Discourse Markers of Emotional States in Mixed Sex Conversations Among Young Adults

Dujmić, Mia

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J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Study Programme: Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and
Literature and Philosophy

Mia Dujmić

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Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Goran Milić, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2017

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Abstract:

This paper will focus on the field of discourse analysis and one of the segments from that field – discourse markers. I will study the impact of gender, age and medium of communication on the language skills of young adults. Moreover, the focus will be put on emotions and their connection to language as well as on how to indicate them through texts. Emoticons are useful when people want to express something in a comfortable way. However, people are often unaware of signifying their emotional states and they often confuse other people with their messages. Young adults imply their emotions more indirectly so the need to practice reading emotions is crucial in order to avoid wrong interpretations and misunderstandings. Sometimes normal text messages are seen as offensive even though there is no specific tone to them. This comes as a consequence of male and female nature and the way they are argued to express their emotions and make conclusions about other. Comprehending human communication and emotions cannot be based only on words, sentences and syntax. People must understand the grammar and lexicon, but also language rules. Language rules differ from one social group to another and language learners must acknowledge them for the sake of better language and social skills.

Key words: discourse analysis, discourse markers, emotions, digital communication

1. Introduction

The main purpose of my paper is to show some of the ways in which discourse markers indicate emotional states. My main thesis is that a variety of devices can indicate the prevailing emotion and is supported by Deborah Schiffrin's statement from the book Discourse Markers where she says that discourse markers have multiple resources and that almost anything can be considered as a discourse marker. First I will explain what discourse analysis is and how the meaning of an utterance changes through various contexts. The linguistic meaning can be descriptive, social but also affective, and the last one is the most significant for my paper, so I will explain what affective meaning is and why linguistic anthropologists started to pay more attention to the affect in language. I chose to talk about discourse markers of emotional states because I want the emphasize the importance of recognizing emotional states indicated by some seemingly simple and meaningless words since it could help people avoid misunderstandings as well as communicate indirectly and imply feelings, opinions, agreements in a polite and formal way. What concerns me more is the communication conducted through computer mediated discourse. People are unable to analyze facial expressions, body gestures, loudness of the voice, pitch and similar variables, so the only things that occupy their attention are words. Recognizing irony, sarcasm, language games, discourse markers and points hidden behind other expressions is essential for proper communication. Misinterpretation can have much bigger consequences than just few conversational misunderstandings. Sometimes people get the wrong impression about other people based on a wrong interpretation of their replies. Emotions leave an impact on language and it is important to recognize it and to understand other people rather than the other way around since people could get the impression of ignorance and insensitiveness. Furthermore, recognizing that someone is annoyed or angry at you could prevent further conflicts. Language knowledge gives you power and control over the way you present your information. Young adults lead complicated lives packed with emotion. They are sailing from one friendship to another and they are creating their own image as well as the image of other people, and they mostly gather and send information through the social media webpages. Because of that, it is important that information is presented in good quality. Moreover, young adults also want to leave the best impression of themselves at all times and because of that it is important that they communicate with other people in a best, most polite and socially acceptable way possible. The last thing anyone needs in their busy lives is to be disrupted by misunderstandings and judgements. Digital communication lacks devices for channeling the information so the idea behind the message is often not presented in a good and

precise way. The usage of emoticons adds tone and clarity to messages, but it also leads to decline in quality of communication. People are more comfortable to express their emotional states with emojis and it is easier to assume if someone is happy or sad according to the smiley faces and sad faces that they send. However, when it comes to expressing yourself through words, people lack the ability to do so and the communication becomes more confusing. The main problem why digital messages can sometimes seem offensive, although that is not their purpose, is because men and women interpret the same content in different ways. In order to comprehend human communication it is not advisable to look only into sentences and syntax because meaning changes from one context to another. Therefore people must look at each word differently and discourse markers can indicate emotions even though people were unaware of actually giving out their true feeling. Texts help people hide their tone, facial expressions and feelings, but the emotions always find their way to emanate from the words and it is important to recognize them and have good and understanding communication with other people because it is the basis of good relationships.

