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PRAGMATICS OF COMMENT MARKERS: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF PAKISTANI ENGLISH AND BRITISH ENGLISH

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Abstract

Present study examines the pragmatics of comment markers in Pakistani and British English using a corpus based approach. Comment markers such as epistemic, style markers and evaluative serve as vital linguistic resources for managing interpersonal relations, organizing discourses and expressing attitudes of the speaker. This study investigates the frequency as well as the pragmatic functions of comment markers in two macro genres: Blogs and General from Global Web-based Corpus of English. The data for the study is analyzed using convergent parallel approach (Creswell, 2014) to explore how localized linguistic practices are reflected through different types of comment markers. Schneider's Dynamic Model (2007) provides the theoretical understanding of the nativization and evolutionary developments of postcolonial varieties such as Pakistani English. Findings of present study reveal the distinct patterns of comment markers and their usage. The study shows how these markers are shaped by the levels of textual informality, multilingual influence and socio-cultural norms in Pakistani English. These findings highlight that epistemic markers are used for persuasion and assertion while in British English these markers are used to maintain epistemic caution. British English shows an implicit evaluation while Pakistani English favors more explicit in terms of the usage of evaluative markers. There is more conventional use of the style markers in British English while Pakistani English reflects reader engagement and rhetorical effect that indicate an ongoing nativization. Present study recommends to further explore the digital corpora to identify emerging linguistic and pragmatic norms in postcolonial varieties of English.

Keyword: Pragmatics of Comment markers, Epistemic, Evaluative and Style markers, Pakistani English, British English, the Process of Nativization, Schneider's Dynamic Model

1. Introduction

Language doesn't only function as a system of lexical choices and grammatical structures rather it serves as a dynamic medium with the help of which different speakers construct different meanings in context. The study intends to investigate how meanings are produced, negotiated and interpreted in real communicative situation is the actual concern of the pragmatics. It focuses on dynamic relationship between the lexical expressions and the context where they are used. It also examines how speakers produce and convey meanings which is beyond the literary interpretations of the words. It explores how various contextual factors such as communicative intensions, shared cultural knowledge and social relationships construct and shape interpretations. In contemporary era, expansion of English in multiple sociocultural settings highlights the significance of localized varieties which often distinctively reflect unique communicative needs and discursive conventions. Within the context of pragmatics, different pragmatic markers gain substantial attention because of their multifunctional roles in interpersonal communication and organization of discourses. Pragmatic markers are lexical items which do not directly produce propositional contents rather facilitate interpretations through structuring discourses, guiding interactional coherence and signaling speakers' attitudes. These markers serve different purposes such as to express stances, maintain conversational flow, signal and clarify speaker's intensions. They are significant due to their ability to connect linguistic forms with their communicative functions which make them vital interactive resources for the successful interactions. These pragmatic markers are highly context dependent which is why they often vary in terms of localized patterns of

communication and sociocultural norms among various verities of English. Comment markers represent an important sub-category of pragmatic markers because they enable speakers to stylistic framing, evaluative assessment and judgement. Style markers demonstrate how the utterances should be interpreted and organized in terms of communicative intension, manner and emphasis while evaluative markers function as speaker's judgements or attitude toward the communicated information. Epistemic markers, in contrast, indicate the degree of speaker's confidence in truth of an utterance and expressions of probability or certainty. Collectively, these classifications serve a significant pragmatic purpose and help the speakers to manage interpersonal relations, guide audience interpretations and negotiate meanings. The multi-functionality of these comments markers reveal how speakers use language strategically in various contexts.

Comment markers play a central role within the domain of world Englihses. In the contemporary era, emergence of multiple localized varieties is the result of global expansion of English. In this global spread of English, each variety is shaped by a distinct communicative and socio-pragmatic context particularly through colonization. This paradigm reflects that there is no monolithic entity but the presence of pluricentric languages that are shaped by local linguistic practices, socio-pragmatic and communicative needs. In the paradigm of World Englishes, postcolonial varieties, particularly those in the outer-circle, have got distinct linguistic norms after a complete systematic process of adaptation. Pakistani English has emerged as an evolving and a significant variety within the paradigm of world Englishes. Initially it was adhered to British norms due to an influence of British colonial history but lately it developed its unique lexical, grammatical and pragmatic features. These features are shaped by institutional policies, multilingualism and socio-pragmatic context. Pakistani English increasingly reflects its unique communicative preferences while British English continues its role as a reference variety. This dynamic relationship between British English and Pakistani English makes a comparison particularly important to understand how different linguistic norms are adapted, restructured and negotiated. This contact of both languages has an influence on the lexical, syntactic as well as on pragmatic usage. In Pakistani English, comment markers may reveal the process of nativiazation, where the inherited, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic forms are adapted for the purpose of local communicative interactions. This nativization is evident in terms of differences in frequency as well as pragmatic functions with comparison to British English. This comparison between Pakistani English and British English can reveal how localized socio-cultural and discourse conventions shape the use of different comment markers. It also helps to understand how Pakistani English negotiates both emerging local identities and inherited norms.

1.2.Research Gap

Recent researches widely examine the functions of pragmatic markers in various international corpus based studies but the research specifically to examine the comment markers in Pakistani English remains unexplored and limited. Existing researches largely concentrate on the established inner-circle varieties such as American and British English, while the comparative researches including Pakistani English receive relatively little attention. Moreover, previous studies mostly investigate pragmatic markers in general rather than examining the categories of epistemic, evaluative and style markers as distinct functional categories. Another important gap remains in the limited corpus-based comparative examination of comment markers particularly in Pakistani and British English. While previous studies acknowledge the pragmatic variations of outer-circle varieties but there are still insufficient empirical evidences regarding how comment markers function distinctively in Pakistani English as compared to British English. Furthermore, in Pakistani English, the process of pragmatic nativization is less

explored particularly in terms of comment markers which reflect interpersonal positioning and speaker's attitude.

1.3.Significance of the Study

Present study is significant in its contribution to the field of World Englishes, corpus pragmatics and variational pragmatics. It attempts to examine how comment markers among localized varieties develop different discourse conventions and how the pragmatics of these markers vary across linguistic and socio-cultural contexts. This research has its central importance because it demonstrates how Pakistani English is a legitimate localized variety with its own evolving pragmatic norms. This study reveals that Pakistani English is not merely a derivative form of British English rather it has its own linguistic, syntactic and pragmatic system.

The present research seeks these objectives to address the following research questions:

a. What types of comment markers such as epistemic, evaluative and stylistic markers are frequently used across Pakistani and British English?
b. How do comment markers differ pragmatically in Pakistani English from the British English during the process of nativization?

