

## مؤشرات التفاعل والبراغماتية في تعليقات لينكدان حول استبدال الذكاء الاصطناعي للوظائف البشرية م. رواء علي حسين المستخلص

يدرس هذا البحث استراتيجيات التفاعل ضمن نظرية التقييم والمؤشرات البراغماتية في التعليقات عبر منصة LinkedIn المتعلقة بتأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي على التوظيف. تتبنى الدراسة المنهج النوعي حيث تحلل عينة قصيدة مكونة من (8) تعليقات مستمدة من منشورين عامين عالية التأثير على المنصة المذكورة أحدهما للخبير (Bernard Marr) والأخر لصفحة (Harvard Business Review). وقد جمعت هذه البيانات في الفترة الممتدة بين ديسمبر 2025 ومايو 2026. وتأتي هذه الدراسة لسد فجوة بحثية متمثلة في نقص البحوث اللغوية التي تبحث في كيفية تعبير الأفراد عن قلقهم أو شكهم أو تفاعلهم تجاه هذا الموضوع الحساس. ومن ثم يهدف البحث إلى فهم كيفية توظيف استراتيجيات التفاعل والمؤشرات البراغماتية في التعليقات للتعبير عن ردود أفعال الجمهور اتجاه الذكاء الاصطناعي والتوظيف. يستند البحث إلى نظريتين رئيسيتين: استراتيجيات التفاعل ضمن نظرية التقييم (Martin and White 2005) والمؤشرات البراغماتية (Fraser 1996) ويحدد البحث أربع فئات رئيسية للمؤشرات التباينية والمؤشرات التفصيلية والمؤشرات الاستدلالية ومؤشرات تغيير الموضوع. حيث تتطافر هذه الأدوات معا لتحقيق عدة أهداف تواصلية. ويهدف البحث إلى تصنيف كيفية استخدام الأفراد لاستراتيجيات التفاعل والمؤشرات البراغماتية في تعليقاتهم المهنية وإظهار مدى إسهام هذه الأدوات في بيئات حالة التوسع أو التضيق الحوارية داخل النقاش. وتشير النتائج إلى أن اللغة المستخدمة في صياغة المنشور الأصلي تترك أثرا مباشرا على المعلقين ويظهر هذا جليا في المنشور الثاني الذي دفع المعلقين إلى اتخاذ موقف حوارية متسع وجعل الحوار أوسع وأشمل من كلمات المنشور نفسه على النقيض من تعليقات المنشور الأول حيث أخذ المعلقون موقفا حواريا ضيقا وحاولوا الحد من نطاق المحادثة وسياقها.

### Engagement and Pragmatic Markers in LinkedIn Comments on AI Replacing Human Jobs Lect. Rawaa Ali Hussein

#### Abstract

This study investigates engagement strategies within appraisal theory and pragmatic markers in linkedin comments concerning the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on employment. The study adopts a qualitative study and analyzes a purposive sample of (8 comments) from two highly influential public posts on **LinkedIn by Bernard Marr and Harvard business review**. The data was captured between december 2025 and may 2026. There is a lack of linguistics research that examines how people express their worry, doubt, definiteness or engagement on such sensitive topic. The research covers this gap and try to understand how engagement and pragmatic markers are used in comments to express the public's reaction toward AI and employment. This research is based on two major theoretical approaches, engagement strategies within appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005) and Pragmatic Markers by Fraser (1996). The research identifies four main categories of pragmatic markers contrastive markers, elaborative markers, inferential markers, and topic change markers. These tools work together to achieve several communicative aims. The research aims to classify how people use the engagement strategies and pragmatic markers in their professional comments and show how these tools help to establish an expansion or

contraction in the dialogue. The results indicate that language which is used to create a post has an effect on the commenters. This is evident in post (2) which make the commenters use an expansive attitude and make the discourse wider than the words of the post. In contrast with post (1) they use a contractive stance and try to limit the conversation sope.

## 1-Introduction

The replacement of human jobs by AI is a professional and concerning topic. So LinkedIn is the natural environment for people to comment on such this subject seriesly by using engagemnt strategies nd pragmatic markers. The rapid development of AI has instigates a universal debates particularlyly its ability to replace human jobs. In this digital period, social media platfoms especially LinkedIn become important for professional discourse and debate. One of the most disscused subjects is the effect of ai on employment and human jobs. When people comment on such topics, they do not only share information but also take particular attitude, express certaint or doubt or object on other's points of view. This research adopts an eclectic model to understand how proffessionals communicate with each other. It establishes a clear boundary between these two models. It highlights the role of pragmatic markers (which organize discourse and signal stance) and engagement markers (which connect speakers with audiences) in shaping the points of view of public.