The paper is structured as follows. First I will exemplify which affective devices convey affective meanings. Another chapter will analyze emotions and their connection to language. After that focus of the next chapter will be put on 'Discourse Markers'. This chapter is mainly based on Deborah Schiffrin's (ibid.) definition and I will present both Schiffrin's as well as Lutzky's examples of the discourse markers '*oh*' and '*well*'. Through the examples given I explain the importance of proper identification as well as interpretation of discourse markers. My claims are supported by the examples of discourse. I will also provide lists of discourse markers, but also possible and most common sources of discourse markers. In the next chapter 'Language and Communication' I will explain the importance of proper communication and the importance of language rules. The idea within the chapter is that knowing the grammar, lexicon, but also the rules of a language will help with correct interpretation, especially through the communication with the native speakers. Throughout the whole paper I will compare spoken and written language as well as the difficulties in both, but the following chapter 'Computer mediated discourse' deals with characteristics of computer mediated discourse and with the importance of recognizing emotional states indicated by each discourse marker given the fact that written communication lacks visual, gestural and auditory channels. In 'Discourse, gender, and age' I explain the characteristics of mixed sex conversations and the language used by young adults, especially through social media sites.

2. What is Discourse Analysis?

In order to understand the meaning of the term *discourse analysis,* it is important to understand that it is "a vast and ambiguous field" (Schiffrin 1) as emphasized by Deborah Schiffrin. There are many definitions attached to that term and I will start with the most basic one, such as Brown's and Yule's, which says that "the analysis of discourse is the analysis of language in use" (Schiffrin 1). Furthermore, discourse analysis is "an approach to the analysis of language that looks at patterns of language across texts as well as the social and cultural context in which the text occurs" (Paltridge 1). The term was first introduced by Zellig Harris in 1952 as "a way of analyzing connected speech and writing" (Paltridge 2). Most important assumptions of discourse analysis state that "language always occurs in context" (Schiffrin 3) and is "context sensitive" (Schiffrin 3), "always communicative" (Schiffrin 3) and is "designed for communication" (Schiffrin 3). Sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic research have detailed that the specific contexts in which language occurs are cultural, social and cognitive contexts. In order to understand the use and structure of the language, you have to consider the context it belongs to. Language is "potentially sensitive to all of the contexts in which it occurs" (Schiffrin 5), and it "reflects those contexts because it helps to constitute them" (Schiffrin 5). Since language is "always addressed to a recipient" (Schiffrin 5), actual or intendent, it is "always communicative" (Schiffrin 5). Since people are social beings, they have the urge to communicate with one another, and language is designed for that purpose specifically. Human beings spend a lot of time engaging in conversations and for most of the people "conversation is among their most significant and engrossing activities" (Richards & Schmidt 1983). Because of that, discourse analysis does not only have roots in linguistics, but also "in the social sciences and in philosophy" (Schiffrin 1). The following chapter will focus on affective meaning in communication.

2.1. Affective Meaning

Niko Besnier talks about three components of linguistic meaning - descriptive, social and expressive (or affective). Expressive meaning represents "speaker's or writer's feelings, moods, dispositions and attitudes toward the prepositional content of the message and the communicative context" (Besnier 419). Affective meaning is seen as "the encoding of the speaker's emotions, which the interlocutor decodes in verbal messages" (Besnier 420). That is led by the assumption that "emotions are internal events, the property of the individual" (Besnier 420). Besnier states

that "obvious affect-encoding devices like onomatopoeias and diminutives" (Besnier 420) have been investigated, but little work has been conducted in "orthodox linguistics on affective dimensions of language" (Besnier 420). However, Besnier notes that:

> Recent developments in the anthropological understanding both of emotional life and of the relationship between language and sociocultural context have caused many of the assumptions underlying structure-oriented linguistic positions on affect to be seen as problematic. (Besnier 420)

Linguistic anthropologists started to "pay closer attention to the role of affect in language" (Besnier 420). The word *affect* is similar to *feelings* and *emotions*. However, we differentiate them by their definitions, and *feeling* are considered to be "a broad category of person-centered psychophysiological sensations" (Besnier 421), *emotions* – "a subset of particularly visible and identifiable feelings" (Besnier 421) and *affect* – "the subjective states that observers ascribe to a person on the basis of the 'person's conduct'" (Besnier 421). The problem connected to the task of "writing a 'grammar' of affect" (Besnier 422) is similar to describing the "structure and use of language" (Besnier 422). Affect is the most salient in emotion words. Moreover, lexical processes like "synecdoche and metonymy are frequently involved in the manipulation of affective meaning" (Besnier 423). Other lexical processes also have affective dimensions. When it comes to emotions, they are "conceptualized as internal events" (Besnier 423) in his case among members of "middle-class American society" (Besnier 423). Many other languages have areas of the vocabulary such as "ideophones, onomatopoeias, exclamations, expletives, interjections, curses, insults and imprecations" (Besnier 423-424) that are full of affective meaning. Furthermore, categories of meaning, e.g. evidentiality (i.e. "encoded markers of the epistemological status of utterances" (Besnier 424)), are also saturated with affective meaning. In English, speakers rely on "adverbs" (Besnier 424) (e.g. obviously, plainly, allegedly), "hedging" (Besnier 424) (e.g. perhaps, sort of, loosely speaking), "intensity" (Besnier 424) (e.g. very, really) and "discourse markers" (e.g. well, you know) in order to encode affective meaning. Other affect-encoding phenomena include e.g. volume, speed, pitch etc. Affective meaning can also be carried out by communicative activities such as "laughing and weeping" (Besnier 427). A lot of times we are able to perceive a certain amount of emotion when we are listening or reading a story that someone is retelling. We often sense another person's moral agenda while paying attention to the tone of the speech, or e.g. if someone is typing in *Caps Lock* and puts a lot of emoticons, we are able to sense what is their own personal opinion about the given situation. Furthermore, "silence, withdrawal, inarticulateness and dysfluency, the unstated, and the understated signify a broad range of affective meaning" (Besnier 427) in many societies and in a lot of different situations. One of the most