2. Literature review

Pragmatics studies the language use in contexts and it also investigates how speakers communicate meanings beyond the literal interpretations of words through contextual and interactional cues. It aims to focus on how meanings are negotiated through shared knowledge, sociocultural conventions and communicative intentions. Within the context of pragmatics, the study of pragmatic markers gains considerable attention because these linguistic expressions perform interpersonal and discourse organizational functions. Pragmatic markers play a central role in producing textual coherence, signaling speaker's attitude and managing interpersonal relationships (Aijmer, 2021). The emergence of corpus pragmatics enables systematic analysis of pragmatic markers across the larger datasets which facilitate the researchers to examine the frequency and pragmatic variations across different varieties of English. Recent studies show that pragmatic markers are useful to examine variations within world Englishes because they highlight localized pragmatic adaptations which are shaped by linguistic and cultural contact (Pichler & Timmis, 2023).

2.1. Pragmatics and Functions of Pragmatic Markers

Pragmatics deals with how language users produce meanings through contextualized communications. It examines the relationship between linguistic items and their interpretations within the specific discourse contexts. Schneider (2021) states that pragmatic meanings are sensitive to understand variations across Englishes and sociocultural conventions. Pragmatic studies focus on naturally occurring linguistic data to explore how speakers use linguistic resources for evaluation, interactional organization and expressing attitudes. Aijmer (2021) claims that corpus pragmatics significantly provides empirical evidences to identify recurring functional and pragmatic patterns which otherwise remain ignored and unexplored in intuition-based analyses. Pragmatic markers are linguistic expressions which contribute in the procedural meanings rather than propositional contents. They help to interpret and organize discourses. Degand and Evers-Vermeul (2021) state that pragmatic markers usually function in textual, inferential and interpersonal contexts. Aijmer (2021) presents three central functions of pragmatic markers such as stance marking, textual organization and interactional management. Stance marking involves the speakers to express doubts, certainty, personal perspectives or evaluations; textual organization involves signaling transitions and structuring discourses while interactional management functions to regulate the relationships between speaker and hearer. Furko (2022) states that pragmatic markers are important to identify pragmatic competence because they are used to facilitate interpersonal communication. This

poly-functional nature of these markers presents them as context-sensitive entities. House (2022) argues that the representation of these markers highly depends on communicative intents and co-textual positioning. These pragmatic markers become useful due to this functional flexibility.

2.2.Comment Markers and their Significant Functions

Comment markers as a significant sub-category of pragmatic markers express the speaker's attitude on the propositional contents of an utterance. These markers indicate speaker's epistemic positions, evaluative stances and stylistic framing of discourses. Mosegaard Hansen (2021) states that comment markers evolve from lexical or clausal structures into discursive and functional devices. Brinton (2022) explains that these marker perform different meta-functions where speakers can comment on the relevance or the manner of an expression and the reliability of an utterance. Their pragmatic values lie in their ability to mediate between speaker's attitude and propositional contents. Significant comment markers are epistemic, evaluative and stylistic markers. Epistemic comment markers show degree of probability, certainty or beliefs. Defour and Simon-Vandenbergen (2023) describe that these markers facilitate the speakers to signal commitment to truth claims and to negotiate epistemic authority. These markers often serve as boosters or hedges depending on the contexts. Degand et al. (2025) demonstrate how these markers undergo functional shifts across the varieties of English and they reflect different changes in interpretive conventions and in the attitude of the speaker. While evaluative markers are used to encode speaker's judgements toward propositional contents. House (2022) suggests that these markers contribute to interpersonal meanings and frame the utterance through subjective evaluations. These markers often perform persuasive functions in the discourses where speakers can influence the interpretations of the audience. These markers reflect rhetorical preferences and cultural norms through their frequency and contextual deployment. Style markers show how different utterances signal the manner of expressions and they indicate how different utterances should be interpreted. Kaltenböck (2024) notes that these markers occur in the form of bracketed insertions which frame and clarify the speaker's intentions. These markers are significant in discourses because their positional flexibility shows the structural preferences in the discourses. Their use highlights socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic conventions which govern rhetorical framing, politeness and directness.

2.3.Use of Comment Markers in British and Pakistani English

British English is considered as a benchmark variety because of its extensive research of pragmatic markers. Tagliamonte and Denis (2021) state that different pragmatic markers undergo substantial functional expansion in British English. Degand and Evers-Vermeul (2021) demonstrate that Britishers use the pragmatic marker 'well' strategically to mitigate face-threatening acts and to manage discourse transitions. They suggest that British English shows significant functional diversifications of pragmatic markers. House (2022) identifies that British English users extensively employ different comment markers in academic and spoken discourses to balance epistemic cautions, politeness and clarity. This research establishes British English as a rich comparative framework to examine variations of pragmatic markers. While, Pakistani English as an outer-circle and a postcolonial variety indicates the influence of multilingual contacts and localized socio-cultural norms but the research on comment markers in Pakistani English remains limited. Previous South Asian Studies highlight the distinct pragmatic adaptations in the domain. Pichler and Timmis (2023) note that pragmatic markers are uniquely used by the outer-circle varieties because of their localized discourse conventions and contact induced-innovations. Schneider (2021) states that such pragmatic variations reflect the stability of the local norms. Pakistani discourses often characterize high interpersonal orientations and greater explicitness which influence the function and frequency of comment

markers i.e epistemic and evaluative markers. Researches on South Asian Englishes highlight that their speakers frequently use pragmatic markers to show communal alignment, deference and politeness (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2022).Their research suggest that Pakistani English exhibits distinctive preferences in the use of comment markers as compared to British English specifically in epistemic and evaluative domains. Crible (2022) states that pragmatic markers vary across English varieties and such variations reflect distinctive interactional patterns and socio-cultural norms rather than grammatical divergence alone.

2.4.Comment Markers and Nativization in Pakistani English

Nativization is the process through which different localized varieties of English develop distinctive linguistic, structural and functional elements and they are adapted to local-socio-cultural conventions. Schneider (2021) suggests that pragmatic innovations in the postcolonial varieties are considered as the strong indicators of their developmental maturity. Pakistani English undergoes extensive nativization through contact with regional languages and Urdu which influences discursive strategies and pragmatic choices. Comment markers in Pakistani English specifically susceptible to the process of nativization as they encode interpersonal orientation and speaker's attitude. They remain similar in their forms to British English but their pragmatic and functional interpretations are usually shifted according to localized socio-cultural and communicative norms. This shows that comment markers in Pakistani English may present nativized pragmatic functions which differ from British English.

