

Module 7 – Communication Functions & Discourse Markers

A Comprehensive Analysis of Communication Functions and Discourse Markers in English Language Learning

[Introduction]

In this lesson, we'll look at what communicative functions are and how to sound more natural, organized, and fluent by using discourse markers, opinion phrases, and structures that emphasize important ideas. The goal of the lesson is to help you improve fluency, structure, and clarity in conversation.

[What Are Communicative Functions?]

Communicative functions are the purposes behind what we say—agreeing, asking, clarifying, emphasizing. Mastering these helps you interact more effectively in English.

[Discourse Markers – Overview & Categories]

Discourse markers are words that don't change the meaning, but they guide your listener through your ideas. They're like road signs in a conversation.

- The most common categories are:
 - Adding: also, in addition, moreover, furthermore
 - Contrasting: however, on the other hand
 - Cause/effect: so, therefore, as a result
 - Emphasizing: in fact, indeed
 - Rephrasing: in other words, to put it differently
 - Summarizing: to sum up, overall

[Examples in Context].

The restaurant has excellent service. Moreover, the food is always fresh.

He's usually on time. However, today he's running late.

She failed the test. As a result, she'll have to retake the class.

Do you think he will like my present? Indeed, he will love it.

She didn't pass the test, in other words, she will need to take it again next semester!

What is your overall opinion of the movie?

[Expressing Opinions, Agreement, and Disagreement]

- These expressions allow you to participate in discussions respectfully and naturally:
 - Stating opinions: I think, In my opinion, As far as I'm concerned
 - Agreeing: I agree, Absolutely, That's right

- Disagreeing: I see your point, but..., I tend to disagree

[Speculating and Hypothesizing]

Modal verbs and conditionals can be used for expressing uncertainty or imagining.

Examples:

- I don't know where they have gone; they might be at the library.
- She could be sleeping by now
- I can't find my car keys, I must have forgotten them at home
- *Maybe he missed the email.*

[Emphasis with Cleft Sentences]

Cleft structures are a grammatical construction that divides a single clause into two parts to emphasize a specific element, to highlight particular information

- **Wh-clefts:** these sentences begin with *what, where, when* or another question word, followed by a clause that introduces the emphasized element: *What I need is a long, hot bath.*
- **It-clefts:** these sentences begin with *it* followed by a form of the verb to be: *It was Sarah who won the race.*

[Final Recap]

- To summarize:
 - Discourse markers help organize ideas.
 - Opinion phrases add nuance.
 - Speculative and emphatic structures add depth.

The more you practice these, the more natural and persuasive your English will sound. Use them confidently in your speaking and writing.