic term for one-word markers, such as *okay*, *hmm*, or *oh*, which restricts the range of items to which it can be applied, since there are also multi-word discourse markers, and discourse markers tend to be syntactically heterogeneous. She claims that discourse particles are sometimes considered a subcategory of discourse markers. The problem with *pragmatic particle* is similar to that of *discourse particle*. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberghe also compare the term *marker* with *particle*: while *marker* signals that the function of the element is to aid in interpreting a message, *particle* is a term for a part-of-speech, and it refers to a short, one-word unit (*marker* can refer to a multi-word unit) (2011, 227). Therefore, the term *marker* is more suitable for this thesis since it deals with the expressions *you know* and *I mean*, which consist of more than one word and do not belong to the word class of particles.

Dér (2010) talks about problems with multi-word discourse markers, such as *on the other hand*, *I mean*, or *in other words*, and how they are dealt with in the literature. One problem is that this group is special even within the group of discourse markers because of its heterogeneity. Even though they are composed of more than one word, they often act as single units and as such are difficult to tell apart from sequences of two or more independent discourse markers. Real multi-word discourse markers usually have their own syntactic structure, but some constituents may be ellipted or modified. Linked single-word discourse markers do not exhibit this feature. Another problem is how to theoretically deal with multi-word discourse markers that have formally distinct versions with the same function. The author thus concludes: “we have no fully reliable cues for distinguishing strings of single-word DMs from multi-word DMs, but if we use several criteria in tandem, we can determine which unit belongs to which category . . . However, we also have to reckon with the existence of transitional cases” (20-1).



## 2.4 Features and functions of pragmatic and discourse markers

Brinton states some formal features of pragmatic markers:

Phonetically, they are often ‘short’ or reduced items, and prosodically, they typically occur in a separate tone group. Syntactically, pragmatic markers occur outside the bounds of the clause or loosely attached to the clause; they are not syntactically integrated with their clause . . . They often occur in sentence-initial position but are not restricted to this position, occurring medially and finally as well. Pragmatic markers are characteristic of the oral medium, particularly of unplanned speech . . . However, pragmatic markers may occur in written discourse, and certain pragmatic markers (e.g., *notwithstanding*) may even be restricted to the written medium. Pragmatic markers occur with relatively high frequency in conversation . . . Because of their frequency and colloquial nature, pragmatic markers tend to be stylistically stigmatized and are often seen as signs of lack of attention or fluency. (2008, 16-17)

According to the criteria above, the expressions that Brinton refers to as *comment clauses*, such as *you know* and *I mean*, may also be understood as pragmatic markers. Even though they are not as phonologically short as prototypical pragmatic markers (such as *well* and *right*), they lack propositional or referential content, they are syntactically moveable, and they are optional, which is typical of pragmatic markers. Moreover, their functions in discourse correspond to those of pragmatic markers (2008, 18). For these reasons, Brinton considers comment clauses as parenthetical pragmatic markers, which differ from other parentheticals and pragmatic markers because of their origin as clauses, and because they are not as phonologically short as typical pragmatic markers, whereas parentheticals can be single words, phrases, or entire sentences (2008, 241). Most researchers, including Brinton (2008), emphasise the importance of pragmatic meaning of pragmatic markers, while stating that they do not possess (almost) any referential meaning, and claim that they occur mostly in spoken discourse.

Some functional features of pragmatic markers, according to Brinton, are claiming the attention of the hearer; initiating, sustaining and ending discourse; marking topic shifts and boundaries; repair; expressing responses, reactions, understanding, attitudes; expressing intimacy, cooperation, shared knowledge; and face-saving (politeness). These functions can be subsumed under “pragmatic” meaning (2008, 17-18), which will be referred to in this paper as opposed to “basic”, or “propositional” meaning of the expressions *you know* and *I mean*. Stubbe and Holmes mention that pragmatic markers provide planning time for speakers and they can serve as hedges expressing epistemic modality. They say that the same marker can fulfil different functions in different contexts, as well as perform various functions at the same time. Besides reflecting the speaker’s degree of certainty in the propositional content of the utterance, pragmatic devices also convey affected meaning – serving as positive or

negative politeness strategies. The speaker's choice of a pragmatic device expresses both referential and affective meaning. Also, pragmatic markers have interactional functions, expressing affective meaning and/or epistemic modality, and function as fillers in terms of referential meaning, thus leaving them out would not substantially affect the syntactic structure and meaning of the utterance (1995, 63-8).

Similar features are stated for discourse markers in the literature, for example, Müller (2005) and Dér (2010) state their syntactic independence, forming a separate tone unit, orality, multifunctionality, phonological reduction, non-compositionality, procedural meaning – they serve to connect parts of discourse rather than contribute to the propositional content of the sentence, i.e., as Fraser claims, they give information on how to interpret the message (1998, 302), etc. However, these features are not defining criteria for discourse markers, i.e. a discourse marker need not exhibit all features in order to be defined as such (Müller 2005, 4). The functions of discourse markers are also comparable to those of pragmatic markers. For example, Müller mentions initiating discourse, expressing responses and reactions, marking boundaries or shifts in the discourse, as well as delaying and providing time for planning (2005, 9). It is not surprising that discourse markers are not easily distinguishable from pragmatic markers since they share various features and functions.

One of the important characteristics of discourse markers, and of pragmatic markers as well, is aiding the hearer in interpreting the speaker's utterance. Müller claims that "the use of discourse markers facilitates the hearer's task of understanding the speaker's utterances" (2005, 8). Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberghe also claim that discourse markers help in interpreting an utterance (2011, 225). According to notions from the Relevance Theory, described by Blakemore (2002), every utterance can be interpreted in a number of different ways. The hearer needs to find the interpretation that is the most relevant in the given context. Therefore, discourse markers guide the hearer by reducing the number of possible interpretations. Since they have procedural rather than conceptual meaning, they "encode a constraint on pragmatic inferences" (4). However, Ariel states that discourse markers may contribute to the conceptual meaning of the utterance, but they have only procedural meaning if they are semantically empty (1998, 223).

Nevertheless, discourse and pragmatic markers differ in several features, according to some authors. One of the differences is that discourse markers usually occur clause-initially (Müller 2005, Dér 2010), while Brinton (2008) states that although pragmatic marker often occur in this position, they can also occur medially or finally, as stated above in this chapter.

As some authors consider the initial position in a sentence or a clause to be a defining feature of discourse markers, it is clear that *you know* and *I mean* cannot be subsumed under this category, since they occur clause initially, medially or finally, as will be seen from the examples. In addition, as Müller claims, one feature of discourse markers is that they do not belong to a single word class (2005, 5), but rather, as Fraser stated, the primary syntactic sources of discourse markers are conjunctions, adverbs and prepositional phrases (1998, 302). If we take this to be true, then the expressions *you know* and *I mean* cannot be considered discourse markers since their source is neither of those three classes; they have clausal origin.

Another problem stated in the literature is related to functions of discourse and pragmatic markers. Dér (2010) mentions Müller's (2005) classification in which there are two broad classes of functions. The first are textual functions, which refer to lexical expressions. They can, for instance, refer to how exact or appropriate they are, or refer to the propositional content conveyed by discourse units. They can indicate transitions between scenes or trains of thought, mark the beginning of a quotation, signal self-correction, etc. The second subcategory consists of interactional functions, which serve to concentrate on the relationship between speaker and listener. They indicate speech acts, opinions, evaluations, replies, drawing attention, referring to shared knowledge, and so on. However, according to Erman's (2001) classification, this function is performed by pragmatic markers, while discourse markers have only textual functions. Moreover, although many authors claim that attitudinal function is characteristic of discourse markers, Dér's view is that the fundamental feature of discourse markers is connecting, which delimitates them from other (pragmatic) markers, and expressing attitudes is outside this function. However, she does not explicitly state whether she considers interactional function as characteristic of discourse markers, but states her view that attitude markers should be distinguished as a separate group of pragmatic markers since discourse markers primarily carry textual functions (2010, 24). Following Erman (2001) and Dér (2010) and rejecting Müller's (2005) claim that discourse markers have interactional functions, the approach adopted in this paper is that discourse markers exhibit only textual functions, i.e. connecting different parts of discourse and creating coherence, while *pragmatic marker* is taken as a broader term, encompassing other functions apart from textual.

## 2.5 Fillers

Fillers are one of the functions that pragmatic markers fulfill. This is the most frequent category in the analysis of *you know* and *I mean* in this thesis. Rieger states that fillers represent one way for speakers to deal with a problem in producing spontaneous speech. This

problem can be an error, an inappropriate lexical or structural choice, a word search, or any other trouble in linguistic planning. Fillers are linked to pauses that delay the production of speech while the speaker is planning how to formulate the next utterance. Hesitation pauses are rarely left unfilled; there are several kinds of place-holders: quasi-lexical fillers (*uh, um*), non-lexical fillers (repetitions, lengthening of sounds), and lexical fillers (*you know, I mean*). The most important are lexical fillers because they typically do not just fill pauses, but perform other functions. “They also meet interactional, social, and linguistic requirements, such as engaging the addressee, yielding the floor, asking for feedback, stressing the content of an utterance, or making it sound more friendly” (2003, 164-5). She claims that lexical fillers are often regarded as discourse markers since they fulfil interactional functions (2003, 165), but in this paper, they are considered as belonging to a broader category of pragmatic markers. Rieger states the reason for using fillers in conversation: “the skillful use of fillers thus masks dysfluencies more effectively than the frequent use of unfilled hesitation pauses” (ibid.).