3. Research Methodology

Present study aims to investigate the pragmatics of comment markers in Pakistani and British English by adopting convergent parallel mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2014). This mixed design facilitates to identify the frequency distribution and the pragmatic orientations of the comment markers in the two distinct varieties of English such as British and Pakistani English. This integrated design helps to analyze both statistical and contextual meanings of comment markers. This research design is appropriate to examine the variations across Pakistani and British English because it provides empirical evidences of linguistically distinctive features and pragmatics of localized usage patterns. This research design provides the quantitative knowledge of epistemic, evaluative and style markers and also qualitatively provides the deeper insight about the process of pragmatic nativization. The data for the present study is drawn from GloWbe, which is one of the largest corpora available to compare and contrast different varieties of English. It contains approximately 1.9 million words from twenty English speaking countries and it is also developed to represent web-based use of English across different national varieties of English. This study adopts purposive sampling to select specific comment markers. The selection of these markers is based on their categorization such as epistemic (I think, I know, I believe), evaluative (sadly, hopefully, ideally) and style markers (briefly, generally).

3.1. Theoretical Framework

Present research situates within the paradigm of world Englishes that recognizes the global diversifications of English into different local varieties. These localized varieties are shaped by distinct linguistic, sociocultural and historical contexts. In this framework, Pakistani English is seen as a postcolonial variety which has developed its usage patterns, its own norms at the pragmatic level. The present study uses Schneider's Dynamic model to account for the evolutionary developments of the Pakistani English. This model presents a comprehensive detail of how English evolves in postcolonial setting through different stages such as 'foundation, exo-normative stabilization, nativization, endo-normative stabilization and differentiation'. Pakistani English positions itself in the stage of nativization and progresses towards endonormative stabilization where specific linguistic and socio-cultural norms begin to gain acceptance and influence language use. This model provides a clear understanding how

different localized varieties emerge, develop and become nativized with the passage of time. Through the five interconnected phases, this model provides evolutionary trajectory of postcolonial Englishes. Schneider proposes that the evolutionary developments of English varieties are shaped by historical contact between indigenous population and settles through which linguistic adaptations happen at the lexical, syntactic and pragmatic level. This model explains that sociocultural negotiation and identity formation occur due to language evolution. Language becomes appropriate for the local communicative purposes when it starts reflecting local discourse practices and cultural norms. This theoretical framework is closely relevant to the present research because of its theoretical basis to examine how localized pragmatic features of Pakistani English have developed especially with reference to the use of comment markers. Nativization is the most significant phase for the present research. It refers to the process where English undergoes structural as well as functional adaptations within local social and cultural context. English speakers start reshaping inherited linguistic expressions according to distinctive discourse patterns, pragmatic norms and local communicative needs during nativization. It often reflects through changes in functional interpretation of discourse marker particularly comment markers and frequency distributions. Since these markers are closely tied to interpersonal communications, highly context-sensitive entities. In the context of Pakistani English such adaptations are influenced by regional languages like Urdu. They lead to unique patterns of comment markers such as epistemic, evaluative and style marking. This model also shows the relationship between linguistic variations and identity constructions. This model suggests that postcolonial varities of English try to progress toward the phase of endo-normative stabilization where speakers recognize their local varieties as legitimate linguistic systems rather than just an extension of the colonial standards. This process usually results in the appearance of innovations at the level of discourses which highlight local cultural norms and communicative values. Within Pakistani context, these comment markers may reflect such developing autonomy of linguistic expressions. This model also helps to understand how Pakistani English speakers use different types of comment markers and it indicates the emergence of local pragmatic norms and conventions which differ from British English norms.

4. Analysis

This section presents epistemic, evaluative and stylistic comment markers in Pakistani and British English of the Global Web Based Corpus. It analyzes frequency distribution and pragmatic preferences of these markers of each community across the two varieties. The identified and observed differences are interpreted in relation to pragmatic nativiazation in Pakistani English, discourse conventions and socio-cultural communication styles. The quantitate analysis identifies the frequencies of different types of comment markers to determine which marker is frequently used in each variety while qualitative analysis reflects their pragmatic functions to determine how speakers of English use these markers to express attitude, certainty, evaluation and style.

4.1. Epistemic Markers

Epistemic markers refer to the degree of certainty, knowledge and belief of the speakers about a particular statement. These markers highlight how certain, sure or unsure the speakers are about the truth of what they are talking about. The following table 1 shows the frequent use of epistemic marker ‘I Think’ in Pakistani and British English in the GloWbe.

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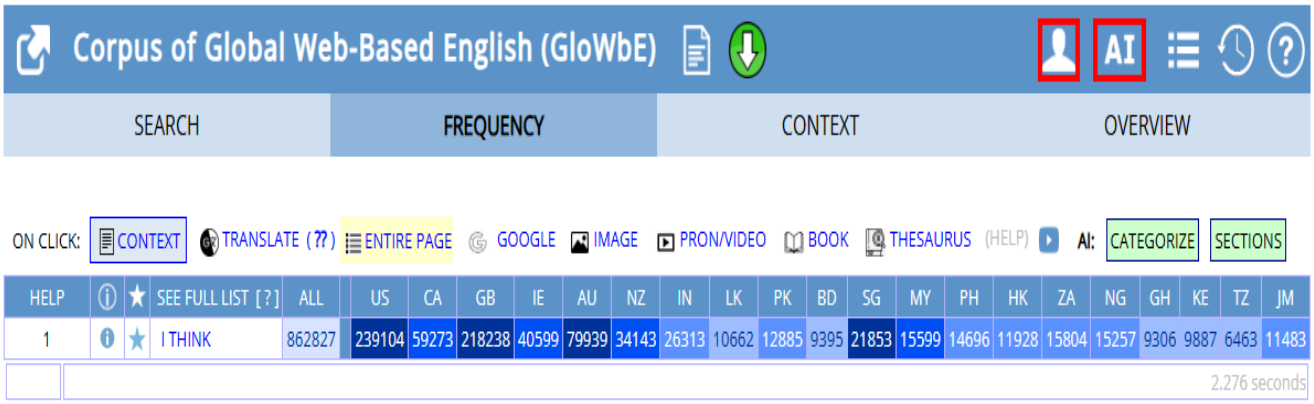
Table 1



HELP	SEE FULL LIST [?]	ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
1	I THINK	862827	239104	59273	218238	40599	79939	34143	26313	10662	12885	9395	21853	15599	14696	11928	15804	15257	9306	9887	6463	11483

