

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the main topics of the research. This includes background of the study, statement of problems, purposes of the study, significances of the study, and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the Study

In everyday life, people convey meaning not only through words, but also specific contexts and situations. The interpretation of utterance often depends on factors beyond its literal meaning, such as speaker's intention, the relationship between participants, and communicative context in which it occurs. These aspects are the primary concern of Pragmatics. Pragmatics itself, as defined (Yule, 1996), concern the study of speaker meaning, contextual meaning, how implied meaning is communicated beyond what is said directly, and how language marks the distance between speakers. These dimensions emphasize that meaning in language is dynamically constructed through context, interaction, and shared assumption between speaker and listener. Therefore, pragmatics provides a framework for understanding how language is used to perform actions, express attitudes, and manage interpersonal relation in communication.

The relevance of pragmatics can be observed in various forms of natural discourse, including podcast conversations. Since their rise in popularity in the mid-2000s, podcasts have become a prominent medium for spontaneous spoken interaction (Ehret et al., 2024). Representing rich sites for pragmatic analysis, podcast conversation involved unscripted exchanges where speakers negotiate meaning, manage relationship, and organized the flow of conversation. As Levinson (1983) notes, language use in natural interaction cannot be fully understood without considering pragmatic phenomena that arise from real conversational context. In line with that, podcast discourse relies heavily on

contextual cues, implicit meanings, and shared knowledge between participants, reflecting how language is naturally used in everyday communication.

One central pragmatic feature that shapes spoken discourse is the use of discourse markers. These linguistic features do not change the propositional meaning of an utterance; instead, they help speakers organize information, guide interpretation, and manage interaction. Fraser (1999) defines discourse markers as pragmatic class of lexical expression drawn from conjunction, adverbials, and prepositional phrases, which signal a relationship between the segment they introduce (S2) and a prior segment (S1). Importantly, discourse markers provide the addressee on how the utterance should be interpreted in connection to earlier speech rather than adding the meaning of representational sentences. As a result, their meaning is procedural rather than conceptual, with specific interpretations negotiated through linguistic and conceptual context. Building on this framework, Schiffrin (1987) provides a foundational analysis of how discourse markers function across multiple planes of discourse, demonstrating their role in organizing talk and managing interpersonal relationships in natural conversation. Schiffrin's seminal work establishes that discourse markers operate simultaneously on ideational, exchange, action and participation frameworks, revealing their multifunctional nature in spoken interaction.

Furthermore, according to Fraser (1996) discourse markers are classified based on their pragmatic functions, which they are topic-change, contrastive, elaborative, and inferential markers. This classification helps explain how speakers manage discourse progression in interaction. Topic change markers are used to introduce new topics or redirect the flow of conversation, while contrastive markers signal opposition, correction, or disagreement with prior discourse. Elaborative markers allow speakers to add information, clarify ideas, or expand previous points, whereas inferential markers indicate conclusions or logical outcomes drawn from earlier utterances. Together, these functions

demonstrate how discourse markers play a crucial role in maintaining coherence and interpretability in real time spoken discourse.

Yule (1996) emphasizes that speakers often rely on pragmatic devices to negotiate meaning and ensure mutual understanding in interaction, especially in informal or semi-formal settings. This observation is particularly relevant for podcast discourse, where speakers must sound both natural and engaging while maintaining conversational coherence in real time. Supporting this view, Aijmer (2004) also notes that discourse markers are flexible and multifunctional, serving roles such as showing hesitation, clarifying ideas, and expressing attitudes. In podcast conversations, these functions become even more salient for understanding how speakers construct interaction.

Beyond organizational function, another important phenomenon in spoken interaction is stance-taking, through which speakers evaluate an object, position themselves, and align with their interlocutors. Du Bois (2007) conceptualized stance as a triadic act involving evaluation, positioning, and alignment, forming what he terms the stance triangle. Through this process, speakers assign value to object of interest, position social actors in relation to those objects, calibrate alignment between interlocutors, thereby invoking shared sociocultural values. Additionally, Kiesling (2022) highlights that position affect both the content created in discourse and the relationships speakers aim to build with other interactants.

Du Bois & Kärkkäinen (2012) expands this framework by emphasizing the sequential and dialogic nature of stance. From this viewpoint, stance is not produced in isolation but is a collaborative accomplishment shaped through continuous interaction between speakers. Each stance-taking act build upon previous utterances and anticipates subsequent responses, forming an ongoing sequence of positioning actions throughout the discourse. This sequential development implies that speakers constantly adjust their stances in response to their interlocutors, making stance a fundamentally co-constructed phenomenon rather than an individual expression. Within this interactional process, discourse markers function as more than organizational devices. They also operate as

interpersonal resources that assist speaker express evaluation, position themselves, and negotiate alignment with their listeners, making them central to how stance unfold across conversational turn.