famous examples where silence is associated "with a broad range of sensations, including antonymic pairs as alienation and intimacy, joy and grief" (Besnier 427) are "Shakespearean representations of Elizabethan culture" (Besnier 427). We witness the multifunction connected to the special type of response such as 'silence'. Other linguistic units also bear the same characteristic. Besnier's survey shows how affective meaning can be conveyed by both linguistic and communicative devices. Some devices can be associated with different types of emotions. Language users are sometimes "unconscious of using even very 'noticeable' affect-carrying linguistic devices, like discourse markers" (Besnier 428). When it comes to affective meaning, descriptive linguistics pointed out characterizations such as "emotional intensity (e.g. involvement vs detachment) or directionality (e.g. focus of empathy)" (Besnier 429) and labels like 'positive' and 'negative' affect. Language users see multifunction of affective devices not as a problem, but rather as a communicative resource. For example, sentences might be ambiguous sometimes and certain linguistic units might carry more than just one meaning, so participants of the conversation create a discussion around that ambiguity. However, the main problem is 'the question of multiple keys'. Something that an individual says in the conversation might have a positive meaning unless the person gives out contradictory signals on different levels. For example, when John calls his friend Peter out and Peter says that he is already making plans with other friends and John says that '*it is okay*', it might actually mean that he is sad or jealous if he suddenly goes quiet. His silence then marks his emotional state. Another example of multiple key problem is when sarcasm or irony take place. For example, Lucy can look really sad and say that she feels awesome, which is clearly a sarcastic response. Another problem in conversation among people is the 'sincerity problem' where participants of the conversation have to distinguish 'true' from 'deceitful' affective displays. Because of such situations, it is very important to acknowledge acceptable social behavior around the globe because many cultures have their own ways of signaling emotional states, opinions, moral agenda, likes and dislikes etc. When you are familiar with other culture, you are more likely to successfully interpret human behavior of a specific area. The problem of sincerity is explained in the following quote:

> The relationship between 'real' emotions and affective displays is a cultural construct; as long as members of a culture 'agree' to match particular emotion labels to particular displays, and as long as this agreement remains tacit, the display is sincere." (Besnier 430)

Current "anthropological research on emotionality" (Besnier 431) has shown that "emotions and social life are intricately interwoven" (Besnier 431). It varies from one context to another in which

way are the members of a certain culture to manage affect. Because of cultural differences and a variety of social contexts, different emotional displays are required in different areas of life and in different situations and places. Same emotion can be displayed in different ways across the world, but some may have universal representation, e.g. happiness is always connected to laughing. Besnier also mentions another very important area of life important for understanding affective meaning in modern communication:

> "An interesting case of emergent tensions among affect displays, their folk accounts, and normative control surrounds electronic communication in postindustrial societies." (Besnier 433)

The e-mail was the beginning of new forms of social and linguistic interaction because E-messages indeed have "a more 'emotional' texture than other types of discourse, as witnessed by the prevalence of emoticons" (Besnier 433). People naturally adapt to the "technological characteristics of the medium" (Besnier 433). Everyone started to use emoticons as soon as they were introduced to them. At the beginning they were used in E-mails, but later they were also present in text messages and today there are even more advanced versions of them in social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, but also apps like Viber and WhatsApp etc. Further discussion will take place in chapter about 'Computer-Mediated Discourse'. The next topic, important for understanding the affective meaning, deals with 'Emotions'.