Table 1 shows frequencies of the marker 'I think', 218238 in British English and 12885 occurrences in Pakistani English. This striking difference indicates that British English users mostly use this marker to mitigate and soften their assertions and present their opinions indirectly. This table reveals higher frequency in British English across the selected comment marker as compared to Pakistani English. This difference highlights that British English has a stronger tendency to explicitly use epistemic markers in English. These markers are used to signal certainty, belief, doubt and personal judgements about the propositional contents. The observed lower frequency in Pakistani English reflects that this marker may often be employed through various alternative pragmatic strategies influenced by localized discourse conventions and norms. This shows an alignment with their communicative preferences to use politeness and hedges epistemically. While Pakistani English speakers do not use this marker frequently which highlights that they may prefer more direct or alternative expressions to show their attitude and stance. The lower use of this epistemic marker suggests the influence of Urdu discourse conventions and communicative practices where direct statements often carry stronger rhetorical force. Concordance lines of British English highlight a prominent difference of pragmatic preferences and orientations. In this example 'I think the problem is that so many people ignore', the use of the marker shows some criticism employing a mitigated potential directness. It suggests that speakers use it to present evaluative judgements without even imposing categorical certainty or belief. Similarly another example 'I think the problem with your concept is more complicated' shows the analytical evaluation which is framed through epistemic modesty. The strategic use of this epistemic markers softens the discourse which could otherwise appear more confrontational. This is a very prominent characteristic of British discourse conventions which employ politeness by using mitigated expressions. Another example signals subjectivity and reduces assertive force such as 'I think the whole agents names thing was just a…'. In this example this marker functions as interpretive qualification and the speaker acknowledges this personal interpretation rather than giving the statement as an objective fact. Likewise the examples such as 'I think the idea is a good one', 'I think the right thing' and 'I think the real reason for his departure was his…' show that British English frequently use this marker to balance the evaluation with mitigation and politeness. It also suggests that this marker introduces inferential judgements while maintaining discursive restraints. On the other hand, Pakistani English Concordance lines highlight that the epistemic expression 'I think' is used to express certainty oriented opinions and personal stance for instance 'I think it depends on the attitude of people where…', this statement shows the personal assessment rather than a strong mitigation. In this example this marker again introduces a color of socially evaluative construction which shows discourse preferences for direct but personally accountable assertions. Similarly the statements such as 'I think it is

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imperative we find someone that you…', 'I think they are testing us that how far we…' and 'I think what Pakistan needs is at least ONE decent…' demonstrate that the linguistic expressions like 'it is imperative', 'they are testing us' and the emphatic use of 'ONE' carry sense of obligation, communal framing and reinforced stance of the speakers. These statements show that this epistemic marker 'I think' in Pakistani English is used to precede an authoritative judgment and it may function assertively rather than as a genuine hedging. It also demonstrates that Pakistani English frequently employs epistemic marker within collective evaluative discourses. The use of this marker in Pakistani English provides pragmatic nativization where it retains the inherited British epistemic marker but its use and function have undergone localized interpretations. The following table 2 shows the use of another epistemic marker 'I know' in both varieties:

Table 2

HELP			SEE FULL LIST [?]	ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
1			I KNOW	374383	103059	26425	82227	19626	31874	13530	11369	4542	6531	3668	9614	7659	10438	4581	7371	9748	5337	6314	3619	6851

Table 2 also shows the occurrence of another epistemic marker 'I Know' in both varieties, it occurs 82227 times in British and 6531 times in Pakistani English, which shows the frequent use of the markers in both varieties but the lesser use in Pakistani English highlights that a pragmatic tendency toward explicit certainty and assertiveness which may be because of the influence of the localized conventions that emphasize clarity and authority. The use of the marker 'I know' in British English performs an acknowledgement and informational functions. The statement 'to be a part of it or the clan anymore. I know that a lot of people have been asking' suggests its function as a neutral attitude of an external information rather than assertion of the authority. In another statement 'I know that my kitten's first Christmas is coming', this epistemic marker is purely used as anticipatory and factual sense which carries ideological and emotional weight and marks awareness of an upcoming event. The statement 'principle of influence in the hands of the ordinary people. I know that some people will say the vote is' uses this epistemic marker 'I know' for the social alignment and collective reassurance which expresses the belief and certainty grounded in communal solidarity. While in Pakistani English the use of this marker follows the inherited pragmatic functions but through using the local communicative norms and conventions such as the statements 'I can't help disrespecting her. I love her but I know naturally I am more authoritative over her', 'God doesn't exist!!! I get very frustrated. Even though I know God exists I sometimes begin to doubt since' and '"of Palestinians as obvious forms of racism. And so I know I am not completely alone, but still the…" reflect the localized discourse preferences for direct stance projection. In these examples the use of the epistemic marker does not reflect the mitigated assertion rather it explicitly foregrounds the epistemic certainty. These epistemic markers function as a discursive corrective in this statement 'I get very frustrated' where it re-

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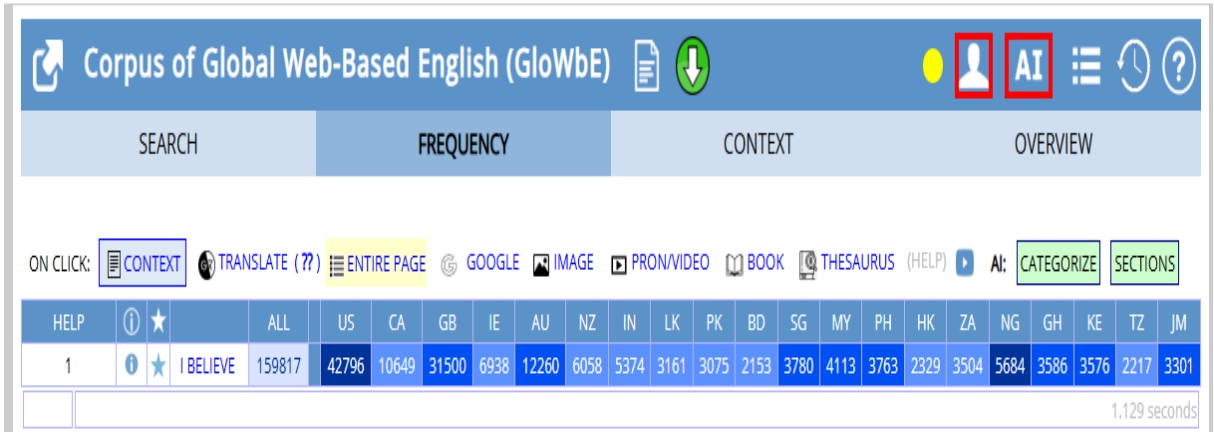
establishes conviction after certainty. This kind of use of the epistemic markers suggests the cultural discursive patterns where epistemic functions are closely tied to ideological and religious commitments.