## 2.6 Hedges

Lakoff defines hedges as “noncommittal words, expressions, and intonations that are characteristically vague, indirect, and unclear” (1972, 123). Rowland (1995) claims that there are different types of hedges, more specifically, two: shields and approximators. Shields lie outside the propositions that follow them, and speakers use them to distance themselves from the proposition. There are two kinds of shields: the first are plausibility shields – expressions that indicate doubt about the validity of a response (for example, *I think, maybe*). The second are attribution shields – they implicate some degree of knowledge to a third party; an example is *According to X*. The second type of hedges are approximators – they are inside the proposition itself. By using them, the speakers give the right amount of information. The first subcategory of approximators are rounders – expressions that insert vagueness and withhold commitment to quantitative information (for example, *about, approximately*). The second subcategory is adaptors: they attach ambiguity to nouns, verbs, or adjectives (e.g. *somewhat, a bit*). They suggest rather than define the extension of concepts and categories. Taylor (2003) says that hedges enable speakers to express a degree of category membership. He mentions some commonly used hedges which would, in Rowland’s (1995) classification, belong to the category of adaptors: *strictly speaking, so-called, in that, par excellence*. Taylor says that, “semantically, we can characterise hedges as linguistic expressions which speakers have at their disposal to comment on the language they are using” (2003, 79). Even though he refers

to hedges that express a degree of category membership, the latter is also true for other types of hedges. Rowland (1995) adds another category of hedges: maxim hedges, which signal a level of inadequacy in the uttered responses. An example of a maxim hedge is *well*, which attaches some vagueness to the speaker's compliance with some of the (Grice's) maxims, thus signalling that the contribution to the conversation will not completely comply with normal cooperative standards. The category of maxim hedges will be applied in the analysis of *I mean*.

## **2.7 Conclusions on terminology**

Some authors consider *you know* and *I mean* as discourse markers (for example, Müller 2005), while some other classify them as pragmatic markers (Fraser 1988, Erman 2001) or use some other terms (*comment clauses* in Brinton 2008). Since it has been stated that discourse markers mostly occur clause initially, have syntactic sources in conjunctions, prepositional phrases and adverbs, relate different segments of discourse and thus organise a text, in this research *you know* and *I mean* are not included in the category of discourse markers. Namely, these expressions have a clausal origin, and, as will be seen from the examples in the analysis, they have broader functions than organizing discourse, also, *you know* and *I mean* appear sentence medially and finally, not only initially.

Thus, in this thesis the classification accepted is that by those authors, such as Fraser (1988) and Erman (2001), who consider pragmatic markers as an umbrella term, subsuming discourse markers under a broader category of pragmatic markers. Also, while discourse markers have only textual functions, pragmatic markers have a variety of other functions. *You know* and *I mean* thus belong to the latter category because of their various functions in the discourse, i.e. a range of pragmatic meanings, as well as their syntactic positions in the text. Therefore, the term for these expressions is *pragmatic markers*. However, the findings of authors about the different functions of these expressions in their research are included in the analysis even if they use different terms from the one adopted in this thesis.

## **3. Cognition verbs**

This chapter gives the definition and different terms for the notion of cognition verbs, as well as the reasons for selecting them for the research on pragmatic markers. Dixon's (1991) verbs of thinking cover verbs of thinking, knowing, believing, etc. In sentences containing verbs of thinking, there are always two roles: a Cogitator, who is most frequently human, has in mind some Thought, which can be realised through a noun phrase or complement clause.

These types of verbs are basically transitive. Subgroups under verbs of thinking are the ‘think’, ‘remember’, ‘know’ subgroup, etc. The ‘know’ subtype refers to the Cogitator, who is aware of some fact or information, or method of doing something. The most general verb in this subtype is *know*, and some other verbs are *realise*, *learn*, *understand*, and so on. One of the grammatical properties of these verbs is that they typically take a complement clause in the slot of transitive object. Even though a noun phrase is a possible alternative, for many verbs this noun phrase must have non-concrete reference (132-4).

Dixon explores meanings of different types of complement clauses. He talks about parentheticals, which in his approach introduce a segment of direct speech. Parentheticals can come at the end or beginning of direct speech, or they can interrupt it. Direct speech can always be turned into indirect speech using a *that* complement clause. A parenthetical is almost always quite short, consisting only of a subject and a verb, rarely an object. The reason for shortness is that a long parenthetical would represent a severe disruption of the main clause, and the listener could lose track of the discourse. Any verb that occurs in parentheticals takes a *that* complement clause. Therefore, ‘thinking’ verbs can appear in parentheticals (1991, 209-15).

Fitzmaurice (2004) says that speakers often use mental verbs and complement clauses governed by them for self-expression, but the most important contribution to the discussion of the way in which speakers interact is using linguistic markers that express the speaker’s concern for the conduct of interaction rather than denote the speaker’s self-expression. *You know* and *I mean*, as discourse markers, as she calls them, belong to this group of markers, and it has been argued that they “oil the wheels of conversational exchange” (428). Apart from that, comment clauses and modal verbs are usually associated with the speaker’s self-positioning using infinitive and *that*-complement clauses governed by mental verbs such as *know*. In the marker *you know* it acquires multiple discourse functions, such as filling pauses, checking on the listener’s attention, covering hesitations, or holding a turn (Fitzmaurice 2004, 432). Thus, the meanings of mental verbs in this case move from denoting mental activity to new pragmatic functions, in which their meanings are bleached, they become more idiomatic, and these changes happen gradually over time.

Erman studies the production of fluent speech and points out that many researchers agree that an important prerequisite for fluency is automatic processing, and that it involves retrievals from long-term memory, which contains familiar combinations of linguistic elements. Namely, when people speak, they not only combine elements into larger structures,

but they also use larger chunks, i.e. fixed structures. Thus, recurrent combinations of words become conventionalised. When they are used frequently, they are used automatically (2001, 1353-4). Cognition verbs are among linguistic elements that form various combinations with other linguistic elements, and these combinations can become fixed and automatic, performing different functions in the discourse.

Rhee explores grammaticalisation of cognition verbs. “Verbs of cognition and perception lend us an important insight to understanding human construal of the world and its linguistic representation since they directly refer to human's experiential basis of the world” (2001, 111). The author claims that verbs of cognition grammaticalise as evidential, desirative, ability, habitual, and temporal markers. The most important for this paper are evidential markers; they signal sources of information. They are similar to epistemic markers, which signal degrees of certainty in a proposition. The most frequent cognition verb that can function as evidential or epistemic marker is *think*. She claims that, crosslinguistically, verbs such as *know* often have this function and provides an example in English: *She's left, y' know* (2001, 112-4). In this use, cognition verbs have different forces of assertion. As was suggested earlier in the text, these markers can be analysed as hedges, which mark that the speakers do not want to commit themselves to the proposition they are making.

Spanoudis, Natsopoulos and Panayiotou say that mental verbs are interesting from the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic points of view. Semantically, “the language of mind or the mental states lexicon consists of expressions of desire, belief and intention, which appear to play a central role in fundamental developments associated with emerging self-awareness and inter-personal understanding” (2007, 490). These are some of the reasons why mental verbs are very frequent parts of pragmatic markers. As pragmatic markers, they have multiple pragmatic functions, such as connecting words to real world knowledge, maintaining text coherence, or elaborating the text in order to achieve a richer mental model, indicating the speaker's attitude, marking a degree of certainty, etc. (ibid.)

All the statements above contribute to the reasons for studying cognition verbs as pragmatic markers. They are interesting because they are rich in pragmatic meanings and show the cognitive connections between thinking processes and textual and interactional functions of discourse. Moreover, they are frequently used in the academic discourse since speakers often need to explain their thoughts, exchange opinions, and make their listeners understand them. Therefore, it is supposed that the expressions such as *you know* and *I mean*,

which contain cognition verbs, will display an abundance of procedural meanings in examples from a corpus based on spoken academic discourse.

#### **4. Academic discourse**

Since this thesis explores the use of pragmatic markers in a specific discourse – the academic discourse, this chapter is dedicated to representing the features of this type of discourse. In his paper, Schleef (2005) examines the sociolinguistic distribution of some discourse markers in the academic speech of women and men of various disciplines in the lecture and seminar context. This type of discourse is produced under particular social constraints, in which it is necessary to express institutional contexts and power relations. His investigation shows that, as far as the language of instructors is concerned, the choice of structures is sensitive to discipline and conversational role, but it is not connected to gender differences. However, there are significant differences in the use of discourse markers between humanities and natural science instructors. Instructors in the humanities use more colloquial style than instructors in natural sciences; they use some discourse markers more frequently. This style is relatively close to their students' informal language. This is especially obvious in lectures. Natural science instructors use markers (*okay* and *right*) to check on their students' understanding more often than humanities instructors since they are aware that many students have problems with the subject matter, which is more fact-oriented compared to the humanities. Although the subject matters of lectures and seminars in the humanities do not differ greatly, they are different in the presentation, which is interactional as opposed to monologic. In interactional discourse, it is not only important to check the understanding of facts, but also of opinions and attitudes. While discussions in natural sciences are more about understanding than agreeing or disagreeing, for interactional discussions in the humanities it is essential to check for agreement and express it. On the use of the marker *you know* he states:

Humanities instructors and students express more opinions, views, values, and approximations than natural scientists, who give reports, descriptions, and present factual information. The former are the contexts in which *like* and *you know* are used more frequently. *Like* and *you know* do always express a certain vagueness which derives from their original use (. . . *you know* 'I am sure you know the kind of thing I'm talking about') which is inappropriate in the natural sciences. (181)

Next, the author investigates the students' language, which is strikingly different from the language of instructors. The reasons for this are different conversational roles: whereas the instructors present information or facilitate discussions, the students are usually the audience,



they discuss or ask questions. However, according to Schlee's research, *you know* does not seem to be tied to conversational role. Among students, there is some gender variation in the use of discourse markers. Moreover, there are different trends in gender use in the humanities and natural sciences and in different contexts regarding lectures and seminars, which shows that gender differences can only be studied with taking into account the context, not generally. In addition, there are differences among students of different level of study, for example, *you know* is used more by graduate students than among undergraduates. The author concludes that the students' use of distinct discourse markers "is influenced by their less powerful conversational role and discipline, but also educational level and gender . . . it seems that academic discourse is produced under particular social constraints that make students and instructors alter their linguistic behavior depending on discipline, context, and conversational role" (2005, 185). House describes situations in academic consultation hours, which are typically about students' study situation, qualification, activities or potential solutions to problems. The professor's interaction role is usually counselling, which includes displaying expertise. "Turn-taking, topic instructions, pauses, overlap, interruptions and various linguistic expressions used to indicate interactants' positioning in the discourse are some of the indicators for the progression of the covert or overt interactional agenda of academic advisors and advisees" (2013, 2).

As academic discourse is specific because of the social constraints under which it is produced, as well as the topics, the way of presenting them, and the types of interactions, the use of linguistic items is different from, for example, a discourse among friends and family, or more formal discourses, such as the legal one. The functions of pragmatic markers and their frequencies are specific for each discourse, and hence for the academic discourse.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 The MICASE Corpus**

For the study of the use of cognition verbs as pragmatic markers in spoken academic discourse the corpus MICASE was used. The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English is a collection of transcripts recorded at the University of Michigan containing speech events in the academic discourse. According to the MICASE Manual (2003), speakers represented in the corpus include all levels of academia: faculty, staff, and students at all levels of university education. In MICASE, academic speech is defined as "that speech which occurs in academic settings. In other words, it is not pre-defined as something like 'scholarly discussion'" (4).

The researchers have recorded a wide variety of academic speech events, such as lectures, seminars, and consultations, which are divided within four major academic divisions: humanities, social sciences, physical sciences and engineering, and biological sciences. According to Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, “in studies of pragmatic markers the emphasis is on (preferably spoken) corpus data. Corpora make it possible to investigate the distribution of pragmatic markers in speech and writing and in different registers” (2011, 231), which is why this approach is adopted in this paper.

## 5.2 Transcription

As for the transcription in MICASE, standard orthography is used for the majority of words, but the beginnings of turns and the pronoun *I* are not capitalised. All hesitation and filler words, backchannels, and transcribable exclamations are spelled out. Repetitions of words, partial word or phrase are also transcribed (MICASE Manual 11-13). This is important because this research is largely concerned with fillers, hesitations and repairs. However, the corpus analysis does not suffice to obtain insights into how particular language elements function. Apart from corpora, Müller stresses the importance of manual analysis: “if we want to discover the functions of discourse markers, we need to consider not only their lexical context, but also the pragmatic context. This is a task a computer is hardly able to do; instead, it requires human interpretation” (2005, 11). In addition, she compares corpus-based to corpus-driven approach. While in the first case the corpus data are used to confirm some existing theory, in the latter approach the examples taken are adjusted so that they fit the existing theories of the analyst, therefore, “in a corpus-driven approach, evidence from the data takes precedence over theoretical constructions” (2005, 26). Müller refers to the corpus-driven approach as a “bottom-up approach to corpus data” (ibid). She thus sets up categories for the discourse markers she studies based on the findings from the data.

## 5.3 The sample

First, the verbs *know* and *mean* were studied and it was found that the most frequent constructions in which these two verbs occurred were *you know* and *I mean*. The search of *know*\* (\* representing any string of signs) gave 12220 concordances, of which about 1200 were taken as a sample. Out of this sample, about 820, which is the majority of the examples, contained *you know* (the number of occurrences of *you know* in MICASE is 7016). This shows that *you know* is the most frequent construction in which the verb *know* occurs in spoken academic English discourse. Then, out of these 820 concordances, approximately 720 occurrences of *you know* could be classified as fillers, which is a large number indeed, while

in the rest of the examples *you know* either had the basic, propositional meaning, or its function could not be clearly classified as an instantiation of pragmatic nor propositional meaning. For *mean\**, there are 5814 matches, out of which 3695 are *I mean*. Not a lot of examples were instantiations of the propositional meaning and a few were unclear as to which category they should be placed in. The number of the analysed examples in which *I mean* occurs is about 340. All of the examples from the sample were analysed in terms of the function that *you know* or *I mean* plays or the situation in which it occurs, and their syntactic position. It is also said in the analysis which authors have had similar insights and commented on certain functions of pragmatic markers. One of the problems that was constantly present in the analysis is that a pragmatic marker can have multiple functions in one occurrence, so the one that seemed the most important and conspicuous was taken as the main function. Furthermore, it is difficult to distinguish the functions of pragmatic markers since they are context-dependent, so their functions cannot be seen outside of context, hence contextual analysis is very important in studying pragmatic markers. The functions which *you know* and *I mean* have in different contexts will be shown in the analysis.

## 6. Analysis

### 6.1 You know

#### 6.1.1 Situations in which *you know* is used as a filler

You know can signalise a speaker's appeal for understanding, as in:

(1) *uh uh, well it's a very challenging kind of assignment i've never done this before. and uh, uh, you know looking at those numbers can, make your eyes blur over but, LAUGH*

Müller distinguishes between two kinds of appeal that occur with *you know*: the appeal for understanding, and the appeal to acknowledge that the speaker is right. In the first case, the speaker cannot find the appropriate lexical expression, or they are not sure of their opinion or do not know what to say, and ask for the hearer's understanding. In the second case, the speaker has a definite opinion and expresses it, expecting the hearer to accept their opinion. However, the speaker does not expect an oral answer, i.e. acceptance of the hearer (2005, 149). The example (1) would correspond to the first kind of appeal that Müller (2005) mentions.

*You know* can also have a function of apology and justification:

- (2) *you know, we we can't give you that money, U-S Congress doesn't allow it. so um, here again you know, you need to have a past behavior of making good, on what you prom- a- as to what you promise.*

It can also be said that *you know* serves as a kind of introduction of the argument in this example. It is placed at the beginning of the clause.

*You know* marking justification can also occur sentence-finally:

- (3) *it's like ninety times heavier than the proton so we didn't stand a chance you know. we didn't know that of course but looking back you think well, hm, but we were looking at this picture*

Most cases of *you know* can be interpreted as 'explaining'. Nevertheless, in some cases explaining is the main function, while other possible functions are less important in those cases. There are different kinds of explanations, as will be shown in the following examples:

- (4) *do you have bullets for the gun. And you know if the person says no no no we don't buy bullets you know that that's you know you sort of, relieving. And if she says yeah well actually I normally keep the*

Müller calls this function introducing an explanation and says it is very frequent: "typically, the speaker mentions something, a concept or an idea, or gives his/her opinion, and then decides that s/he has to express it in different (and perhaps more) words to make it plain what s/he meant . . . Marking explanations is . . . the most frequent category of *you know* in my data" (2005, 166-7). Macaulay mentions that *you know* can be used to introduce backgrounded information in a subordinate clause or prepositional phrase (2002, 757), and this can be said to be the case here. As Erman says, at the clause level *you know* is used primarily to guide the listener's interpretation of the message. The speaker often urges the listener to accept some information as known or given or in connection with topicalisation and highlighting some elements. The speaker can also introduce a change of content, correct, or introduce a specification of previous discourse, which is often achieved by repeating a part of it. Also, the speaker can mark parenthetic comments that contain information for which the speaker assumes the listener needs to know in order to accomplish understanding (2001, 1342-4). In some examples, such as the following, *you know* can be replaced with *in other words*, thus serving to clarify the previous utterance:

(5) *what we (tried) to do with the Black Terns. our methodology was, uh in a sense like a transect you know we we moved through and counted everything that we found. um, we weren't depending on vocalizations*

One subfunction of explanation is explaining the previous word:

(6) *to social mobility in the New World one was land ownership, uh and the other was apprenticeship you know learning a trade learning a um uh how to, how to be a craftsperson*

This function is mentioned in Macaulay – “the speaker is elaborating a preceding item” (2002, 759).

There are also explanations with a lot of hesitations in which the speaker is struggling to explain something:

(7) *the one in, in uh, Dangerous Minnds. So basically I go on you know to ask you know what, how, you know how would I deal with that, and my answer I guess is, you know maybe maybe*

This is similar to Erman’s finding that *you know* can occur “between reported states in a long descriptive passage” (2001, 1344). Also, *you know* can introduce a specification of previous discourse, which is often achieved by repetition of parts of it (Erman 2001, 1343), which is the case in this example.

Speakers can also explain how to do something (or what to do):

(8) *the delta-T and the characteristics here and the, you know like the, you know the dimensions you can calculate the physical properties if you know the temperature*

*You know* often appears in adding something to an explanation:

(9) *exploring your options figuring out what you like what you don't like, you know you might like mathematics, and chemistry but if, you're\_ you know you work your hardest and you get*

Müller calls this function *amplification*, but states that it is quite rarely introduced by *you know* (2005, 166), which is also true for the sample in this research.

