

Pragmatic Functions of Discourse Markers in the Context of Phone English

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Abstract

Distance learning has undergone a phenomenal growth over the years, predominantly because of the technological advancement in the field of telecommunication. High-speed Internet and the increasing number of home computer ownership have empowered students to access distance learning programs offered by many universities, colleges and private companies throughout the world. In relation to these previous explorations in the context of distance learning, this study aims to describe further another related type of synchronous distance learning known as "Phone English" - the online English classes in which computer-mediated communication between the instructor and learner is employed. A synchronous computer-mediated class is characterized by a pre-arranged class schedule, agreed upon by mutual time availability of the student and the instructor. The class is conducted through teleconferences in the forms of chat rooms or streaming videos where both the student and the instructor should be both present at the same time and at the same instance of the interaction (Mantovani, 1996). Thus, in synchronous computer-mediated communication, messages responses and feedback delivered by the student and the instructor are conveyed and obtained during the class interaction. Furthermore, this study attempts to show a descriptive analysis on the pragmatic functions of discourse markers found in utterances in the context of Phone English and provide a pedagogical understanding on its learning effectiveness and efficacy in achieving communicative competence among EFL students. Thus, despite the emerging influence of globalization, the teaching and learning of the English language continues to adapt its various mechanisms and medium with the existing condition and demands for global education survival. These utterances of speech acts as well as the application of discourse markers in utterances are some of the few mechanisms that manifest such adaptation of both learners and educators to current social and economic contexts.

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