Table 3 shows the occurrence of the epistemic marker 'I believe' in both varieties:

Table 3



HELP			ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
1		I BELIEVE	159817	42796	10649	31500	6938	12260	6058	5374	3161	3075	2153	3780	4113	3763	2329	3504	5684	3586	3576	2217	3301

This table 3 shows the frequency distribution of the epistemic marker 'I believe' 31500 in British English and 3075 in Pakistani English. The reduced frequency distribution in Pakistani English may suggest that Pakistani English speakers use such epistemic expressions according to their localized pragmatic norms and conventions. These expressions are lesser in their use in Pakistani English but still they are being used according to the inherited linguistic customs and norms of British English. This epistemic marker functions to express epistemic commitment and stance of the speakers in the discourses. It enables a speaker to present a proposition as personally reasoned observations and beliefs rather than as absolute truths and facts. However, this marker differs in its pragmatic realizations in British and Pakistani English. The concordance lines of British English reveal the use of this expression for example the statements such as 'going down with location-awareness, for data protection reasons, but I believe that pragmatism will win the argument.', 'my opinion that a country is also a sophisticated system. I believe that they wanted to deflate a potentially dangerous.' and 'by announcing the winner as Morsi, although he probably was. I believe that the problems that befall us are because..' show the use of this epistemic marker 'I believe' as a hedging strategy which softens the predictive claims through a personal interpretation rather than surety and certainty. This also suggests the discursive politeness where speakers may contribute evaluative predictions without presenting them confrontational or overly dramatic. The second statement shows the epistemic caution which reflects a common pragmatic function of British English and preserves the argumentative contribution while reducing the explicit confrontational force. Third example highlights the argumentative distancing where the speakers present critical commentary which strengthens the force of casual attribution. While an example from Pakistani English 'depended on personal reasoning, which he knew had defects? I believe that the type of ijtihad that corrupted the…' shows the use of this epistemic marker in more explicit way to express the interpretive authority of the speaker rather than reducing commitment. These examples reflect that these markers are used in different contexts with their distinctive functions such as evaluative comment markers.

4.2.Evaluative Markers

Evaluative comment markers are used to express the attitude of the speakers and their emotional reaction or judgements toward a proposition. These markers indicate whether something is observed or seen as good, bad, desirable, surprising or unfortunate such as the most common examples of these evaluative markers occur in the discourses such as sadly,

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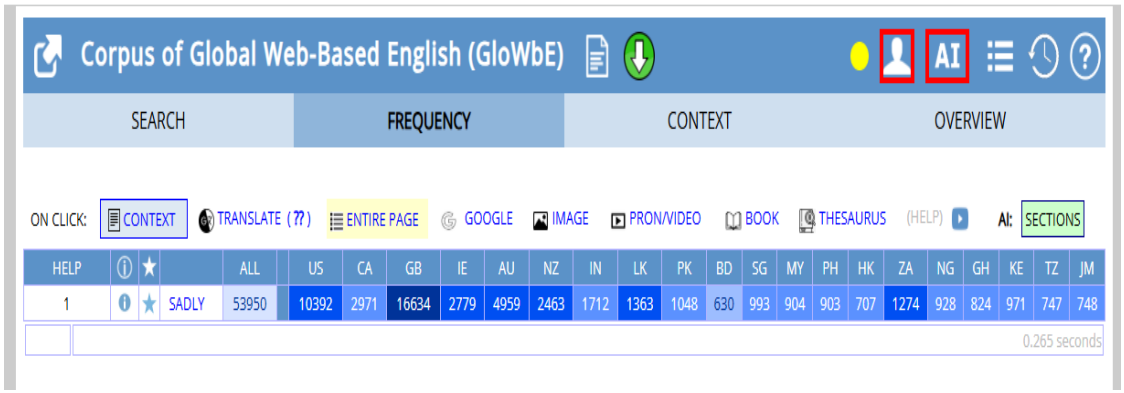
hopefully and ideally. These markers function to explicitly show the speaker's stances and guide how readers should interpret the propositions. The following table 4 shows the frequent occurrence of the evaluative marker 'sadly' in British and Pakistani English:

Table 4



HELP				ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
1			SADLY	53950	10392	2971	16634	2779	4959	2463	1712	1363	1048	630	993	904	903	707	1274	928	824	971	747	748

Table 4 shows the comparative distribution of the comment marker' sadly'. The table presents the frequency 16,634 in British English while 1,048 times in Pakistani English. These numbers reveal the significant difference in both varieties as for as the use of this evaluative marker is concerned. The frequent use and higher frequency in British English highlight that British speakers frequently use this marker to express disappointment, regret, sympathy or positive and negative assessment. In Pakistani English, this variation is interpreted as an evidence of pragmatic nativization which presents that during this phase the inherited forms of discourse adapted selectively and gradually according to the local social and cultural discourse norms and conventions. The use of this marker in British English illustrates the relatively neutral descriptive evaluation rather in Pakistani English it reveals that the function of this marker is shaped by the moral commentary and social concerns. British English statements such as 'of Kenwood and Sunny Heights material, and much more besides. Sadly for whatever reason they have priced it at a…', 'a while it appeared that she would pull through, but sadly her stomach and intestines had shrunk too much and…' and 'Will it last forever? I don't know. Sadly other people sleep in the guest bedroom sometimes. But…' reflect consumer-oriented evaluation, emphatic affective use and personal disappointments in these statements. These are the characteristics of British English where negative judgments are framed through emotional framing and the evaluative force becomes descriptive rather than morally charged. While in Pakistani English these markers introduce collective moral evaluations where these markers are used primarily to express disappointments such as these statements 'comfortable lying to a girl's parents as well. And sadly, a few bad apples DO spoil the barrel.', 'moment you open the doorway, and it's major. Sadly, many smokers become accustomed to the smell within their car.', and 'threat that they may curse those who treat them bad. Sadly, pushed out of homes by their families as children and find…' different pragmatic functions. The first statement explicitly demonstrates the social disapproval of undesirable behavior where this marker 'sadly' is used in terms of social judgments, evaluative generalizations and moral condemnations. In this example the expression 'DO' expresses the intensified force of evaluation and shows that this marker is used to frame an asserted social criticism. This marker also signals the awareness building commentary, negative social evaluation and corrective public criticism. Similarly, in second and third statement this marker expresses moral framing, emphatic social condemnation and collective ethical positioning. These differences in both varieties provide evidences of the nativization phase. In this phase Paksitani English tries to adapt inherited evaluative markers into more localized pragmatic entities. The use of this

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marker in Pakistani English reveals distinctive evaluative discourses which are shaped by the local sociocultural communicative norms.