Instead of adding something to an explanation, *you know* may be used to summarise it and give a kind of conclusion:

- (10) *some of these Christmas count groups may have a hundred people. some of them may have one. you know it varies. and, people go out and let's say you have more than one, typically at the end of the day*

Furthermore, there is emphasis on a specific word. There are a lot of such examples, and *you know* occurs inside a phrase. In this example, it is between the modal and main verb:

- (11) *so, I think they are very real issues but, um, I mean I I think that we can't, you know ignore a very serious social problem, simply because a large percentage of one*

This could be a case of marking lexical search or “filling the gap” (Müller 2005, 158), and the previous words might be repeated in search of the right one that follows:

- (12) *native American communities you have Navajos being transplanted, both forcibly and also in terms of you know in terms of their own desire (xx) wanting that, those um, (dislocations.) um... and and when it and*

Fox Tree and Schrock state that the organisational use of *you know* can have a function in “emphasis [emphasis added], such as highlighting a particular point or the thrust of a narrative” (2002, 740). This also applies to the next example, in which the speaker emphasises what is important in order to prove their argument:

- (13) *I mean if you really like French, there's no reason to change, but if you are thinking about, you know if you really want to start another language, or if you just*

Erman subsumes this function under metalinguistic functions and says that it is operating “whenever the speaker underscores the illocutionary force of the utterance as a whole. The most obvious instantiation of the metalinguistic function in everyday talk is in connection with emphasis” (2001, 1347). According to him, emphasisers are used to enhance the effect of the message, and they emphasise the speaker’s authority.

Sometimes it is contrast that is emphasised:

- (14) *um, which i know for you guys is about forty-six but uh LAUGH you know for some of the rest of us it gets to be a, high double digit number let's just stop there,*

*You know* may be used in argumentation and disagreeing to soften the blow of an utterance and thus functions as a face-saving device (Stubbe and Holmes 1995, 70; Müller 2005, 149):

- (15) *let this change too. you can't just do a simple analysis anymore. it's not that, complicated but you know it's, a little bit... not easy, okay? but you can put it in your analysis too if you already put it*

In the example (15), the person tries to explain and prove their arguments, and makes an effort so that the interlocutor understands them. The person is not quite sure how to express their argument and softens the force of it with *you know* and *a little bit*.

This can be achieved sentence-finally:

- (16) *if you want. It's not that bright you know. Uh, Jessica can*

*You know* thus draws the collocutor into the conversation by assuming common ground. However, this common ground does not have to exist before the utterance is produced or before the conversation occurs, it can be made and called for during the conversation. This is done in argumentative talk, in proving your arguments:

- (17) *I even think if I said that to some of my other women friends they would be like you are? You know it just seems like it has such a negative connotation and often I wonder I that's like*

*You know* can be used in expressing contrast; it occurs between two propositions that are being contrasted. In the following example, the speaker is making sure that the listener does not get the wrong information:

- (18) *how nurses work, i wondered, if one place to look too might be, and i'm not in pedia- pediatrics you know i'm at the total opposite end, but is there standards out there for educating*

Speakers sometimes use *you know* when they refer to something that has been mentioned previously and is thus part of the common ground. In some examples *you know* occurs between two expressed thoughts and serves to connect them:

- (19) *And you were commenting that the courses you took had large enrolments, you know so why, why has this been, put under study? And it'll be interesting to see what happens next*

This use is stated by Fox Tree and Schrock: “reference, such as to introduce given information or request a referent to be searched for in the common ground” (2002, 740). It is

also mentioned by Dér, who categorises this function as interactional, and states that it expresses the reference to shared knowledge; the speaker draws the attention of the listener to something mentioned earlier during the conversation (2010, 22).

- (20) *the end of the novel, and then it says the entire historical notes at the end of the novel like you know that one part sort of (in quotes?) or, could you just have the first part different so it doesn't*

With *you know* the speaker can refer to something that is already a part of common knowledge, but is not necessarily mentioned in the current discourse, to explain something. This function is often stated as one of the most common functions of *you know* (Müller 2005, 177).

Another common function of *you know* is introducing indirect speech. *You know* usually stands before the part that is reported; sometimes before, and at other times after *that*:

- (21) *he told me you know that this whole influence thing it's so absurd i i could start naming, um you know pianists i really don't like that indirectly though also have*

Quite a few authors state this function of *you know*: Müller, who says that in counselling sessions, what other people said about something might be important but it is unlikely to be reported directly (2005, 168). In addition, Müller comments on marking approximation: “In my own data, *you know* was employed with a word or phrase or even a clause which apparently did not exactly render what the speaker had in mind, or whose exactness was not important. In other words, the linguistic expression is only an approximation of what would have been the most appropriate or correct expression” (2005, 162). She, as well as Dér (2010, 22), shares Erman’s view – that the function of introducing indirect speech works on the textual level. He calls this function “mark[ing] transitions between direct and reported speech, close in function to quotation marks in written text” (2001, 1344). Redeker claims that quotations “refer indexically to the context in which the quoted speech was uttered or is imagined to be uttered” (n. d., 6). Macaulay talks about *you know* marking direct speech and points to a problem when *you know* occurs within the quoted speech. It is then difficult to determine whether it is part of the quoted speech or not (2002, 758).

*You know* can also introduce a suggestion. In the following examples, it was either between two sentences or at the beginning of the suggestion:



(22) *a certain plot the next day, you could go back and look at, the spot maps that people had done. You know, couple days before a week before two weeks before, and get an idea for what you were gonna see the*

(23) *picture right just right. You know uh uh uh if you don't have time to read, just go in and look at the figures, like before the exam.*

*You know* can be said to have a hedging function here since the speaker softens the proposition with it and does not want to impose their opinion. This is also a kind of appeal. In the following example, the speaker tries to tell someone what they think the person should do, but does that reluctantly and with effort, showing difficulties in expressing it. It can be seen that *you know* has a hedging function and it softens the tone of the utterance:

(24) *OPAR, you know, stay, it's not always, you know you have to think of, you can't just take every- you know maybe uh, i think it's uh, i mean this doesn't he sh- maybe should have quali*

Another function is connecting different propositions making the discourse coherent, i.e. continuation of the speaker's discourse. *You know* occurs between the phrases in the examples:

(25) *end of the nineteenth century, and then, you know the beginning of the twentieth century also, you know by that time Germany had tremendously increased*

Erman says that this function is performed by textual monitor markers which can have a role as cohesive devices and are often referred to as discourse markers. As the author states, they are not primarily concerned with the decoding of the message done by the addressees, but with the organisation of the discourse (2001, 1342-3). In the next example, the speaker refers to what has been said in the previous part of the discourse to explain their thoughts, and *you know* connects what is said before and what comes after it.

(26) *members who have helped me they have always been men. my husband finds this very strange, that you know all of these men from my college undergraduate days that were my best friends i have no women best*

*You know* can signal a break in the sentence structure and introduce some other information, when the speaker jumps from one proposition to another, and thus it gives the speaker time to organise their thoughts:

- (27) *building was constructed in such and such a date and i thought it was kinda cute that he that he you know he was a scholar he has to be a professor and has to be a doctor LAUGH but go*

As has already been said, *you know* can be used to create coherence, which is the case here – it connects different propositions. According to Erman, discourse markers can signal transitions between smaller or larger discourse chunks; and these transitions can occur at clause level or they can connect larger pieces of discourse. They are used to ensure that the hearer gets a coherent picture of the discourse (2001, 1340). He also claims that a speaker may use markers to introduce a change of content, correct or modify previous discourse (2001, 1342).

*You know* often signals that the speaker has problems with formulating an utterance and is taking time to formulate their thoughts. This mostly happens with long utterances, when there is need for a pause in order to figure out what to say and how to express it. Some authors call these functions of pragmatic markers *editing*.

- (28) *what proportion, yes it says\_ and there's anothe- you know there's the clue it says no matter what. that's a clue that you're talking about apo- epistasis.*

Erman claims that encoding and editing belong to the text-oriented functions of pragmatic markers, since they are oriented toward the text proper. The encoding process includes putting thoughts into words, and the structuring process – turning words into phrases and then into a text. Therefore, pragmatic markers sometimes signal that the speaker is selecting the appropriate words and structures. In doing this, speakers can signal repair of previous discourse or a new direction of discourse, so they find a way to gain time for the planning or continuation of the following utterance (2001, 1340-2). Fox Tree and Schrock (2002) state that *you know* and *I mean* may contribute to repairs in three or more ways. The first is by substituting a pause, i.e. they can be used to repair or avoid a break in fluency caused by it. The second is by stalling for time during various stages of speech production and restarting utterances that have started falsely. The third is to forewarn the upcoming adjustments to what has been said and indicating what kind of adjustment the hearer can expect. They talk about how *you know* is used in this function: it may occur in the discourse “when speakers want to heighten addressees’ inference processes” (738). This happens when the speakers have trouble expressing themselves, and they want the addressees to infer what they want to say. For this reason, *you know* often occurs with problematical stretches of speech, apart from

buying time (ibid.). Müller mentions that *you know* can signal lexical or content search, thus “filling the gap” in the discourse, and mark a false start or repair. She says that “the speaker cuts off in mid-sentence ..., inserts *you know*, and then starts again with the repetition” (2005, 161).