## 2-Pragmatics: An overview

Pragmatics investigates the meaning that arises from context. pragmatics examines how meaning is constructed and perceived in specific communicative situations. It was formed by theorists like Austin, Searle, and Grice, who demonstrated that communication transcends mere literal meanings, incorporating the negotiation of speaker intentions, audience expectations, and contextual factors. (Searle, 1969).

Grice's theory of conversational implicature illustrates that speakers frequently convey meanings by adhering to the cooperative principle and its maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. (Grice, 1975).

Speech act theory by Austin indicates that utterances can serve as actions locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary were expanded by Searle into further categories as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. (Searle, 1969).

In contemporary pragmatics, speakers explore how linguistic resources are employed to achieve goals related to communication, such as maintaining coherence, facilitating turn-taking, showing politeness, and ensuring a smooth discourse flow. (Schiffrin, 1987).

Analyzing online contexts reveals that pragmatic inquiries are increasingly focused on brevity, the use of multiple modes of communication, and the role of algorithms in mediation. (Shifman, 2014).

Pragmatic markers are tools at the discourse level that enhance coherence, indicate the speaker's stance, and coordinate relationships. These include particles (well, you know), connectives (but, because), adverbials (clearly, frankly), and hedges (sort of, I think). Pragmatic markers add no propositional meaning but signal relationships between discourse units, thereby guiding hearers in interpreting coherence and speaker stance. (Schiffrin 1987)

The meaning of the marker can vary significantly depending on context, as the word "well" might indicate hesitation, qualified agreement, or emphasis under different circumstances. Thus, pragmatic markers demand interpretation within the discourse context rather than relying on form-meaning mapping. (Levinson, 1983).

They indicate how discourse units are related, facilitating readers or hearers in constructing coherent interpretations. Without those markers, conversation risks fragmentation. Furthermore, pragmatic markers are employed as instruments for stance-taking and interpersonal negotiation. They enable speakers to temper statements, strengthen unity, or emphasize timeliness, which is especially crucial in settings rich with content like social media Where brevity and speed are key. In essence, pragmatic markers indicate that meaning is context-sensitive, influenced by speaker intent and audience interpretation, which underscores their significance in both spoken and digital communication. (Huang, 2007)

### **3. Definitions and Functions of Pragmatic Markers**

Following the framework suggested by Fraser, pragmatic markers are linguistic aspects of a statement that do not alter the propositional meaning but reflect the speakers' attitudes or relationships between utterances. They are words that enable the audience to grasp the intended meaning of the utterance. Pragmatic markers include discourse particles such as well, you know, and I mean, conjunctions like but, however, because, adverbials clearly, obviously, frankly and and hedges kind of, sort of, I think. These elements function at the metadiscursive level, influencing how listeners interpret coherence and the speaker's intentions (Fraser, 1996).

Fraser (2009) defines pragmatic markers as free morphemes occurring at the beginning of propositions, indicating a specific message that either complements or supplements the basic message, and is recognized as such due to its semantic and pragmatic functions. Importantly, pragmatic markers do not follow the same rules as semantic operators their interpretation requires contextual and shared norms of communication.

Social media usage highlights the increased importance of pragmatic markers, where discourse should be concise, non-sequential, minimize communicative effort, and maintain coherence. In such circumstances, a single marker can signify discourse cohesion, speaker identity, and relational perspective. (Herring, 2013).

According to Fraser (1996), pragmatic markers play various functions in discourse. **These functions are:**

**-Discourse Coherence:** Pragmatic markers connect discourse units, facilitating clearer comprehension for hearers. Connecting utterances helps creating coherence and logicity, which is essential for interpreting complex arguments. (Fraser, 1999).

**-Speaker attitude and solidarity:** most pragmatic markers convey the speaker's attitude toward propositional content, indicating certainty, doubt, or conditional commitment. Indicators like clearly, obviously, personally, and arguable express epistemic stance. Fraser explains that these indicators show the commitment level a speaker has towards a subject. (Redeker, 1990).

**-Politeness and Face Management:** expressions such as **well, you know, and I mean** which serve as hedges that decrease statements, face management, and social relationship negotiation. They allow speakers to present their claims in less threatening ways. These markers decrease the intensity of the statements. Differentiating between hedged and direct language indicates a speaker's assessment of social connections and communication purposes, with settings characterized by closeness and common values leaning more towards straightforward expression. (Hyland, 2005).