2.1.1. Emotions

People have emotions and in some cases the emotions have an impact on a language. Emotions are shown through facial expressions, body postures, proximity, but also through lexical and syntactic forms. Both language and emotions have a function in the communicative process among people. Michael Bamberg says that "[L]anguage is means of making sense of emotions, and as such can be used as a starting point to explore the world of emotions in different languages as well as in different 'language games'." (Bamberg 1997) Emotions fall into "two categories: primary emotions and secondary emotions" (Nyan 59). The group of primary emotions consists of e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and they are considered to be innate. Secondary emotions begin to arise only when we start experiencing emotions and when we start to form "systematic connections between categories of objects and situations, on the one hand, and primary emotions, on the other" (Nyan 59). Ed Comber addressed emotions in his research because they "interfere

with critical and rational thoughts" (Comber 73). He states that "emotions are an integral part of the human experience" (Comber 73). The main purpose of his essay was to:

> "…present and explain a taxonomy of emotive-response discourse markers that helps teachers identify points in student-authored texts where emotions and affective language confuses, even flattens, the critical thinking and rhetorical abilities of students." (Comber 73)

As the main indication of an emotive-response discourse he suggests a situation when a response to a topic is constructed in a way that it goes into a different direction. Verity of such a statement is hard to deny since everyone has witnessed such example in many different conversations. It often occurs when people are arguing that the participant 'A' jumps to another topic or responds completely unexpectedly when the participant 'B' triggers him in any way with his own statement. The importance of understanding emotions and its connection to language is because many times people are unaware of their overemotional responses. Emotions can impact language but also the very stream of thoughts. People can say something that is too emotional, but others can also interpret something in a completely negative way. Sometimes innocent texts can be viewed as insensitive or dismissive because people are interpreting according to their own feeling. Most of the time people cannot feel or see distress through the texts where it is present, but lots of times they construct the whole interpretation in a completely wrong direction from the very nature of the text. Because of so many potential misunderstandings in every conversation, people started to be more careful and try to recognize markers of possible emotions within the texts. People started to practice reading emotions and discourse markers help them achieve it easier and faster. The next chapter will explain what discourse markers are and how to recognize them.

2.2. What are Discourse Markers?

Bruce Fraser states that even though most researchers agree that discourse markers are "expressions which relate discourse segments" (Fraser 931), there is no agreement on "how they are to be defined or how they function" (Fraser 931). However, he defines discourse markers as "a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases" (Fraser 931). Their specific interpretation is defined by linguistic and conceptual context. Discourse markers are expressions such as e.g. *so*, *and*, *furthermore*, *but*, *after all* etc. Deborah Schiffrin was the first to analyze discourse markers in 1987, and her list of discourse markers consists of "words like: oh, well, and, but, or, so, because, now, then, I mean, and y'know" (Schiffrin 2). However, she suggests that discourse markers "do not easily fit into a

linguistic class" (Fraser 933). Fraser emphasizes that she "goes so far as to suggest that paralinguistic features and non-verbal gestures are possible discourse markers" (Fraser 933). This statement is fundamental for the thesis of this paper. Schiffrin proposes that in order to understand discourse markers, we should analyze different resources and see what else could fit in the vast group of discourse markers. Nevertheless, she notes that discourse markers have to be "syntactically detachable from a sentence" (Fraser 933), and that they are commonly used in "initial position of an utterance" (Fraser 933) and that they "have a range of prosodic contours" (Fraser 933). Discourse markers usually operate at both local and global levels of discourse "and they also operate on a different planes of discourse" (Fraser 934). Other cases which Schiffrin considers as possible markers of discourse are:

> "perception verbs such as *see, look* and *listen*, deictics such as *have* and *there*, interjections such as *gosh* and *boy*, meta-talk such as *this is the point* and *what I mean is*, and quantifies phrases such as *anyway, anyhow*, and *whatever*." (Fraser 934)

Discourse markers usually function like a "two place relation, one argument lying in the segment they introduce, the other lying in the prior discourse" (Fraser 938). Although this is not always the case, Fraser defines three main sources of discourse markers, and they include – "conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases" (Fraser 934). Deborah Schiffrin gives the example of '*Oh'* in her book *Discourse Markers*. She gives the information on the usage of *Oh* in the following quote:

> "*Oh* is traditionally viewed as an exclamation or interjection. When used alone, without the syntactic support of a sentence, *oh* is said to indicate strong emotional states, e.g. surprise, fear, or pain." (Schiffrin 73)