*You know* can in some cases signal repair, which is confirmed by some authors, such as Erman (2001, 1344), Schleef (2005, 178), Müller (2005, 160-2), and Redeker (n. d., 6). Erman accentuates the difference between repair and introducing a change of information content, in which correcting or modifying previous discourse often occur: in the case of repair, the speaker stops in mid-sentence, phrase, or word, and makes a restart, unlike in changing the information content (2001, 1342).

(29)        *solution is in terms of the value, to the agents, um, what we want to do, is to somehow form- you know, construct these solution supply chains, and we want we want and and and preferably we'd like*

In this instance, the speaker interrupts the word (*form-*) and replaces it with the word they find more appropriate (*construct*). In this way, they reformulate the explanation to make it clearer.

*You know* can mark the speaker being imprecise and unspecific because they are not sure how to say something or for other reasons. This is often accomplished by using hedges such as *things like that*:

(30)        *go over, like, the exam, like, other information that you guys wanna know you know things like that. okay? so like i have other questions but if we don*

This function is stated by Müller (2005, 162-4), Fox Tree and Schrock (2002, 730), and Stubbe and Holmes (1995, 69). In addition, Erman says that *you know* alone does not fulfil the function of approximator, but in combination with other expressions. By using approximators, the speakers set a limit to how specific they are. Hedges and approximators “relieve the speaker from being completely committed to the truth value of the proposition in question” (2001, 1341), which makes them face-saving devices. However, as Erman points out, approximators can be used with an appealing function, with which the speaker appeals to some shared knowledge or general truth, as in the statement *we're all not perfect, y' know* (2001, 1348). It is assumed that these truths are taken for granted, so it is assumed that the hearer will accept the appeals, since they do not pose a threat to their face. Here is an example of this:

- (31) *something on on a s- on a stepladder that says don't be stupid, or don't be a negligent parent, you know that sort of thing, but but the language of risk in terms of injury and illness is is a a is an acce*

Speakers sometimes use *you know* at the beginning of an utterance to introduce new information (as in the example (32)) or start a story (to draw the collocutor in, as in (33)). In this use, the function of *you know* is to draw the addressees' attention.

- (32) *okay you know how they use like retroviruses to, cuz to get, um prokaryotic bacteria to replicate, or to*  
(33) *nasal voices. that would be annoying. LAUGH but other than that, you know my brother always used to say*

It also occurs when the speaker is announcing something, i.e. it is used to draw the listener's attention:

- (34) *You know, i'm hungry. i need some food. i need to go to the bathroom. i really need that, Nike's*

Erman says that *you know*, together with some other pragmatic markers, often has a turn-taking function, which is usually accomplished indirectly (2001, 1345). It is often the case, as in these examples, that *you know* introduces a previously unknown information to the hearer; in this way it can be used to start a story (Fox Tree and Schrock 2002, 735), or to announce something, as has been pointed out. Fraser provides a similar example (*Y'know, I really like eating raw pickles*) and says: "*you know* does not signal a comment on how the utterance is related to the foregoing context. Rather, it signals a message requesting that the hearer appreciate and/or be in sympathy with the speaker's point of view" (1988, 26), and for these reasons, he excludes it from the category of discourse markers. However, in this case, the speaker does not express their point of view, but wants to draw attention and wants the hearer to take their utterance into consideration.

*You know* often occurs in giving an example. Its position in the sentence in this case is before the part of the discourse that is exemplified. It can be said that the phrase exemplified is also emphasised.

- (35) *Philip Roth talks about that too where he says how, you know y- if Anne Frank had come from some you know some Orthodox family you know Eastern European you know it wouldn't have had nearly the same impact*

*You know* also occurs with enumeration:

- (36) *can look at the um, you can look at the cellular level you can look at the, organ level you can, you know the tissue level you can look at the organ level you can look at the whole physical being level. –*

It seems that *you know* here serves as an interruption to make the whole utterance less monotonous.

*You know* is sometimes used in estimations, when the speakers do not want to commit themselves to giving exact information or are not certain of it. Erman mentions this function, but says *you know* is not used in connection with hedging (2001, 1347-8). However, in the following example, it is used with the hedging word *probably*, i.e. the speaker gives an estimation of the time when they will be able to do something, so it seems that *you know* can be used with hedging function.

- (37) *slowly, slowly improving it which is um, which is good i should have the final word on that um, you know probably by the end of this week or early next week and then um, i'll let you know and as usual we*

In the next example, *you know* serves both as a hedge and emphasizer: the speaker shows reluctance to say the word *true*, which is emphasised at the same time. As the speaker is not sure of the truth of the proposition, *you know* is part of a hedge on the maxim of quality:

- (38) *and also the other thing that people talk about i don't know if this is, you know true or not but, they say that the whole state, system could, um be moving towards*

The following example is interesting because the speaker concedes to something that has been previously stated somewhere or is widely accepted, but actually says something opposite (using the conjunction *but*). Therefore, *you know* is also a hedge here since the speaker admits to something that is opposite from what they claim:

- (39) *happening in Cambridge, maybe that M-I-T is gonna be the last bastion of the English language. and you know John Grisham and and Steven King, are great writers. but their vocabulary is severely restricted.*

When *you know* is pronounced with a falling contour, usually at the end of the utterance, it marks closing the turn, as if saying “I’ll say no more” (Östman 1981, 26). “By assuming (and letting the hearer know about it) that the hearer has the relevant kind of background, the

speaker expresses positive politeness” (Müller 2005, 149). Furthermore, Redeker mentions end-of segment markers (n. d., 6), and Macaulay studies *you know* occurring in final position and says that it usually marks the end of a syntactic unit, or it can mark the end of a quoted passage. However, he also says that it usually does not signal the speaker’s intention to yield the floor (2002, 757-8). In the following example, the speaker has nothing more to say or is not sure what to say next and thus marks the end of their utterance, offering the collocutor to take the floor or finish the conversation.

- (40) - *ah i was trying to figure out what i should do for my thesis. cuz this is the information i have you know. oh okay*

Also, *know* can be used without *you* as a filler:

- (41) *LAUGH like level, regulations. Things like that and then after that. So like know like, how these things fall into the place of like how, you go from DNA to protein. And know what*

#### 6.1.2 Basic meaning and other functions

There are some patterns in which *you know* occurs, such as: *do you know...?*, *did you know?*, *as many of you know*, *I think you know*, *how do you know*, *I’ll let you know*, *you know what* (which serves as an attention getter). These expressions will not be discussed here since *you know* is not an independent phrase, but is a part of a larger construction.

There are also some uses of *you know* with the basic meaning in the sample from MICASE, for example:

- (42) *I don't know whether you know what the percentages are in other states.*

However, *you know* used in a compositional meaning is quite rare in the sample from the corpus: only about 70 examples compared to more than 700 in which it is used as a filler.

In the following example, *you know* is stressed, which means it is not a filler. However, its meaning is both basic, since the speaker really refers to the addressee’s knowledge (everyone knows life is hard), and pragmatic since *you know* is used to refer to the addressee’s knowledge in order to prove the speaker’s point, i.e. to strengthen the force of the utterance.

- (43) *and mind you, you know life is hard. And so, your daily needs, your daily income, whatever you do,*

As Fitzmaurice says, “adopting the second person subject with *know* is clearly a much stronger and more aggressive move to influence the stance of his addressee than asserting his own opinion” (2004, 430). This is the opposite of hedging in that the speaker strengthens the force of the message instead of softening it, but what is common is that the speaker does not present the message as their own opinion, but as something that is common ground.

When *you know* is used with an interrogative intonation contour (represented by the question mark) at the end of utterance, the speaker uses it to ask the addressee for feedback, although the addressee does not have to give a verbal feedback. Instead of *you know?*, the speaker might say *do you know what I’m saying?*, *do you know what I mean?*, or something similar. Erman categorises this function as social monitoring (2001, 1340; 1346), and Östman says: “If accompanied by an interrogative intonation contour, *you know* almost explicitly requires a response from the addressee” (1981, 26). In this sense, *you know* functions as a tag question (Müller 2005, 171):

- (44) *i don't even know if it, makes up for her not being here because, like, you know?*

### 6.1.3 Unclear situations

There are some examples in which it is not clear what function *you know* performs, either because there is not enough context, because the sentence intonation is unknown, or simply because it is not clear what the speaker meant.

- (45) *was there no, National Enquirer in Paris then? No Hard Copy? No gossip columnist that you know, couldn't you do something with this letter?*

In this example, it is not clear whether the speaker uses *you know* as a filler or refers to being acquainted with a gossip columnist, using *you know* in the basic meaning. Nevertheless, it is more probable that it is used in the compositional meaning since it fits the syntactic structure and makes sense if it contributes to the conceptual meaning of the whole sentence.

- (46) *well, you know there is a lot of other terminology, up there in that document, and why can't i search that?*

In this example the meaning of *you know* depends on whether it is stressed or not; if it is stressed, its function is similar to that in the example (43), and if it is not stressed, than it is a filler, and the speaker uses it as a kind of apology, providing the reason for doing something, and as an appeal to the hearer’s understanding.

(47) *uhuh, okay, mm, you know.*

This example is not clear because there is not enough context (co-text). *You know* is probably a filler here, since it appears with other fillers.