**-Turn Management and Interaction:** in dialogue, pragmatic markers determine who speaks next and signal an intention to proceed or pass the turn, as well as correct communication errors. These markers serve to direct hearers regarding the speaker's desire for further conversation or response. Pragmatic markers serve as traffic controls, influencing how utterances are linked and establishing relevance among participants. (Sacks & Jefferson, 1974).

**-Emotional function:** adverbials and intensifiers serve as pragmatic indicators to express emotional states and attitude. Words like 'honestly', 'sadly', and particles indicating emphasis convey the speaker's internal state, making it clear to listeners. Emotional markers are crucial for building the personal side of communication, going beyond just the content of the message and acknowledging the speaker as an emotional, embodied individual. They enhance the interpersonal aspect of communication and deepen relational connections. (Aijmer, 2002).

## 5 .Classification of Pragmatic Markers according to Fraser(1996)

Fraser classifies pragmatic markers into four types:

### 1. Contrastive discourse markers

They indicate a clear understanding of S2 in opposition to the interpretation of S1. Additionally, it suggests that the statement in S2 conveys a contrary meaning to what was previously mentioned

For example:

**a. A. We can go now . B. But we haven't finished our pizza yet.**

**b. Sona is here, however, she is nit going to home.**

In sentences (a) and (b), a contrast is shown between S1 and S2 through the use of "But" or "however."

### 2 .Elaborative discourse markers

These markers indicate a quasi-parallel relationship between S2 and S1. They show that the speech elaborates on or completes parts of the preceding segments.

For example:

**a. Take your sunblock with you. But above all, take gloves.**

**b. I think you should wait for minutes . In other words, sit down and wait a little bit.**

In sentences (a) and (b), the phrase "above all" and the term "in other words" highlight the connection between S1 and S2.

### 3 .Inferential markers

These markers indicate conclusions derived from the preceding segment due to its strength. The inferential marker signifies the conclusion derived from the context provided earlier.

For example:

**a. Ahmed went home. After all, he was not good.**

**b. A: Rasha is away this weekend. B: So, she won't be available sunday.**

In sentence (b), "So" indicates that the following part is the conclusion of what was said before.

### 4. Temporal discourse markers

Temporal indicators show the connection between the time when a statement is judged as true and the time it is expressed in a sentence. The meaning of temporal markers according to Fraser's theory are adverbs of time and conjunctions.

For example:

- a. **You should write while doing that.**
- b. **A: I can't see the girl. B: Then, don't leave**

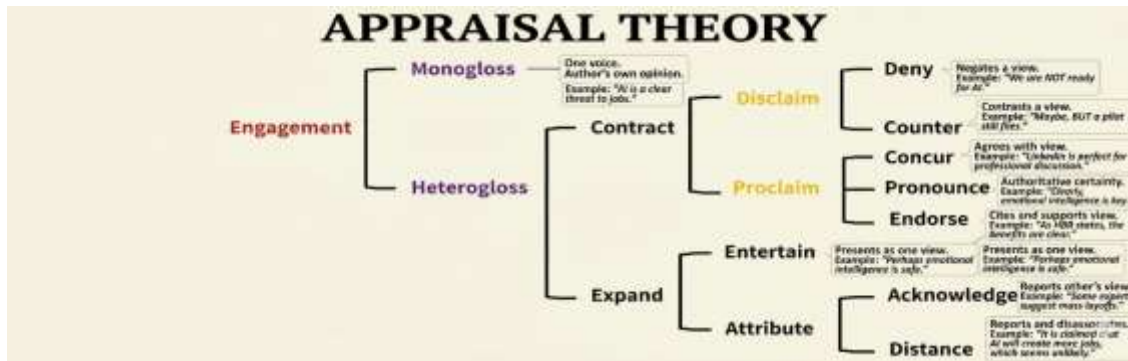
In sentences (a) and (b), the words "while" and "Then" indicate when a statement is considered to be true.

## 6.Appraisal Theory

Building upon Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, Martin and White(2005) introduced Appraisal theory to investigate the evaluative roles of language. They posited that language serves to convey emotions, opinions, and assessments, along with mechanisms to enhance and engage with these evaluations. Appraisal is a broad term encompassing three categories: Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement. The appraisal theory focuses on the linguistic tools that writers and speakers employ to articulate their views on communicative events and gauge others' attitude during interactions.