Although discourse markers and stance-taking have typically been studied as separate phenomena, recent research has begun to acknowledge their interconnected role in spoken discourse. Traugott (2020) argues that discourse management markers serve as stance-to-text markers, indicating the speaker's orientation and attitude towards what they are saying. Similarly, Fitzmaurice (2004) demonstrates how markers are deployed to reflect speakers' attributions of attitudes of interlocutors, tracing their evolution from subjective stance markers to interactive discourse markers. Extending this, Grzech (2021) provides empirical evidence for speakers' strategic use of discourse markers to negotiate epistemic stance in content-specific interaction, highlighting how these markers mediate the relationship between knowledge claims and social positioning. Heine et al. (2024) advance the perspective by showing that discourse-pragmatic markers embody both subjective and intersubjective dimensions of stance. Together, these studies indicate that discourse markers and stance-taking are deeply intertwined, as discourse markers serve as the linguistic resource through which stance-taking is enacted, expressed, and negotiated in conversation.

To examine this interplay in naturalistic digital media context, this study draws its data from the video podcast *"Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson"* hosted by Nick Viall on the Nick Viall YouTube channel. Robert Irwin is a widely recognized wildlife conservationist and public figure, known as the son of the late Steve Irwin, "The Crocodile Hunter". At the time of the interview, Robert was actively competing as a contestant on *Dancing with The Stars* Season 34, which contributed to significant public interest in the episode. Nick Viall, the host, is television personality who participated in *Dancing with The Star* Season 24, giving him first-hand understanding of the competition that Robert Irwin was experiencing. This shared background creates a distinctive conversational dynamic. In this setting, Nick is not only an

interviewer but also someone who personally relate to Robert's Irwin experiences on the show. Consequently, both speakers actively express opinion. They respond to each other's stances and manage the conversational flow in a natural and engaging manner. This makes the podcast a particularly suitable context for examining how discourse markers and stance-taking function in naturally occurring spoken interaction.

Building on this foundation, previous studies provide an important foundation for this research. Fraser's (1996) framework has been widely applied to analyse pragmatic markers in various communication contexts. For instance, Khasanuddin (2021) shows how pragmatic markers function as strategic resources in political discourse. This study demonstrate how Donald Trump uses them to organize arguments, manage interactions, and express attitudes in a Town Hall Forum setting. Similarly, Kalaf (2020), applying Du Bois's stance triangle, shows how stance is constructed through evaluative language and alignment in political speech, confirming that stance-taking is a dynamic and intersubjective phenomenon. Furko (2017) further demonstrates how pragmatic markers are used manipulatively in political discourse to express stance and manage audience relationship, revealing the strategic dimension of marker usage in persuasive communication. These studies collectively illustrate that discourse markers are not merely structural devices but also function as interpersonal resources for constructing speaker identity and managing social relations.

Another recent research emphasizes the multimodal and emergent nature of stance. A systematic review by Andries et al. (2023) highlights that stance emerge through interactions between verbal and prosodic sources and are formed sequentially in interactions. However, they also identify a lack of research focusing on digital speech media such as podcasts. In the context of digital communication, Rahmayanti et al. (2025) further show that pragmatic strategies play a crucial role in building engagement and interpersonal closeness in YouTube content, reinforcing the relevance of video podcasts as legitimate sites for pragmatic investigation. Youn (2023) adds to this body of work by

examining how discourse markers vary across different pragmatic performance levels and task types, demonstrating that markers usage is sensitive to both speaker proficiency and interactional goals.

Collectively, these studies reveal that discourse markers and stance-taking are central mechanisms for managing interactions, organizing discourse, and expressing the speaker's position. However, most studies analyse discourse markers primarily from a structural perspective, without systematically linking them to stance-taking. As a result, there remains limited research integrating Fraser's classification of discourse markers with Du Bois's stance framework, especially in the context of podcast conversations. To address this gap, this study analyses how Robert Irwin, Witney Carson and the hosts use discourse markers to express position in "*Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson*". By applying established theoretical framework to this digital media context, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how discourse markers and stance-taking facilitate meaning-making and interpersonal engagement in modern mediated conversation.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the background of the research, the writer found that although discourse markers and stance-taking have been widely studied in various discourse contexts, most existing studies analyse both topics separately. The majority of current research analyse discourse markers mainly from a structural perspective, without explicitly connecting the to the stance-taking process. Research connecting discourse markers and stance-taking, particularly in digital speech such as podcast, remains limited (Andries et al., 2023). As for that reason, this study examines video podcast *Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson* from Nick Viall YouTube Channel. This study focuses only on Nick Viall and Robert Irwin, as they have the highest number of turns in the conversation. Their shared background in *Dancing with the Stars* creates a rich context for spontaneous interaction, where they express opinions, respond to each other's stances and negotiate meaning. This interaction provides an

opportunity to examine how discourse markers function in stance-taking in podcast discourse.