#### 6.1.4 Summary of functions of *you know*

The marker *you know* in most cases refers to the common ground between the speaker and listener. However, this common ground might not be what the two participants share, such as their previous discourses or extralinguistic knowledge. Rather, the speaker creates the common ground and signals it, as in the examples with introducing new information which is not familiar to the listener. As Macaulay points out, *you know* often introduces statements that cannot represent shared knowledge between the speaker and listener since the latter could not have previously known what the speaker refers to in some cases (2002, 755-6, cf. also Jucker and Smith 1998, 193). This also enables the appealing function in seeking understanding from the listener, either when the speaker cannot find the right expression and hopes that the listener can still understand them, or when the speaker expresses their opinion and expects the listener to agree with them, as stated by Müller (2005, 181-2). This also achieves intimacy since the speaker implies that they and the listener can understand each other and share common ground. Müller (2005) also claims that even when the speaker does not refer to the shared knowledge, they still appeal to the listener's ability to imagine a scene they are describing or see the speaker's implication. In discussing grounding, Matei claims that discourse markers often guide the creation and recognition of common ground in the discourse. At the beginning of a conversation, the speakers share mutual knowledge and background assumptions, but the shared knowledge increases during conversation as new information is added and confirmed by the hearer, common ground is thus a collaborative process (2010, 122-3). This is in accordance with the findings that *you know* can introduce new information or signal appeal, as speakers create common ground together. This is especially important in explanations, which are very frequent examples of using *you know*, since the collocutors must share some common ground in order to understand what is being explained.

## **6.2 I mean**

### 6.2.1 *I mean* as a filler

Like *you know*, *I mean* is often used with explanations, but not as often and commonly as *you know*:



- (48) *and the description of the anatomy it's all there. none of it's couched. i mean, they talk about all of the you know all of the female body. the breasts everything,*

Brinton says that *I mean* can function as introducing clarification. One of the types of meanings she states for this expression are appositional meanings, which describe or add something to the preceding discourse. These functions are metalinguistic or metacommunicative since they focus on a speaker's use of the code, and their subvarieties are repair, reformulation, exemplification, and making the part of discourse more explicit. In these functions *I mean* can be replaced by expressions such as *what I mean to say* or *namely* (2008, 114-5). In the example (48), the speaker makes their utterance more explicit by using *I mean* and an explanation after it, and *I mean* can be replaced by *namely* here. The following examples demonstrate how *I mean* can be used to connect two segments of discourse, in which the second segment anaphorically refers to the first. In the example (49), the segment after *I mean* explains the term that is used before *I mean* (*seductive alternatives*), and in (50) *I mean* is placed between two sentences. Again, what follows after *I mean* refers to and serves to explain what precedes it.

- (49) *read the other ones which may turn out to be better and we try to write in seductive alternatives i mean uh alternatives that maybe are partially right but aren't as good. and the same way for essay, tests*
- (50) *just in that little, why greedy? PAUSE duration :04 ho- why is the rat rare and unknown? i mean w- what are those terms, what is the connotation of the ter- those terms?*

With *I mean* the speakers often explain reasons for their actions:

- (51) *i just don't want to, count on her for something, because i mean we only have a week left, and if we count on her for something if she doesn't do it, but then,*

Also, as has been said, speakers explain what they have said, making it clearer, thus *I mean* can introduce a clarification:

- (52) *David how do the ignorant tourists at\_ in the hotel setting react to the play? i mean did you feel like the the the basic tourist base enjoys these performances or no?*

In this example, *I mean* can be replaced with *in other words* since it introduces a clarification, formulating the utterance differently to enhance understanding.

Modification and clarification of the previous utterance using *I mean* is mentioned by Stubbe and Holmes (1995, 70), although they refer to it as a repair device, and Redeker mentions that parenthetical discourse units can function as explication and clarification (n. d., 6).

In (53), *I mean* is used to make the statement more specific, i.e. state that it does not have to be applied generally, making the speaker less committed to it:

- (53) *really upper working cla- no yeah the upper working class it's pretty much like the upper class (xx) i mean here in the States anyway. PAUSE duration :04*

*I mean* can also be used with enumeration, similarly to *you know*, to make the discourse less monotonous and gain time to plan the next element. In these instances *you know* can be used instead of *I mean*, and other fillers, such as *well*, are also possible:

- (54) *well i mean if you stand in a river what do you see i mean there's banks, and braided channels i mean there's yeah there's tons of 'em. i mean if you look at a river,*

Also similar to a function of *you know*, *I mean* can be used to emphasise one or more words that follow it. In this case, it is inside a phrase, in the medial position, before the part that is emphasised:

- (55) *with the cognitive mapping i- is that done, like i mean within a lighted tent or, i mean are you, you know somehow sensory deprived in some way or?*

Another function of this is for the speaker to take time to plan the next word. This function is also stated by Brinton, who subsumes *I mean* preceding a phrasal category under an expression of the speaker's attitude, together with evaluation – expressing judgement, and sincerity. She also says that the utterance preceding *I mean* often expresses an opinion (2008, 116-7). In the next example, the speaker expresses their opinion, and the position of *I mean* is between two sentences:

- (56) *don't want, um, they don't want to be confronted with it. um, and i i think that's a cultural thing, i mean i feel it also, as a teacher, i i like that sense of, um, of, open flow of communication and equality*

*I mean* is also used with explaining the speaker's impression of something, especially something unpleasant that the speaker is reluctant to express:

- (57) *PAUSE WHILE LISTENING TO POEM isn't this horrible...? i mean isn't it pompous, and... (xx) portentous PAUSE duration :19 you gotta have the bowed cello*

This use can also be subsumed under Brinton's evaluative function, i.e. expression of speaker's attitude. Since the speaker is reluctant to express their evaluation, *I mean* can soften the strength of the evaluation (2008, 113). House says that *I mean* "acts as a focalizing device in a speaker's contributions to the discourse. It is a point of departure for the speaker's explicit expression of his/her subjective evaluation, signalling emotional involvement in the topic at hand" (2013, 4). Therefore, by using *I mean*, the speakers show that they are trying to soften the force of their evaluation and that they are reluctant to express their opinion. *I mean* can also be used to evaluate what somebody has said:

- (58) *good point yeah i i th- i mean first of all you're right to that i need to integrate my interviews uh but also, uh it's true that I*

*I mean* is sometimes used in reformulating the utterance:

- (59) *since he's b- he was in this day care, i mean i would be getting to look you know i mean i i, he lives in New York so i don't visit him very often but sometimes when i go visit him you've*

In this example, *you know* and *I mean* are used next to each other; the explanation is quite fuzzy, since the speaker seeks the way to express the information, and the sentence structure is interrupted and changed. Brinton states that *I mean* can have the function of reformulating the previous utterance, and she considers this an appositional function (2008, 115), since the segment after *I mean* functions as a reformulation of the preceding segment. Erman classifies this use as encoding and editing, which are subvarieties of textual functions. By using it, the speakers show they are preoccupied with formulating their thoughts or stall for time in order to plan the continuation of the discourse, which is also one of the functions of *you know* (2001, 1340). In the following example, the speaker is uncertain of what they want to say and thus changes the sentence structure along with using many fillers (among which *I mean*) and tries to start the utterance over:

- (60) *i don't, i really don't know. i think it's built over i mean y- all well you know i think UNINTELLIGIBLE SPEECH*

Similarly, in the following instance, the speaker shows reluctance – they are not sure how to express the proposition, so they repeat fillers and reformulate the utterance:

(61)        *month just to get a prediction of a, of a one hundred, you know foot channel.  
you see\_ i mean so... i mean i\_ it was just kind of uh, i i was thinking that most of the  
people\_ i guess what i was thinking is*

*I mean* can introduce an argument. It is placed at the beginning of the sentence that contains the argument. It shows that the speaker is reluctant or needs to think about the argument for the statement:

(62)        *'m seeing this as totally flexible like, the question of what is a studio came up  
for me right away. i mean, for me the p- the possibility that the studio's not the end of  
the line. but it is the line was*

*I mean* is also used to explain an argument: in this case, it is placed between two sentences, before the argument that is introduced:

(63)        *these kind of societies. whereas in the state society, well in our state society  
there isn't right? i mean there's people from all over the world that come to America  
and they're all, citizens of the state.*

*I mean* is often used in discussions to question someone's proposal, as it softens the argumentative character of the utterance:

(64)        *social norms, relate to the goals? i mean this is, really just building on what  
you said but, but um, i mean, when we set goals, how do we decide what our goals,  
should be? i mean, do you think for example*

*I mean* can be used to introduce a statement that is in contrast with what someone has said, and it provides an explanation for this contrast:

(65)        *of program. i mean i suppose one could always, turn them around and\_ well no  
you really couldn't. i mean as a matter of fact, actually, we recently did a study using  
these E-C-L-S data where we were*

Brinton also states *I mean* can express contrast, but in her examples, it expresses the speaker's belief and is therefore subjective and metacommunicative (2008, 115).