Considering her statement that discourse markers are usually used in the initial position of an utterance, *Oh* is a perfect example of a discourse marker that occurs in such a position and embodies different affective meanings depending on the context in which it occurs. To give you an example of our own, if Lucy says: '*Mary is my best friend*', to which her other friend Bertha replies: '*Well, I've heard that she gossips about you all the time when you're not around*', and if then Lucy replies with '*Oh!?*', then *Oh* is used as a discourse marker of a more complex emotional state. Lucy is not only surprised but also sort of angry and confused. That same discourse marker could be used in a completely different context where it could imply completely different emotional state. Because of this, it is very important to consider full contextual meaning when trying to interpret meaning of the given utterances, since they might mean something completely different depending on the discourse markers that give out the hidden and even subconsciously

implied emotional state. Ursula Lutzky gives another interesting example in her book *Discourse Markers in Early Modern English:*

> "*Well* has furthermore been said to express the speaker's attitude or to signal that they "take up an epistemic or affective stance towards the text or the hearer or the implicit beliefs, assumptions, expectations, norms evoked by preceding discourse"." (Lutzky 84)

However, *well* can also:

> "…convey emotions of various kinds, like annoyance, concession, disapproval, reassurance, reluctance or resignation, express that the speaker is impatient for an answer or imply that they are unconcerned about an issue." (Lutzky 84)

Furthermore, the discourse marker *well* "…may function as a sign of puzzlement or surprise as the speaker may see no good reason why a question is asked as the answer may be obvious and can be deduced from the evidence available" (Lutzky 84). It depends on a context in which the discourse marker occurs whether or not the emotion may dominate. For example, if John criticizes Tom for the way he plays football and Tom responds with '*Well, why don't you play instead of me the next time?*', *well* implies that Tom is really angry, but also irritated and annoyed by John's utterance. Another study on *well* was conveyed by *Multimodal Analysis of "Well" as a Discourse Marker in Conversation: A Pilot Study,* according to which *well* can be used as a way of "initiating a new utterance" (Baiat, Coler, Pullen, Tienkouw & Hunyadi 284), but also as a "preclosing device, offering its recipient a chance to reinstate an earlier or unexpanded topic" (Baiat, Coler, Pullen, Tienkouw & Hunyadi 284). Moreover, it is also frequently used when the speaker doesn't know what to say or is simply avoiding the truth. For example, if Ben's mother is concerned about his exams and asks him '*When are you planning to inform me and your father about your progress??*' and Ben replies with '*Well, it's currently….*', it is likely that his mother will interrupt him, knowing and saying that he is avoiding giving a sincere report on his current situation. In such case, *well* is used as a "delay marker" (Baiat, Coler, Pullen, Tienkouw & Hunyadi 284). Another situation when the discourse marker *well* is used, is when the speaker is trying to or is about to change the topic. Consider the following meet up:

> Andrew: Oh, hello Bob!
> Bob: Hey Andrew.. It's been a really long time since I saw you.
> Andrew: Yeah.. Well.. How's it going?

Bob: Really good.. How's your wife and the kids?

…

At the beginning, Andrew uses discourse marker *Oh* in the initial position of his utterance. He is surprised to see Bob, probably because they haven't seen each other for a really long time and they used to be close friends. After Bob responds, Andrew uses discourse marker *well* to shift the focus from the awkwardness of unexpected meet up into the direction of a possible topic. He is trying to get the conversation going, and is connecting his previous utterance with a new one with seemingly meaningless word and an actual discourse marker – *well*. Furthermore, the use of *well* at the beginning of a sentence can also indicate politeness or "denials, refusals, and objections to a given utterance" (Baiat, Coler, Pullen, Tienkouw & Hunyadi 284).

This review of discourse markers is as precise as possible, given the fact that there is no one firmly established definition. I have supported my research with lists of discourse markers constructed by a few professors and linguists as well as with the list of word classes where possible discourse markers are to be found, but, as Schiffrin explained, there are numerous resources of discourse markers and almost anything can be considered as a discourse marker, e.g. non-verbal gestures. The following chapter will focus on the importance of appropriate communication.

2.3. Language and Communication

In their work, Jack C. Richards and Richard W. Schmidt talk about *Rules of speaking* and *Conversational analysis* and one of their main ideas is supported by the following quote:

> "From the point of view of language learning and of intercultural communication, it is important to recognize that the individual who wishes to learn a new language must, in addition to acquiring a new vocabulary and a new set of phonological and syntactic rules, learn […] the rules of speaking: the patterns of sociolinguistic behavior of the target language." (Richards & Schmidt 1983)

What they are basically trying to explain is that it is important to be familiar with the appropriate speech behaviors when it comes to language learning because it is crucial for an effective communication with the native speakers as well as for the proper interpretation of conversations etc. People who are learning a new and completely different language must know the grammar and lexicon but also the rules of speaking in order to understand the meaning of the utterances.