Based on the problem mentioned, the writer concludes that there are two questions that will be the main focuses on this research, which are:

1. What types of discourse markers appear in the video podcast “*Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson*”?
2. How do these discourse markers mediate stance-taking process within the conversation in the video podcast “*Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson*”?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the writer is intended:

1. To identify the discourse markers used in the video podcast “*Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson*”.
2. To analyse how these discourse markers mediate stance-taking process within the conversation in the video podcast “*Going Deeper with Robert Irwin and Witney Carson*”.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The significance of this study is divided into two significances, which are theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, this study aims to make a contribution to the field of pragmatics, especially discourse analysis by providing empirical evidence on how discourse markers function in contemporary spoken media, particularly podcast communication. While discourse markers have been widely studied in political speech, classroom interaction and everyday conversation, analysis within podcast settings remain limited. By applying Fraser's (1996) pragmatic marker framework to authentic podcast data, this study enriches the theoretical discussion of the multifunctionality of discourse markers and their role in managing coherence, signifying discourse relations, and guiding interpretation.

At the same time, this study also contributes to the theoretical development of stance-taking research. Previous studies have largely focused on stance in face-to-face interaction, narrative interviews or institutional talk, leaving a gap in understanding how stance is considered in digitally mediated, conversational podcast settings. By incorporating Du Bois' (2007) stance triangle into analysis, this study provides insight into how discourse markers serve not only as structural devices but also as stance resources that facilitate evaluation, positioning and alignment. Thus, the research extends the application of stance theory into a new discourse environment and demonstrates how stance emerges through the interplay of discourse markers within sequential interaction.

Practically, this study provides a practical example of how to analyse spoken discourse through an established pragmatics framework, demonstrating how Fraser's typology and Du Bois's stance model can be applied to real conversation data. It is hoped that this study is able to help future researcher with their study as a reference in the pragmatics field, specifically in discourse markers and stance-taking. At the same time, the study benefits English learners by showing how discourse markers help produce natural and coherent speech. By observing how native speakers use these markers to organize ideas and manage conversational flow, learners can improve their fluency, interactional skills, and pragmatic awareness in various speaking situations.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in an integrated conceptual framework combining Fraser's (1996) pragmatic model of discourse markers with the stance-taking theory proposed by Du Bois (2007) and further elaborated by Du Bois & Kärkkäinen (2012).

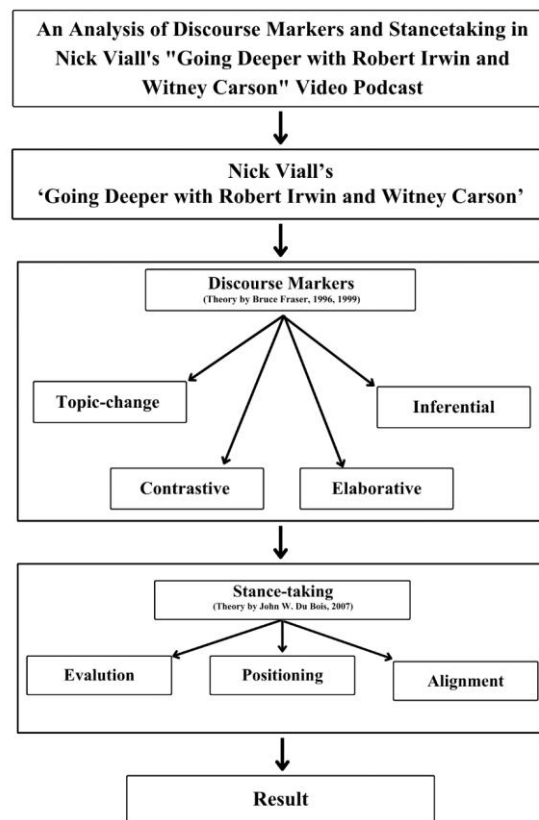


Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework

Discourse markers are lexical elements that function as pragmatic bridges between segments of discourse. Discourse markers carry procedural rather than conceptual meaning, which they serve as instructions about how the current message should be understood in relation to the previous one rather than adding new propositional content to a sentence. As Schiffrin (1987) demonstrate in her foundational work, discourse markers operate across multiple planes of discourse simultaneously, serving both referential and essential for maintaining conversational coherence. Building on this, Fraser (1996, 1999) clarifies that defining characteristic of discourse markers is their capacity to establish a two-place relational meaning that connects a new discourse segment to a prior one, with their core meaning further enriched and elaborated by context. Based on their function, Fraser categorizes discourse markers into four main subtypes.