In the following example, *I mean* expresses disagreement and is used to soften the force of that disagreement to save the speaker's and hearer's faces. Propositionally, the speaker is not

saying the collocutor is wrong, but actually disagrees with something they have said, and uses *I mean* to soften it and sound polite:

- (66) *to do. i think that's, that's i mean there's definitely um, there's definitely, some truth to this, i mean, i'm not saying you're wrong*

*I mean* can be used with politeness strategies to ask for something, as in (67), where the speaker expects something from the collocutor, but does not want to be rude, so they use polite forms (*it would be nice if you could...*), and then *I mean* to explain or add something to the explanation of their expectations. It may also be unpleasant for the speaker to ask for something from the hearer:

- (67) *what were the sentences i'd be interested to\_ it would be nice if you could avoid that i mean just well if if you want smoo*

*I mean* is often used as an apology, when the speaker feels the need to justify their acts:

- (68) *LAUGH and that's, that's it. i just don't have time i mean i'd like to.*

In the following example, the speaker uses *I mean* as a kind of apology and admits to their mistakes:

- (69) *good. i mean i know i have like major problems with like prepositions and stuff.*

*I mean* can be used to acknowledge someone else's proposition. In the following example, it also emphasises the complexity of the propositions that have been made:

- (70) *yeah i mean these are really good questions. i don't expect you to be able to answer them. right? i mean, these are big questions. um, but you LAUGH that's very*

Similarly to *you know*, *I mean* can be used to soften a suggestion in order not to impose your opinion onto the listener. This is why *I mean* can be replaced with *you know* in the following example:

- (71) *you know what i would, probably do, is look at something you can't take here, i mean you can take four-oh-two here unless\_ i i always think it's interesting abroad to*

Also, it can be used to explain to somebody what they should do:

- (72) *white space uh uh those those kinds of things. uh uh, but if you try to have straight just by itself i mean it have to has\_ you have to ha- have some width to the line to be able to imagine it so it's...*

In the following example, the speaker uses *I mean* both to express contrast and make a suggestion to the hearer. The speaker does not want to impose their ideas on the listener, but still tries to give them directions for doing something:

- (73) *right. so you want to leave some of the probability left over for this node E right? but, i mean, so, you should still be able to apply noisy-or but you want to use some of the terminology in the*

Moreover, instead of telling the listener what they should do, the speaker might use *I mean* to leave the decision to them, without imposing anything and thus being polite:

- (74) *m'm, i mean it's one of\_ if it's easier for you, to take it closer to home over the summer, i mean that's fine, if that's how you wanna spend your spring half-term, that's cool, not a problem.*

Again, as Brinton claimed, *I mean* serves to soften the assertive force (2008, 113).

The marker can also serve to introduce a proposition. In the following example, the speaker uses it as a hedge, saying they are not sure they understood something correctly, so they do not want to completely commit themselves to what they are going to say next:

- (75) *of quiet? yeah go ahead. ah i mean, if i understood right the question he was like how do you you know capital- capitalize on somebo-*

#### 6.2.2 *I mean* as a hedge of conversational maxim

*I mean* often serves as a hedge on some of the conversational maxims. By using it, the speakers can express their uncertainty or being aware of the lack of coherence in their discourse. In addition, according to Brinton, “*I mean* may serve as a negative politeness marker since it is deferential and hedges assertions to protect face” (2008, 113). One of the examples of this is (76), in which the speaker admits their utterance is not coherent – therefore, this is a hedge on the maxim of manner, but hopes the hearer will still understand them:

(76) *levant denominator, and you have to divide the number of crimes by, the rate of criminality, so that i mean i'm being a little bit babbling here but i think you get the general, sort of point that they*

In (77), the speaker is not sure whether what they say is true and are therefore reluctant to say it, so *I mean* serves as a hedge on the maxim of quality:

(77) *yeah, i think that they\_ oh, i mean i don't know, i'm not really sure but i think that they maybe have classes that are more oriented to*

In (78), the speaker softens the force of the proposition by admitting they might be wrong (*maybe my perception ... is not quite right*). However, by using *but* and continuing with expressing their opinion, the speaker implies they do not actually believe to be wrong, and *I mean* serves as a hedge in order not to sound rude, and also connects two seemingly contradictory propositions ('I might be wrong' and continuing the discourse in spite of the preceding admission).

(78) *yeah i mean maybe my perception is i mean, is not quite right but i mean my\_ i've certainly been in s- in a lot of situations in which, uh, people observe, somebody and say*

### 6.2.3 Other pragmatic meanings: repair and specification

There are situations in which *I mean* has a pragmatic meaning, but is not actually a filler. One of them is repair, which is one of its most common functions, mentioned by many authors. Redeker defines the repair function as “emendations of (part of) an utterance that suggest that the speaker found the initial formulation incorrect or inappropriate (this latter stipulation distinguishes repairs from paraphrases)” (n. d., 6). In addition, she states that they refer indexically to an element of “trouble” in the discourse (ibid.) According to Brinton, “*I mean* is a ‘mistake editor,’ or marker of self-initiated (self)-repair of a preceding utterance, used to prevent misunderstanding” (2008, 112-3). She considers this an appositional function, in which the speaker is focused on the code, and *I mean* precedes or follows a phrasal category, or can occur parenthetically. However, she claims this function of *I mean* is quite rare in Present-day English (2008, 114-15), but quite a few examples are found in MICASE. Dér subsumes self-correction under textual functions of discourse markers and illustrates it on *you know* (2010, 22). Fox Tree and Schrock (2002) also state this function of pragmatic markers, as has been described for *you know*. Erman as well maintains that editing the text is a

textual function, and states: “markers with an editing function can turn up anywhere in a text when there is need for either stalling for time, as hesitation markers, or signalling repair, as repair markers” (2001, 1344). Thus, we can see that pragmatic markers are extensively used to signal repair and modify the speaker’s utterances. Here are some examples where *I mean* is used to signal repair:

(79) *filter 'em out any time you want. y- you don't wanna do too much filtering here because, the S-P-S\_ i mean because H-L-M is a data-hungry. and so it wants lotsa kids and it wants lotsa schools.*

(80) *so you don't know any other Naomi Bernsteins? there's a there's a famous, i mean you're famous too there's another famous there's an art critic, or someone who writes on*

*I mean* can serve to specify the previous utterance, as in (81), in which the speaker says: “when I was a little boy”, and then specifies what they meant by *little*: “I mean little like, three”:

(81) *grandma Mahler, um, my father's mother, i remember this quite vividly when i was a little boy, um and i mean little like, three, my folks would park me at my grandmother's house sometimes, years later i found*

In the example (82), the speaker corrects themselves, explains what really happened and also specifies it, so this is an example of both repair and specification:

(82) *i only saw Spottails but i didn't pick up that many. I mean I picked up a handful but i didn't look at 'em all.*

#### 6.2.4 Basic meanings

Now we turn to the basic meaning of *I mean*. Under “full” meanings, Brinton considers the dynamic and cognitive meanings. The dynamic meaning ‘to intend [to do something]’ usually comes with a to-complement. The cognitive meaning ‘to signify, to intend to convey a certain sense’ occurs in a number of syntactic structures. It can occur with clausal or phrasal complement: *what I mean is*, *by X I mean*, and so on. The sense ‘to signify’ does not often occur parenthetically (2008, 114). Here are some of the examples from MICASE:

(83) *is always equal to Y. sometimes i refer to that as, vertically-dominated region of the rack and what i mean by that is the vertical motor, is the critical motor there. that's the one that always has to run.*



- (84) *don't need to break the solution, in two different solutions anymore. um, what i mean is, let's say this is the average H and if i put it in the equation for Nusselt i get the Nusselt*

Even though the construction in which *I mean* appears in (84) introduces an explanation and can be replaced by *in other words*, it is not a filler since the speaker explains what they intended to say, so they use the verb *mean* in its basic propositional meaning. Although *I mean* is not used as a filler in these instances, there are much fewer examples in the corpus of this than of those in which *I mean* is a filler.

#### 6.2.5 Summary of functions of *I mean*

The analysis has shown that *I mean* is always a kind of hedge, expressing reluctance to say something because the speaker is afraid their opinion will not be accepted. Fox Tree and Schrock discuss this and claim that speakers can use *you know* or *I mean* not to commit themselves to a face-threatening utterance (2002, 733). By using *I mean*, the speaker shows the need to explain themselves, which is why it often accompanies expressing opinion. Therefore, Fox Tree and Schrock claim that *I mean* is common in thoughtful and opinionated talk. The speakers use *I mean* to adjust their speech since they are more careful and want to express exactly what they mean to express. But also, *I mean* is used mostly in casual, spontaneous speech since there is the need for adjustments, unlike in planned speech. Also, they say that *I mean* is linked both to positive and negative politeness. It is connected to positive politeness because it reminds the speaker and hearer of the casual conversation, and with negative politeness because it decreases face threat and commitment to the utterance, therefore not offending the collocutor (2002, 741). It often has an anaphoric reference – the part after *I mean* explains and refers to what is uttered before *I mean*, and in some cases can be replaced with *in other words*. When its position is inside a phrase, the sentence structure is changed and it has a function of repair or other type of editing the discourse, and since the speaker reflects on their use of language, it is speaker-oriented.