They have to be able to interpret and respond appropriately and that requires a certain amount of knowledge. Quite often language learners find themselves in a situation where they are "unable to interpret the meaning of an utterance even though they 'know all the words'" (Richards & Schmidt 1983). For example, everyone knows what *well* means, but not everyone will be able to interpret what emotional state that particular discourse marker implies within a certain unique context. Conversations and situations where such seemingly simple words are used are often misinterpreted by language learners. Imagine a situation where a student, who is a language learner, gets transferred to a university in the country where the language that he is learning is official. He is new at the university and finds himself surrounded by the group of students who already know each other and have already created friendships among each other. The new student is curious and asks the native speaker a lot of questions. He is anxious and even goes into details in order to know everything and to make sure not to make any mistakes that could cost him his scholarship. However, he does not notice that he is being answered in such a way that the discourse marker *well*, used in the initial position, and an interjection *gosh* imply annoyance as well as boredom created by the effort of trying to answer something that is already known among all the other participants of the group. The described situation is very awkward and a new student could have avoided all that just by knowing some language rules and by interpreting responses in a correct way, realizing the implied annoyance on time. The given example explains the purpose of acknowledging rules of speaking.

Things become even more complicated when people are distanced and communicate through their gadgets – computer, phone, etc. The significance of knowing the language rules and social skills is even greater in computer-mediated discourse, so the whole follow in chapter will be dedicated to the problems associated with it.

2.3.1. Computer - Mediated Discourse

In modern society, we all communicate through the Internet and we often witness or even create misunderstandings by misinterpreting the content or conversations. Computer-mediated discourse is the type of communication which is "produced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked computers" (Herring 612). Most computer mediated communication is text based, that is, "messages are typed on a computer keyboard and read as text on a computer screen, typically by a person or persons at a different location from the message sender" (Herring 612). Computer-mediated communication can take a variety of forms, e.g. "e-mail, discussion groups, real-time chat, virtual reality role-playing games" (Herring 612).

Computer networks are considered to be a medium of communication. When it comes to the speed of information exchange, computer mediated discourse is slower than speaking, but faster than e-mails and letters etc. However, the positive side of being slower, is that the person who is typing a message can think about the content that the person is about to send. For example, if person writes a really angry message, she or he can easily change her or his mind about actually sending the message. Another example is when someone is socially awkward and the person can actually take her/his time to construct a well written message without grammatical mistakes or awkward utterances. To continue, face-to-face communication is a 'rich' medium because "information is available through multiple channels: visual, auditory, gestural, etc." (Herring 614) The advantage of putting out information through multiple channels is that people are more likely to understand and interpret the information correctly, especially when it comes to expressions like irony, sarcasm and similar. People are also more likely to interpret discourse markers correctly, unlike via computer networks where people cannot see each other's facial expressions and are therefore more likely to misinterpret the content and the prevailing emotion. Therefore, computer-mediated discourse is a 'lean' medium because "information is available only through the visual channel, and that information is limited to typed text" (Herring 614). Language of the computer-meditated discourse is "less correct, complex, and coherent than standard written language" (Herring 616). Another problem with e.g. communication via social media networks like Facebook is that participants of the conversation sometimes type the message at the exact same time and continue sending messages at the same time and then the 'question – answer' type of conversation does not make sense since all the replies are mixed together and it is hard to see which reply is the answer for which question. A situation like this is even more complicated when people are arguing and it becomes even harder to properly interpret the mixed content. To avoid possible complications built around the problem of a 'lean' medium, people should "take their time in constructing and editing messages" (Herring 618). Herring mentions another compensatory strategy in the following quote:

> "Computer users have developed a number of compensatory strategies to replace social cues normally conveyed by other channels in face-to-face interaction. The best known of these is the use of emoticons, or sideways 'smiley faces' composed of asci characters, to represent facial expression." (Herring 623)

Given the fact that people are trying to compensate for the lack of different channels (available in face-to-face communication) and are using different tactics to demonstrate the idea in the most credible way possible, there are numerous sources of markers of emotional states. When engaging

in a conversation, especially with a recently met person, people are not only paying attention to the words, but also pauses they take, numbers of commas, emoticons, length of the laughs and many other different things with a purpose of proper interpretation of the utterances. It is in the best interest of people to understand each other and to avoid misinterpretation which could not only cause conversational problems, but also much bigger ones such as creating a wrong image about someone based on the mood and energy they 'radiate' through the texts that they send. However, it is not always easy since the way of communicating and interpreting messages depends not only on age but also gender, which is what the following chapter will be dealing with.