It includes a range of interpersonal strategies and linguistic tools employed to convey values, emotions, and the intensity of engagement related to propositions, as well as the attitudes. It is an extension to Halliday's Functional Linguistics and has been influenced by earlier advances in discourse analysis. It's a linguistic theory that systematically aims to decode the meanings of statements through context. (White, 2002)

According to appraisal theory, opinions are treated as distinct components, encompassing attitudes along with propositions like Engagement and Graduation. Therefore, unlike traditional discourse analysis, which overlooked the context of communication and the depth of the participants' involvement in the propositions presented, Appraisal theory pays attention to the communicative situation and the extent of the speakers' engagement in the communication event. (ibid)



The engagement resource focuses on pinpointing the specific dialogic role linked to certain meanings and elucidates the stakes involved when a particular meaning is chosen over another. Engagement deals with whether a speaker dismisses (monoglossia) or acknowledges (heteroglossia) any external viewpoints. for example

**1.The water boils at 100 degree**

**2.According to scientists, The water boils at 100 degree.**

In example 1, the author asserts without citing any external sources, making this a monoglossic proposition. In example 2, when "scientists" are referred to, heteroglossia is the case. Authors frequently employ heteroglossia to show that what they are saying does not originate from them, or to underscore its credibility through the endorsement of respected sources, thus warranting trust and consideration. (Hyland, 2005).

According to Appraisal Theory, the level of engagement the speaker demonstrates is not limited to just one audience, but considers all possible readers or listeners. It outlines the various intersubjective stances that can be taken or conceptualized, and suggests that these can be categorized as dialogically expansive or dialogically contractive. Perhaps the distinction between 'dialogically expansive' and 'dialogically contractive' evaluations can most clearly be grasped by contrasting the act of stating a fact with that of voicing an opinion. (White, 2003).

The engagement component employs a complex classification system, which comprises four categories: disclaim, proclaim, entertain, and attribute.

1- Disclaim assertions are words that used to promot a rejection i.e., made from an authorial perspective that contradicts or disagrees with another viewpoint. It is divided into two additional types deny and counter.

2-Proclaim assists the author in either ignoring or opposing other viewpoints by portraying the argument as highly plausible, valid, well-supported, widely accepted, or reliable. This category encompasses concord, proclamation, and confirmation subcategories. By engaging with the inventory of entertainment,

the authorial tone presents a particular proposition as part of a variety of potential propositions, thereby invoking dialogical alternatives. (Martin & White, 2005).

3-Entertain suggests that the author's stance is one among several which creates a framework to explore additional viewpoints. (Fuoli, 2018).

4-Attribution characterized by external voices and dialogic alternatives, attribute propositions permit non-endorsement and enable the author to maintain an independent stance regarding alignment or disalignment. The category is split into two divisions: acknowledgment and distance. (Wilson, 2011).

## 7.Data Selection and Analysis

In this research the data was selected from the widespread platform which is called linkedin. this platform is famous with professional posts and deal with different issues related to employment. To ensure the reliability the comments are chosen from two different professional and highly influential pages. The comments were extracted purposively from two highly influential public posts. The first post belongs to Bernard Marr 'a global Influencer' and the second belongs to the Harvard Business Review (HBR) official page.

### -Data analysis (post 1) by Bernard Marr

**(AI won't take your job, but someone using AI will)**

**Comment 1: Honestly, this phrase is becoming a bit of a cliché now. But the sentiment remains true.**

The word (honestly) reflects the speaker's personal commitment and trustworthiness. It is a structural marker. The writer demonstrates authority and claims that this viewpoint is unchallengeable. Another word is (but) which highlights a notable difference between the first and the second part. It is a contrastive discourse marker. The writer of this comment addresses the negative aspect to reaffirm and support the central idea of the post. By labeling that this post is (cliche) the writer creates an opportunity for a dialogical exchange allowing alternative perspectives before addressing the main idea of the post. This is a heteroglossia entertain.

**Comment 2: Actually many entry level roles are already being replaced. It is not just about using the tool anymore.**

The word (actually) is used to correct misunderstanding or to present an apposing statement in relation to what is presented. It is a contrastive discourse marker. Moreover, the writer rejects the influencer's statement by presenting real world evidence (many roles are replaced) to narrow the post's claim and challenge it directly.

**Comment 3: I think we are oversimplifying the impact. Surely certain industries will see mass layoffs regardless of the skill.**

The word (surely) is used to assert that the writer believes the words in the post and accepts it. It is a pragmatic marker. The words (I think) serves to soften the sentence and make it appear less aggressive. It is Heteroglossia entertain.