## **7. Discussion**

The main difference between the markers *you know* and *I mean* is that, as has been stated, *you know* is addressee-oriented, while *I mean* is speaker-oriented. As a speaker-oriented device, *I mean* serves to put focus on the speaker's thoughts and intentions. Both markers are used to increase intimacy and thus reduce social distance, so they are used to achieve positive politeness. However, they are also used to achieve negative politeness since they can signal

that the speaker does not want to commit themselves to the truth of the proposition or to a face-threatening proposition (Stubbe and Holmes 1995, 69-70). By saying *you know*, the speaker signals that they invite the addressee to come about their own inferences, and thus leave out the ideas that pose a threat to their face. Using *you know* can also imply that the speaker and addressee share the same inferences, which can increase a sense of having similar views on a matter and a feeling of familiarity (Fox Tree and Schrock 2002, 737-8). Moreover, as Müller states, at the interactional level, the speaker signals they want to involve the addressee in the conversation – from appealing for the addressee’s mental involvement to inviting them to actively participate in the conversation (2005, 171). On the other hand, by using *I mean*, the speaker focuses on their own produced discourse and forewarns upcoming adjustments to it. In this way, they encourage listeners to focus more on the speaker’s thoughts, while with *you know* the focus is more on the listener’s thoughts elicited by the speaker’s utterances. Most importantly, the use of *I mean* is both intersubjective and subjective in explanations. It is intersubjective since the speaker is attentive to the need to explain their thoughts to the listener, which shows that both participants are important for the interpretation of the utterance. On the other hand, it is subjective, since the speaker expresses their personal view (Brinton 2008, 116), and reflects on their own speech production.

Jucker and Smith claim that the representations of common ground are assumed to be shared between the collocutors and include not only the information that has been shared explicitly, but also the inferences that are expected to be drawn correctly. Nevertheless, these inferences are assumed to be made implicitly: the collocutors do not state them aloud; the speaker rather uses expressions such as *you know* to signal that they expect the addressee to draw them (1998, 173-4). Jucker and Smith introduce the notion of *presentation markers*, which “accompany and modify the speaker’s own information” (1998, 174). *You know* and *I mean* belong to the subcategory of addressee-centred presentation markers (the other subcategory comprises information-centred presentation markers), which “relate the information to the presumed knowledge state of the addressee” (ibid.). The authors claim that, apart from introducing information that was already known, i.e. that is a part of common ground, *you know* can introduce new information or be connected to statements that have been contradicted by earlier statements. Therefore, they conclude that the function of *you know* must be explained differently from claiming that it is concerned with whether the information was already known. “We propose that it lies in the role of *you know* as a device to aid in the joint construction of the representation of the event being described. More specifically, we

suggest that *you know* invites the addressee to recognise both the relevance and the implications of the utterance marked with *you know*" (1998, 194). When the marked information is indeed a part of common ground, the speaker calls attention to its relevance and to implications of it that the addressee can draw: "The point of his marking appears to be to try more aggressively to get A to accept not only the direct content of the utterance but also its implications for his perspective" (1998, 195). In cases when the speaker presents new, previously unknown information to the addressee, the speaker might invite and allow the addressee to recognise its implications and contribute to the discussion with their knowledge. In addition, when the speaker's statement contradicts those made by the addressee, the speaker wants to strengthen their arguments and seeks acknowledgement of their opinion, but also of the implications of their assertion, i. e. the speaker wants their opinion to be accepted. According to Ariel, the latter case would be similar to making justifications in that the speaker feels the need to be extra persuasive (1998, 245). Thus the speaker establishes information as common ground (although it might not have been a part of it previously) to get a better chance that their proposition will be accepted. Furthermore, Ariel considers that justifying and contrastive information is related to accessible information. In other words, the unexpectedness of the information depends on the prior expectations: "it is the unspecified expectations shared by the speaker and her addressee which constitute accessible information, though not the proposition itself" (1998, 247). So, the expectations and accessible information in the conversation are brought about by both the speaker and addressee, and the creation of discourse is their joint activity. This is in accordance with Jucker and Smith's claims that

*you know* is a strategic device used by the speaker to involve the addressee in the joint construction of a representation. While it may or may not mark information already known to the addressee, it appears always to mark statements whose implications are critical to a point being made. *You know* thus invites the addressee to complete the argument by drawing the appropriate inferences. These inferences, which may or may not be stated subsequently, are thus acknowledged and exploited as common ground. (1998, 196)

As with providing justifications or arguments, the repairing and editing functions of *you know* and *I mean* also require the addressees to draw the appropriate inferences. By using these markers, the speaker appeals for understanding even though their formulation of a statement is not the best one possible. However, the use of these two markers does not accomplish this in the same way. Schourup talks about different effects of using *you know* and *I mean* as repair devices. While *you know* signals a fairly predictable transition between parts that need to be repaired and parts that come after the repair marker, with *I mean* this transition is

unexpected and less predictable (1985, 125). With giving reasons, explaining yourself or giving impressions, *I mean* is usually not replaceable with *you know*, while in some cases, such as suggestions or explaining how to do something, these two fillers are mutually replaceable, but the procedural meanings of the utterances are not the same since they contribute to the conversation with different pragmatic meanings.

Finally, Macaulay provides another reason for the frequent use of *you know* and *I mean*, among some other pragmatic markers: their phonetic features. They have simple vowel-consonant structure, a rhythmic pattern which is very common in English (2002, 763), and they are short, which all makes them easy to pronounce and remember. According to Fox Tree and Schrock, they occur frequently in unplanned, spontaneous conversations, which are collaborative in nature. They are much less frequently used in prepared speech since this type of discourse allows the speakers to plan their expressions in advance: *you know* is not as necessary as the speaker has already planned most inferences and made most adjustments, so there is also less need for *I mean* (2002, 745). Because of their phonetic structure, widespread use, and various functions, together with their clausal origin as containing frequently used verbs of cognition, *you know* and *I mean* are suitable to be prominent elements of the language structure.

## 8. Conclusion

The expressions *you know* and *I mean* belong to the group of pragmatic markers because of their formal and functional features, and differ from discourse markers accordingly. They have a clausal origin, containing a personal pronoun and a cognition verb. They occur sentence or utterance initially, medially, or finally, unlike discourse markers, which are considered to occur initially by many authors. *You know* and *I mean* are characteristic of spoken discourse, they can be left out of a sentence without changing its propositional meaning, since they have procedural rather than conceptual meaning, and are often reduced phonetically. One of their most important characteristics is multifunctionality. The functions of pragmatic markers depend on the context and are therefore studied based on the examples from the corpus of spoken language. The corpus used in this thesis is MICASE – Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English. In the sample from MICASE not a lot of examples of *you know* and *I mean* present their basic, compositional meanings; they mostly serve as fillers and have some pragmatic functions. Some of their functions are textual, such as repair, reformulating utterances to make them clearer, and signalling difficulties with the formulation of utterance. However, they have other functions that operate outside the text, which

distinguishes them from discourse markers since the latter are mainly considered to connect different parts of discourse. Apart from textual functions, *you know* and *I mean* often signal appeal for understanding or accepting the speaker's opinion. In those functions, they are used to soften the force of the utterance and thus achieve negative politeness. In addition, they can contribute to positive politeness since the speaker conveys intimacy (especially with *you know*, in which the speaker refers to some information from the common ground or creates common ground, and the hearer accepts it). They also have a hedging function in the examples where the speakers do not want to commit themselves to the propositions they made, or they comment on their formulation of them. Furthermore, there are examples in which it is very difficult to determine whether *you know* or *I mean* have a procedural or compositional meaning, and the interpretations usually largely depend on intonation. On the other hand, with some examples it is difficult to decide which function the marker performs because there is not enough context. All this shows that pragmatic markers play a variety of roles in discourse apart from merely stalling for time or marking hesitation. The choice of the marker depends on what the speaker wants to accomplish. By using a speaker-oriented marker such as *I mean*, the speakers bring into focus the expression of their own thoughts, which they modify and reflect on. On the other hand, by using an addressee-oriented device such as *you know*, the focus is on the addressee's interpretation of the utterances and their mutual construction of the discourse, as well as drawing their attention, and creating a sense of familiarity and mutual understanding between the collocutors. All these functions are present in the academic discourse, in which the most typical type of utterance is explanation. In this type of discourse, the speakers often need to explain some information, such as a complicated subject matter, but also their opinions and attitudes. They thus use cognition verbs in a wide variety of pragmatic functions, in which the meanings of the expressions containing these verbs are removed from the basic conceptual meanings, to connect their mental processes with conversational aims.

## Abstract

The thesis explores using the cognition verbs *know* and *mean* in pragmatic markers *you know* and *I mean* in spoken academic discourse. For this purpose, the first part of the thesis is dedicated to discussing the notion of pragmatic markers and resolving the terminological issues of discourse markers versus pragmatic markers. Next, the class of cognition verbs is presented regarding especially its grammaticalisation and pragmaticisation with their specificity in representing mental processes. After that, it is discussed in which ways academic discourse differs from other types of discourse. As for the methodology, the examples of using pragmatic markers in academic discourse that were analysed were taken from MICASE, which is a corpus of spoken academic discourse collected and transcribed at the University of Michigan. The analysis showed that *you know* and *I mean* occur in various situations and have a large number of functions, which is typical of pragmatic markers. In some examples they have textual functions, such as helping in formulation of an utterance, continuation of discourse, etc. However, they also have interactional and metalinguistic functions, which delimitates them from the class of discourse markers. Some of these functions are hedging, either a conversational maxim, the speaker's assertion, or some other proposition; emphasising a part of discourse; referring to common ground, and many others, while the most frequent situation in which they occur is explanation. Although *you know* and *I mean* have overlapping functions, *you know* is more frequently used to place focus on the addressee in order to appeal to the shared knowledge between them and the speaker, or to create common ground, while with *I mean* the focus is more on the speaker and their speech processes. As these two markers, whose origin is clausal, containing cognition verbs, have a simple phonological structure and enable connecting mental processes with conversational aims, they are widely used in the spoken academic discourse.

## Keywords

Pragmatic markers    Discourse markers    Cognition verbs    Academic discourse  
Spoken discourse

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