Table 5 shows another evaluative marker in British and Pakistani English:

Table 5

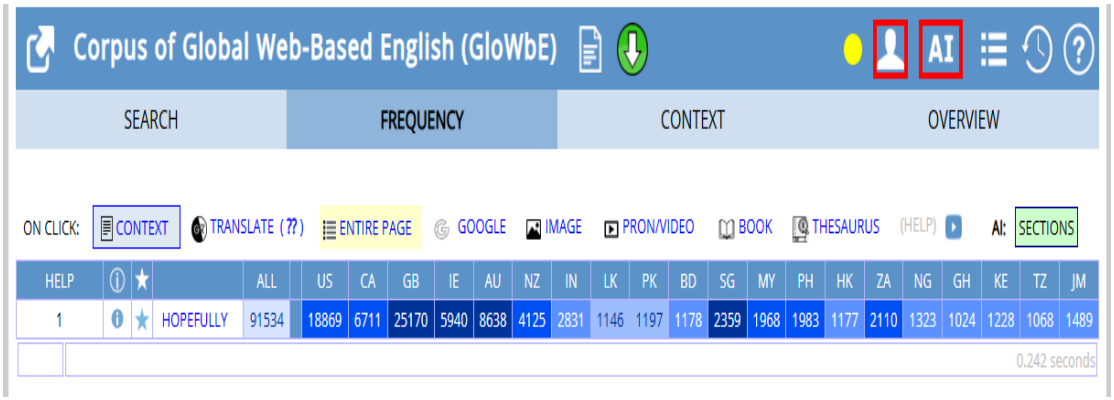
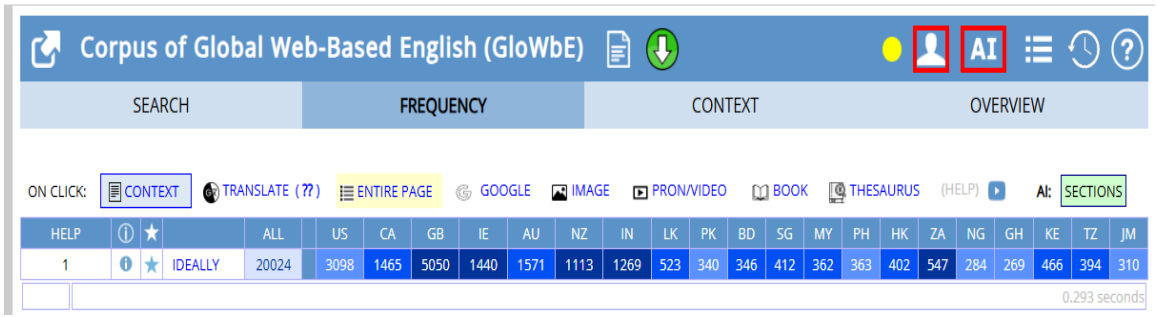


Table 5 presents the frequency distribution of the use of evaluative comment marker 'hopefully' in British and Pakistani English. It shows the striking difference in both varieties such as 25170 times in British English and 1197 times in Pakistani English. This evaluative marker is used as an important pragmatic device to express anticipation, expectation and optimism for a future situation. This marker enables the speakers to frame and position themselves toward the proposition and signals the hopefulness toward anticipated outcomes. Different statements of Pakistani and British English highlight the similarities and differences in the use of this evaluative comment marker. Concordance lines of this comment marker show that both varieties use this marker to express positive expectations. In British English, this is used as a device of interpersonal mitigation and tentative optimism while it is used in more situational, contextual and direct manner in Pakistani English. While Pakistani English reflects that this marker is used to perform implicit evaluative functions. Unlike British English, Pakistani English has more subtle confrontational use of such expressions. Concordance lines of Pakistani English such as 'Protecting it's weaker sections. That is your opinion, hopefully based on facts.', 'now being felt in Norway for the first time (& hopefully last), as a matter of daily life in my country' and 'which site I got it from. Im still searching and hopefully will come across it' reflect the use of this marker to precede opinions while maintaining the formal politeness during the discourses. These Pakistani examples suggest the expanded use of the pragmatic preferences where the inherited markers are adopted according to the Localized discourse functions. Use of this evaluative marker reveals the emergence of different pragmatic conventions which signal the evolution and development of Pakistani English as an independent nativized variety of English. Similarly table 6 shows the use of another evaluative marker 'ideally'.

Table 6



This evaluative marker is used to express evaluative expectations, preferred conditions and optimal standards toward a process, outcome and a situation. It enables speakers to present

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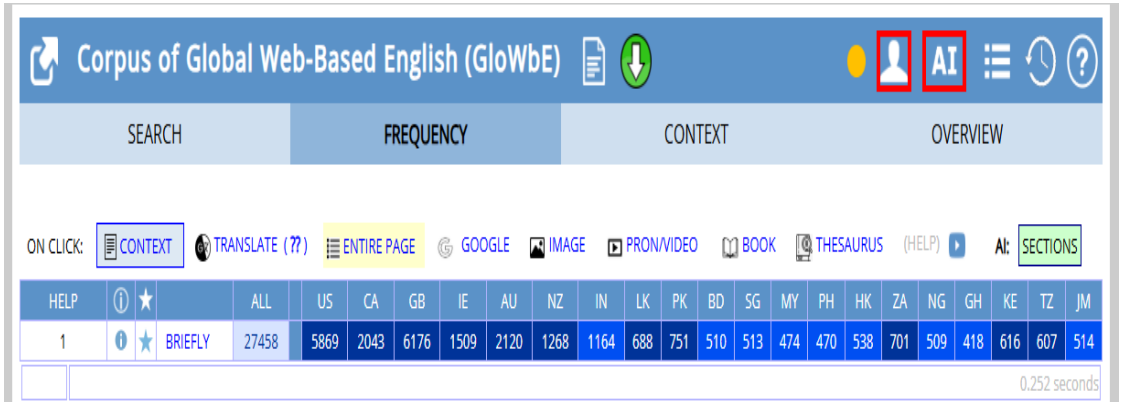
propositions as desirable recommended states. Frequency distribution of this marker demonstrates a prominent difference between British and Pakistani English.