**Comment 4: Indeed. But let's be real many companies will just use AI to cut costs and reduce headcount.**

The word (indeed) is used to indicate agreement whereas the word (but) signals a contrasting point to show the more frustrated economic fact. It is a pragmatic marker. (indeed) is a proclaim but the phrase (let's be real) works as a disclaimer that eliminates the idealistic viewpoint on AI and adopt a practical and hard economic opinion.

**-Data Analysis post (2) by Harvard Business Review**

**(Generative AI is changing how we work. Are you ready?)**

**Comment 1: certainly productivity will go up. But will the benefits be shared equally?**

The word (certainly) is used to indicate agreement. It is a pragmatic marker. Whereas (but) opens a new way by introducing a critical question. Also the writer initially agrees with the productivity statement and this is a proclaim. The writer ends the comment with open-ended question for the community and this is a heteroglossia strategy that helps to expand the points of view for other readers.

**Comment 2: Definitely a game changer. However I believe we are missing the conversation about human ethics.**

The word (definitely) indicates absolute certainty whereas (however) suggests a contrast to the preceding statement. It is a pragmatic marker. The writer starts with a word which shows a proclaim that is fully in line with the post's idea. Then the phrase (I believe) moves to expand the discourse toward less explored issue (human ethics).

**Comment 3: In fact I have already seen a decline in freelance writing gigs so the impact is very real and immediate.**

(In fact) is elaborative and emphatic marker which is used to introduce an evidence. The word (so) denotes a conclusion based on presented evidence. This is a monoglossia because the speaker presents a direct observation or fact without any possibility for another interpretation.

#### **Comment 4: May be AI is the co-pilot but the co-pilot is straring to fly the plane alone in some cases.**

The word (may be) indicated possibility whereas the word (but) signals a shift in the context (metaphor). It is a pragmatic marker. The use of (may be) broadening the discussion, promoting readers to to imagine the future where AI gains full control. It is entertain.

#### **8-Conclusions**

- 1- Post (1) presents a stong and idividual statement where as post (2) presents an open ended which encourages more imaginative and varied responses.
- 2- Commenters on the first post focus on changing the viewpoint of the influencer using markers such as (actually or but) whereas commenters on the second one try to broaden the discussion and move the speech toward wide topic and themes like ethics.
- 3- Commentares on this platform (LinkedIn) try not to present their views as facts instead thy use words like (I think or may be). They depend on hetrogolssia instead of monoglossia.
- 4- Commenters accept the reality of the risks of AI but they rely heavily on contrastive markers to narrow the scope of the post.
- 5- The results indicate that language which is used to create a post has an effect on the commenters. This is evident in post (2) which make the commenters use an expansive attitude and make the discourse wider than the words of the post. In contrast with post (1) they use a contractive stance and try to limit the conversation sope.

#### **Refernces**

- Aijmer, K. (2002). English Discourse Particles: Evidence from a Corpus. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Austin, J.L. (1962). How to Do Things with Words. United Kingdom: Clarendon Press.
- Birner, B.J. (2013). Introduction to Pragmatics. United States. Wiley Blackwell.
- Fraser, B. (1996). Pragmatic markers. Journal of Pragmatics, 25(2).
- Fraser, B. (1999). What are discourse markers?. Journal of Pragmatics, 31(7), 931-952.
- Fraser, B. (2009). An account of pragmatic markers. International Review of Pragmatics, 1(1), 2–20.
- Fuoli, M. (2018). A step-by-step guide to conducting appraisal analysis. Functional Linguistics, 5(1), 1-25.

- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. *Syntax and Semantics*, 3, 41–58.
- Herring, S. C. (2013). Discourse in computer-mediated communication. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 127-151). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Herring, S. C. (2013). Discourse in computer-mediated communication. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 127-151). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse: Exploring Interaction in Writing*. Continuum.
- Levinson, S.c. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Redeker, G. (1990). Ideational and pragmatic markers of discourse structure. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14(3), 367-381.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696-735.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shifman, L. (2014). *Memes in Digital Culture*. MIT Press.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- White, P. R. R. (2002). Appraisal: The language of attitudinal evaluation and intersubjective stance. *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, 1-24.
- White, P. R. R. (2003). Beyond modality and hedging: A dialogic view of the language of intersubjective stance. *Text-Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse*, 23(2), 259-284
- Wilson, R. (2011). *Appraisal Theory as a Linguistic Tool for the Analysis of Market Research Interview Data* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield]. White Rose eTheses Online.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford university press .