1. Topic-change markers; these markers indicate a shift from the current topic of discussion, redirecting the conversation without necessarily maintaining a logical connection to what was previously said. Common example of these markers such as by the way, incidentally, and speaking of which. These markers operate at the level of discourse management rather than message content, making them distinct from the other three subtypes.
2. Contrastive markers; these markers indicate that the message they introduce stands in opposition to an interpretation of the preceding segment. Expressions such as but, nevertheless, however, and on the contrary fall into this category. Contrastive markers signal the listeners that the following message challenges, qualifies or contradicts something already established in the discourse, as opposed to merely providing information.
3. Elaborative markers; these markers signal that the new segment complements, enhances, or refines the previous one. Examples include furthermore, moreover, in addition, and in other words. These markers indicate that the speaker is expanding on, clarifying, or reinforcing what has already been said, thereby contributing to the development and coherence of the discourse.
4. Inferential markers signal that the message they introduce is a conclusion or consequence drawn from the preceding segment. Expressions such as so, therefore, thus, and consequently belong to this category. Inferential markers establish a logical relationship in which the prior segment serves as the basis or evidence for what follows.

While Fraser's framework provides a systematic way to identify and classify the markers, it does not fully account for the deeper interpersonal meaning that discourse markers carry in actual conversation. As Traugott (2020) argues that discourse management markers function as stance-to-text markers, signalling the speaker's orientation toward what they are saying.

This observation points towards the need for a complementary framework that can capture the interactional and evaluative dimensions of discourse marker use.

For this reason, this study also draws on the stance-taking framework proposed by Du Bois (2007). Stance-taking refers to a public act in which a speaker simultaneously evaluates an object, positions themselves, and aligns with other participants in the interaction. He describes every stance act as a tri-act because these three components always occur together whenever someone takes a stance in conversation, forming what he calls the stance triangle. An important insight from Du Bois (2007) is that subjectivity always require an object. Speakers do not experience emotions or certainties abstractly, instead, they are glad or certain about specific things, often in connection to other people. Building on this, Du Bois & Kärkkäinen (2012) contend that emotions and affect manifest as accountable, observable action in interaction rather than private internal state. Collectively, these ideas establish stance as something that is built across turns between speakers, not something that exists within a single utterance alone.

1. Evaluation refers to the act of giving some quality or value to a stance object which can be an object, person, circumstance or utterance. When a speaker describes something as fascinating or even uninteresting, they are performing an evaluation act. This component is the starting point of the stance triangle, as it provides the object around which the other components are organized.
2. Positioning refers to how a speaker situates themselves in relation to an object, either emotionally or epistemically. Emotional positioning includes expressions of feeling such as excitement or sadness, whereas epistemically positioning involves expressions of knowledge such as certainty or doubt. Crucially, positioning is always connected to a particular object in the discourse and never abstract.

3. Alignment refers to how one speaker adjusts their stance in response to another's. Du Bois (2007) treats alignment as a continuum scale where speakers subtly negotiate the distance between their stance and a prior one rather than simple choice between agreement and disagreement. Du Bois & Kärkkäinen (2012) describes alignment as continuum between convergence and divergence, where the goal is a shared space where two speakers can meaningfully respond to one another rather than perfect agreement.

By integrating these two theories, the study establishes a two-step analytical process. Fraser's theory serves as the entry point for identifying and classifying discourse markers. Then Du Bois's stance triangle provides the interpretative lens for understanding what those markers reveal about the speaker's attitudes, relational intention, and interactional alignments. This integrated approach is supported by a growing body of empirical work. Fitzmaurice (2004) and Grzech (2021) demonstrate empirical study on how markers facilitate the negotiation of epistemic and affective stance in interaction, showing that the structural and interactional function of these markers are inseparable in practice. Furthermore, Heine et al. (2024) show that discourse-pragmatic markers encode both subjective and intersubjective dimensions of stance, serving as bridges between the speaker's internal evaluation and the collaborative construction of shared understanding. In this way, discourse markers are treated not merely as signals of discourse organization, but as resource through which speakers construct meaning, express their stance, and manage their relationship with one another in conversation.