Table 6 shows that this expression occurs 5050 times in British English while only 340 times in Pakistani English. This less frequency suggests its restricted discourse context where this variation also suggests that though these markers exist in both varieties but their frequency and pragmatic orientation differ in both varieties. British English statements highlight more flexible and broader use of this evaluative comment marker for instance in the statement 'a product ideally has to tick most of, if not all the…' this marker shows evaluative suggestion toward consumer's expectations. Similarly this marker functions as procedural recommendations in this statement 'ideally test this by standing sideways…'. While Pakistani English demonstrates the use of this comment marker in instructional and technical contexts. This marker is used to evaluate the suitability of a technical function within a specific context. Here this marker functions as a device of technical optimization which highlights the performance efficiency and functional compatibility of a task. In another statement 'Ideally we want our code to describe the conceptual level…', this marker serves as an instructional device to introduce a useful standard for programming. In both cases the use of the marker is highly technical to indicate precision and efficiency. The use of this comment marker in Pakistani English shows the process of nativization. The function of this marker becomes more specialized and restrained to instructional and technical discourses. In Pakistani English, this marker is localized into a task-oriented role. This specialized use and lower frequency illustrate how such markers are adapted rather than replicated. Furthermore, different examples in both varieties provide evidence of another significant type of comment marker which is stylistic marker.

4.3.Style Markers

Style markers are the kind of comment markers which are used to organize discourses. They are not used to comment on 'what' rather how something is stated. They are the guiding devices which help the listener or reader to interpret the manner or the structures of communications. The most common style markers are briefly, frankly and generally.

Table 7



HELP				ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
1			BRIEFLY	27458	5869	2043	6176	1509	2120	1268	1164	688	751	510	513	474	470	538	701	509	418	616	607	514

This style marker 'briefly' serves as a significant device which is used to signal discourse organization, conciseness and discourse limitation within communications. It provides an information and guides the listener or the reader about how the information should be presented or interpreted. Table 7 gives the detail of frequency distribution of this stylistic marker and reveals that it occurs 6176 times in British and 751 times in Pakistani English. This frequency distribution in the table illustrates that British English speakers use this marker more frequently than Pakistani English speakers. This difference signifies that British English speakers rely more on the stylistic metadiscursive framing than Pakistani users. Pakistani English users use this marker within the limited contextual settings. This variation between the varieties reflects the pragmatic phase of Pakistani English as well.

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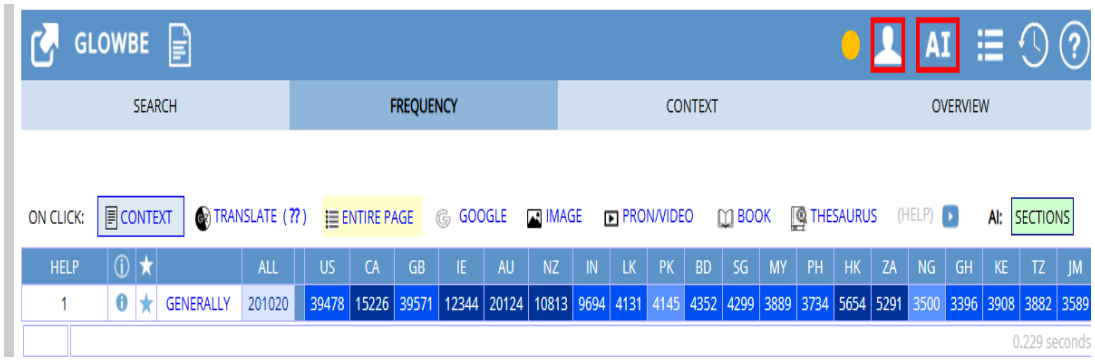
Pakistani English concordance lines highlight that 'briefly' functions in contexts relevant to event descriptions, temporary actions and instructions. For instance the statement 'Briefly explain what call provision is and in which case companies use…' shows how this marker functions as an instructional marker to direct the readers and provide them a concise interpretation. It also helps them to establish limitations on the detail or the length of the response. This marker supports to guide the discourse organizations pragmatically. It helps to control the manner of communication and regulates the expected style of responses. In the second concordance line of Pakistani English 'Somalia's Al-Qaeda-linked Shebab fighters briefly took control of a small town…', this marker functions as a device to indicate temporary duration rather as a discourse organizer. In this example this maker is used to modify the action and signal that the control is short lived. Similarly in the last statement, 'They briefly took control of the town but were later forced back', this marker again serves temporally and emphasizes the shorter duration of the event. In these examples, this stylistic marker functions to concise the factual information and foregrounds the transitory nature of the event. These statements highlight that Pakistani English uses this stylistic marker in informational and journalistic discourses where direct event narration and temporal precision of the action are important. While examples from British English highlight broader functions of this marker. Such as statement 'professionals who visit the project briefly and who have no expertise…', shows the similar functions to the examples of Pakistani English by illustrating its temporary duration. This use of the stylistic markers suggests broader contexts where such evaluative criticism adds a reflective and interpersonal dimensions to the use of the marker. In another example 'Things are back to normal as of iTunes 9.01, but briefly the green button maximized the window…' this marker highlights the temporary state of the action but it also structures the sequence of the narrative within the proper explanation. Third statement reflects the metadiscursive style marker which minimizes the speaker's engagement with the proposition which establishes interpretive attitude of the speaker and signals limited involvement. This comparative analysis of the style markers in Pakistani and British English demonstrates that 'this marker is used in more direct and instructional manner is Pakistani English whereas British uses this marker more flexibly across evaluative and narrative contexts. The following table 8 shows how frequently the style marker 'generally' is used in both varieties of English.

Table 8



HELP				ALL	US	CA	GB	IE	AU	NZ	IN	LK	PK	BD	SG	MY	PH	HK	ZA	NG	GH	KE	TZ	JM
1			GENERALLY	201020	39478	15226	39571	12344	20124	10813	9694	4131	4145	4352	4299	3889	3734	5654	5291	3500	3396	3908	3882	3589