2.3.2. Discourse, Gender, and Age

Affects holds an important position in research of culture and gender. This claim is supported by the following quote: "In many autochtonous discourses, women and men are said to differ in the frequency, the intensity, and the type of affect they express in interaction." (Besnier 434) Besnier says that "women are often characterized as more emotionally extravagant, communicatively indirect, and solidarity seeking than men" (Besnier 434) and supports that claim with the linguistic evidence: "exploitation of a wider pitch range than men", "frequent use of tag question and hedges [assumed to convey attitudinal insecurity]", and frequent use of "intensifying adverbs and modals" (Besnier 434). Besnier also emphasizes that different social groups are also perceived to have different affective styles. Shari Kendall and Deborah Tannen also wrote about the connection between discourse and gender. One of the brought thesis says that "girls learn to use a 'non forceful style' because unassertiveness is a social norm of womanhood…" (Kendall & Tannen 549). However, that is not always the case, and not all woman communicate with other people in the same way. Other aspects like social status and group can also influence on the way women speak. Therefore, there are many holes in the idea of 'women's language'. Nevertheless, there are cases that are proven to be more common, e.g. cases where men interrupt more in conversations and cases where women "produce more listening cues (mhm, uhuh)" (Kendall & Tannen 550). Women tend to ask more questions, they use more '*you know*', and they tend to actively pursue "topics raised by men" (Kendall & Tannen 550). On the other side, men sometimes "do not respond to topics initiated by the women" (Kendall & Tannen 550). Men tend to joke more often, while women are more likely to be emotional and even use discourse markers for that particular purpose. Women are often indirect, so discourse markers serve as a great way of indirect implication of a specific emotional state. Discourse markers can also provide as an excellent way of politely implying dislike or disagreement. For example, if a woman and a man are getting to know each other and the man brings up the topic of woman's past relationship, she could politely imply that

she is not eager to speak about it and that she wants to shift to another topic by beginning her sentence with the discourse marker *well* as a way of avoiding a response to the topic brought up by the man. Therefore, discourse markers help people interpret other people's opinions, statements etc. Young adults are also more likely to use more complex sentence constructions and are more likely to use discourse markers in the form of linguistic units instead of, for example, emoticons since then they might not be taken seriously. Younger generations use more emoticons and more direct ways of showing emotions, e.g. they indicate their joy with laughs and smiley faces. Older people also indicate their emotional states more directly, for example with emoticons, since that is considered to be the easiest way of showing e.g. approval or disapproval, or they use words that describe certain emotions in order to describe their state or opinion. However, when it comes to more formal ways of communication, e.g. via e-mail, then more formal responses are valued. Responses have to be more specific, especially when e.g. writing a complaint – you have to be polite and also careful when constructing sentences. Emojis are not frequently used in formal ways of communication. Therefore, discourse markers can serve the purpose of indicating emotional states, opinions, agreements and disagreements, likes and dislikes etc.

2.3.3. Discourse markers of emotional states in mixed sex conversation of young adults: A pilot case study

With the intention of presenting the idea of how men and women interact, I analyzed the way they express their opinions over the Internet by performing a pilot case study on a purposefully selected piece of conversation. I am interested in young adults, so to be sure that I identified them correctly, I chose the topic that is less likely to attract high school and senior school students as well as the elderly since it is less likely that they would search for such topic. I searched for 'university tips' and came across Thomas Frank's channel where he uploads videos that offer a lot of useful tips for good organization, increasing concentration, studying tips, and basically how to deal with a lot of obligations at the university. However, I was more interested in the comment section and the comments left by young adults as a hybrid form of a conversation. I realized that most of the women are less likely to leave comments to men, but are more likely to comment to women and support their opinions. However, I found a comment of a young man where both men and women commented. The following part is a copy of the interaction found in the comment section for the video called *'How to Study Effectively: 8 Advanced Tips – College Info Geek'*. X's represent men and Y's represent women.

1. Xa: Our brains are not meant to act like a hard drive. All this college cramming is just dumb. In real life, you actually use resources that are available to you. **But** in schools, they take away all your resources and expect you to get the data from your brain.

   [the following utterances are commentaries on the main commentary]

2. Xb: true

3. Ya: True story and I respect your opinion. **And maybe** it is because we need to exercise our brains. As opposed to using resources for the certain class you would have.