This style maker is used to express broader applicability, generalization, common accepted patterns and typicality within discourses. This stylistic marker helps the speakers to present information in broader applicable manner. Table 8 shows the frequency of this style marker where it reflects the striking difference between two varieties which states this marker occurs 39,571 times in British English and 4145 times in Pakistani English. This difference indicates that British English speakers use this expression frequently and this higher frequency shows that British English users rely extensively on explicit strategies of generalization in discourses while Pakistani English speakers use this marker within more ideological, explanatory and

instructional manner. Examples from British English illustrates that this style marker establishes broader observations. For instance, in the statement, 'Eurodollars A US dollar-denominated deposit? Generally in a bank located outside the United States…' this marker serves as an important device for descriptive categorization. This is also used to soften and present information in broader perspective rather than in universally fixed dimensions. Similarly another statement 'as soon as you give special power that power is generally and at times extremely abused or over-extended,' this style marker is used to express evaluative and social generalizations. Here the speaker tries to present element of power as a tendency instead of showing it as outcome. This marker emphasizes speaker's evaluative attitude within discourse and it reflects pragmatic norms of British English where argumentative claims are used in more soften manner to preserve caution and maintain the intellectual caution. While the concordance lines of Pakistani English identify different pragmatic tendencies of this expression for instance the statement 'The elder children can generally be given more freedom,' reflects advisory function of this 'generally' stylistic comment marker. The speaker uses it common social patterns based guidance. This example introduces this marker as parenting practice in pragmatic context. In the next example 'Levels can generally be solved with a combination of logic and some…', this marker again presents an explanatory observation where its function is more instructional and procedural. Speakers use this to explain typical problem solving methods by acknowledging the existence of exceptions. This difference between the two varieties shows the nativiazation phase where this difference demonstrates the adaptation of inherited discourses within Pakistani English. Schneider states that postcolonial varieties gradually acquire the inherited forms and reshape them according to the local sociocultural norms.

5. Discussion

Present study investigates the pragmatic functions and frequency distribution of the comment markers in Pakistani and British English. Findings show that British English speakers use comment markers substantially higher than Pakistani English speakers. Pakistani English demonstrates the distinctive localized pragmatic patterns despite of having lower frequency distribution. It reflects pragmatic nativization and sociocultural adaptations. This study also reflects that postcolonial English varieties, such as Pakistan, do not just copy the inherited linguistic forms of British English rather reshape them gradually according to their sociocultural realities and communicative needs. This study highlights that comment markers such as epistemic, evaluative and style markers do not function merely as linguistic tools rather they present the interactional positioning, cultural identity and stance constructions (Aijmer, 2021; Fung & Carter, 2021; House, 2022). This study also elaborates this stance that Pakistani English develops its own pragmatic norms and conventions as for as the use of the comment markers is concerned. It tries to establish these norms through socially embedded interpretations, evaluative commitments and some functional specialization. One of the most important and central findings of the present study reveal the use of the epistemic markers such as I think, I know and I believe and identify that British English frequently uses these markers to express inferential caution, mitigation, argumentative moderation and interpersonal politeness. Contrastively, Pakistani English employs these markers with stronger assertive stance taking and epistemic commitment within the discourses. Some examples from Pakistani English show that it often acquires evaluative and interpersonal force than the Native English varieties (Kaltenböck et al., 2022; Müller, 2021, & Neary-Sundquist, 2023). Present study also confirms that Pakistani English adapts inherited exonormative epistemic forms according to their localized communicative needs and sociocultural realities (Aijmer, 2021). This study also reveals the difference in the use of the evaluative markers such as sadly, hopefully and ideally. The findings show that British English uses these markers to express cautious optimism,

flexible evaluative framing and moderated emotional commentary. Whereas Pakistani English demonstrates the use of these markers in terms of socially grounded evaluative functions (Pichler, 2022 & Romero-Trillo, 2021). The present findings also suggest that Pakistani English speakers use evaluative markers more for moral positioning, direct evaluative commentary than interpersonal softening. Another important finding illustrates the use of style markers which employs that these markers are used extensively across the metadiscursive, explanatory and narrative contexts. In different examples these markers are used to organize discourses, establish analytical flexibility and soften claims. The findings show that Pakistani English uses these markers within the procedural, factual and instructional domains. The study reveals that these stylistic markers become pragmatically important according to the localized communicative needs (Capone & Bongelli, 2021). In the light of these findings, study highlights the process of nativization of Pakistani English. Though Pakistani English adapts linguistic comment markers from British English but their pragmatic realizations differ significantly. Findings of the present study also reflects that pragmatic differences are not just linguistic rather they are deeply embedded in ideological positioning, cultural identity and social interactions. Pakistani English provides an evidence of pragmatic nativization through supporting the claim that postcolonial varieties develop autonomous pragmatic conventions and norms over time.

6. Conclusion

Present study concludes that comment markers such as epistemic, evaluative and style markers are not just linguistic elements rather they operate as important pragmatic entities which help the speakers to construct stances, organize discourses, express sociocultural identities and negotiate interpersonal relations. This study illustrates that both British and Pakistani English varieties establish pragmatic realizations of these comment markers through the comparative corpus-based analysis. These difference between both verities indicate that pragmatic use of these markers is shaped by the cultural orientation, discourse traditions of speech communities and communicative priorities. The findings of the study also highlight that English varieties cannot be understood in isolation rather they should be examined through their localized pragmatic systems and norms. Present study also signifies the importance of corpus-based research in pragmatic domain. It highlights that the research provides an empirical evidence of pragmatic differences between the two varieties that may not be completely clear through the non-empirical analysis. The findings of the study also validate Scheneider's dynamic model (2007) and states that during the phase of nativization pragmatic elements become localized with the evolution of postcolonial English varieties. The study highlights that this pragmatic nativization is not restricted to pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar rather it extends into speaker's attitudes, stance constructions and discourse practices. This localized usage of these comment markers In Pakistani English also reveal how language speakers reshape the inherited linguistic forms to present interactional norms, patterns of sociocultural meanings and indigenous cultural values. This study also provides an insight into how English varieties develop independent identities over the period of time.

Limitations and Recommendations

Present study provides significant insights into the pragmatics of comment markers in Pakistani and British English but it remains limited in its focus. It does not focus on the response markers, discourse connectors, interpersonal markers and hesitation markers that is why this research does not represent complete pragmatic system of Pakistani and British English rather it focuses on specific area of corpus pragmatics. Another major limitation of this study is that it provides authentic and large collection of naturally occurring language data which is mainly based on the web-based discourses which resultantly provides the findings that may not fully cover the pragmatic behaviors of speakers during the interactions, institutional settings, classroom

discourses and face-to-face communications. Despite of certain limitations, this study presents some important recommendations for future researchers. They may expand the ambit of the study through examining different discourse markers other than epistemic, evaluative and style markers. Future studies should also include spoken corpora because discourse markers perform differently during the spoken interactions. Such studies would be helpful in a more detailed understanding of the interactional pragmatics in Pakistani English. Another recommendation can be the inclusion of different English varieties in comparative analysis of comment markers. Such cross-varietal researches can help to identify whether pragmatic elements highlighted in Pakistani English are different and unique to the particular variety or part of the some broader patterns within the domain of New Englihes.

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