4. Xc: **Actually** in a simple way your brain is a hard drive.

5. Xa: **well**, for school it's RAM. It holds much of the things for short term before it forgets.

6. Xd: you're only saying that cos your grades are sh*t

7. Xe: true

8. Xf: Not sure what that mean exactly, but as a college professor and business owner, I use there techniques all the time. They are very useful, practical, and productive.

9. Yb: **Yeah**, maybe if you clean toilets for a living. **But** if you do actual research or leading projects there is no way around working with your brain

10. Xg: it is nice to task your brain and see how resourceful you are and it will help you a lot when carrying out a research or field work

The main comment expresses disagreement with both the video and school methodology. Only two women commented to that and they were outnumbered by six men. This is because women are less likely to get into an argument with someone else. One woman (Ya) expressed her thoughts only after she emphasized that she respects Xa's opinion. She wanted to point out the way she approaches the subject without starting a 'fight'. Her opinion is introduced with *'and maybe'*. Another woman's approach was more rough. She used discourse marker '*Yeah*' at the beginning of a very sarcastic utterance and then expressed her opinion with discourse marker '*but*' in the initial position. 'Yeah' would usually be used as a discourse marker of agreement but the context is different and 'yeah' implies sarcasm. Both women had different approach. The first woman was polite and careful while expressing herself while the other one was more rough and emotional. On the other side, some of the men were agreeing and some expressed their opinions on the topic. To be precise, two men agreed by saying '*true*' and the four of them expressed themselves. Person Xc expressed his opinion, which disagrees with the main commentary, by saying '*Actually in a simple way your brain is a hard drive*'. He firmly asserted his opinion with the word '*actually*' which is a

discourse marker used when a person is introducing a contrast in what is being talked about. After that, the person Xa want's to slightly change what he first said but still remain within the borders of his first comment and begins his utterance with discourse marker '*well*'. To sum up, there are multiple meanings of discourse markers and it is crucial to study them within a certain context. For example, discourse marker 'yeah' usually expresses confirmation and agreement, but in the given example it is used in a negative and sarcastic way.

3.   Conclusion

To conclude, human beings are social beings and most of their time they spend communicating with one another. Communication is an essential part of human existence because it constitutes good relationships among people. I have explained what discourse analysis is and what kind of meanings can be extracted from the discourses. My main preoccupation was affective meaning because of the way emotions and language are connected. People are emotional beings and emotions impact their thoughts, decisions, utterances, behavior and basically all the spheres of their lives. People share their thoughts, feelings, experiences and ideas through language and communication and they like the feeling of being understood and supported. However, there is a little chance that someone who is not aware of their emotions will be able to understand them properly. Although emotions can be very complex, I explained in which way they are divided. It is important that people are aware of their variety as well as the ways they reveal themselves, especially in order to practice reading them. One of the ways that emotions can be recognized is through discourse markers. The way I analyzed them is based on Deborah Schiffrin's studies. Schiffrin made a list of most common discourse markers as well as the frequent sources. Almost anything can be considered as a discourse marker so people should be careful and pay attention on all the words. However, in order to properly interpret the utterances, people should not only pay attention to sentences and syntax, grammar or lexicon, but also to the rules of speaking. In face-to-face communication body gestures indicate emotions, but in computer-mediated discourse there is scarcely anything but words and emoticons. For that reason, people take into account all the words, commas, silences, the speed of replying, frequency of laughs, emoticons, etc. People like to be careful because digital communication is often very confusing especially when there are no emojis and when the other person does not state how she/he feels. Men and women also like to interpret things differently and sometimes innocent texts can be seen as offensive, insensitive, and dismissive. In order to avoid frequent misunderstandings, arguing and awkward silences, participants of the conversation can either ask questions or analyze the words such as discourse markers. Discourse markers seem irrelevant and simple to language learners, but they can serve much bigger purpose and help people raise the quality of their communication. Different discourse markers can indicate different emotions, as I have showed through the conversation of young adults over the Internet through the usage of discourse markers – *but, actually, yeah, and maybe.* However, further research must be conducted for the sake of growth and development of the field of discourse analysis. The lack of research is addressed to the fact that linguists have only 'recently' started to analyze texts profoundly. However, the language, speech and literature have

been studied for two thousand years since they were always an integral part of human culture. The innovation of devices such as phone and a computer gave people the opportunity to exchange information faster and to have access to all the information at any time and any place. Because of that, it is important to stylistically present the information in an advance and proper way in order to avoid the decline of the communicational and language skills. Computer-mediated discourse is our everyday activity so the need to broaden, detail and outnumber the current researches is necessary, helpful, and valuable.

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