



# The Use of 'Oh' and 'Well' as Discourse Markers in Conversation of Bandung State Polytechnic Students

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## Abstract

Discourse markers could be particles such as 'oh', 'well', 'then', 'you know', and the connectives 'so', 'because', 'and', 'but', and 'or'. This research study was focused on discourse markers as particles: 'oh', and 'well' since the data was taken from spontaneous students' conversation. Based on the theory of Tree and Schrock (1999), discourse markers mostly used in spontaneous conversation are 'well', 'I mean', 'like', and 'oh'. From the students' conversation, only two discourse markers were found, namely: 'oh' and 'well'. This study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods with the descriptive/interpretative approach. The aims of the research are: first, to analyze the use of 'oh' and 'well' in the conversation of students' at Polytechnic State of Bandung; second, to analyze the erroneous use of 'oh' and 'well' as discourse markers in students' conversation. The findings revealed that 'well' was mostly used as a face-threat mitigator, while the use of 'well' as a qualifier, indicating some problems on the preceding utterance, was not found. Meanwhile, the use of 'oh' was mostly used as pure surprise. The other uses of 'oh' as assertion, emphasis, and reaction were not found. From this study, it can be found that the use of discourse marker 'oh' was more frequent than 'well' since 'oh' is also more commonly used in Indonesian conversations than 'well.' Another finding is, although students are more familiar with the use of 'oh' in their conversations, they made more errors in using it than 'well', because they do not know the correct use of it.

**Key words:** discourse marker, discourse analysis

## Introduction

When participants in conversation want to express their ideas, sometimes they do not know how to respond to questions directly, especially if the speaker has doubts or is confused what to say. To fill the empty 'space' before a speaker decides what to utter, he/she uses some particles occasionally such as 'oh', 'well', 'um' and many other things. Discourse particles, or later called discourse marker by Schourup (1982), could be used to 'stabilize' conversation with different meanings so that there is no vacuum 'period' during the conversation, and it helps the flow of conversation run smoothly. The use of discourse markers could make conversation more interesting, more understandable, and even more polite, and more powerful, though it won't change its grammatical structure. Fraser (1988) states "The absence of the discourse marker does not render a sentence ungrammatical and/or unintelligible. It does, however, remove a powerful clue about what commitment the speaker makes regarding the relationship between the current utterance and the prior discourse" (p.



22). From this statement, we can see that discourse markers can make conversation easier, and more interesting to be discussed.

Another theory of 'oh' comes from Tree & Schrock (1999) who say that the presence of a discourse marker creates a naturalistic conversational effect. From those theories above, it can be seen that the presence of a discourse marker can make conversation or utterance livelier and more interesting. For that reason, the researchers analyzed students' conversations and found that some students made mistakes in using them. Tree & Schrock (1999:280) state that 'One of the ways spontaneous talk differs from planned talk is the presence of discourse markers such as 'well', 'I mean', 'like', and 'oh'. Discourse markers are rarely found in prepared or rehearsed speeches, but are rarely absent in conversation'. From the statement above, we can see that in spontaneous conversation, we can find more discourse markers to be used for filling the empty 'space', whereas in prepared conversation, discourse markers are rarely found as the interlocutors have known well what to say, so there is no empty 'space'.

## Literature Review

Lots of research studies on discourse markers have been observed and one of them was investigated by Heritage (1998). His research describes the particle 'oh' from the point of view of the answerer. He finds out that 'oh' in response to an inquiry can do three things: First, it is used to show that the inquiry being responded to is problematic as to its relevance, presuppositions, or context; second, he says that 'oh'-prefacing is used to foreshadow reluctance to advance the conversational topic invoked by a question; and third, 'oh' could be part of a "trouble -premonitory" response to various types of *how are you* inquiries in conversational openings and elsewhere. From his research, it could be pointed out that 'oh'-prefaced responses markedly show that the question to which they respond has caused a shift in the respondent's attention. In addition, the use of 'oh' prefacing can be a general means of intensifying or emphasizing responses to questions.

Another research study on discourse markers was carried out by Tree and Schrock (1999). In their research, they argue that recognition of words is faster after 'oh' than when the 'oh' is either excised or replaced by a pause or excised entirely. They also report that semantic verification of words heard earlier in the discourse is faster after 'oh' than when the 'oh' is either excised and replaced by a pause or excised entirely, but only when the test point is downstream from the 'oh'. From their research, it can be deduced that 'oh' is not only a potential signal to addressees, as has been suggested by corpora analyses, but that it is in fact used by addressees to help them integrate information in spontaneous talk.

## Discourse Markers

The first theory used by the researchers is discourse markers. A discourse marker in linguistics is a word or phrase that is relatively syntax-independent and does not change the sentence meaning, and somehow does have empty meaning. Discourse markers as phenomena in linguistics have been analyzed and discussed broadly by some linguists (Levinson 1983; Schriffin 1987; Aijmer 2002; Lenk 1998, etc). Discourse markers play a significant interactive role in discourse as they show a relationship between the interlocutors. Furthermore, Hulker (1991, pp. 78-79) draws attention that there are four basic features that characterize discourse markers: (1) they do not affect the truth conditions of an utterance; (2) they do not add anything to the propositional content of an utterance; (3) they are related to the speech function rather than a referential, denotative, or cognitive function. From the four



basic of discourse markers above, it can be concluded that the use of discourse markers enable discourse to be explored widely, since the use of them has different functions.

### *'Oh' as discourse marker*

In this study, the researchers used the theory of discourse markers proposed by K. Aijmer (2002) because she could be considered as the one who has done the most extensive study of 'oh' in the London-Lund Corpus of speech and identified a large number of ways for the use of 'ohs.' She explains several uses of 'oh' from many linguists, such as Stenström (1984), who points out 'oh' and lexical collocation; and Wilkin (1995), who connects 'oh' as interjection with indexicality. Aijmer (2002) describes the various core meaning of 'oh' and one of them is the core meanings of 'oh' as discourse functions. The use of 'oh' as discourse functions performs a special interactive task, which explains that it is used in some contexts, for example, after informative statements and questions-answer exchanges. Furthermore, Aijmer (2002) states 'oh' is often used in the context where the core meaning is 'surprise' in many ways, and among others are:

#### **a. Pure surprise**

The function of 'oh' in pure surprise shows surprise mixed with sympathy. The following dialogue shows the use of pure surprise:

A> + (-laughs) + yes God  
B> *Oh it's the guests who say ah well can we help you with the washing-up now and we say \*my God no\**  
C> *\*^f\Oh\ these\*\* t\errible\* people#\*\**  
D> *\*\*^ we^we don't \*\* :r\eally' have# +^ those.*  
C> *+^=[=m]#*  
(Aijmer, 2002, p. 112)

From the dialogue above, speaker B said that she doesn't like guests who want to help with the washing-up, followed by C's sympathetic 'oh these terrible people.'

Another example of 'oh' as pure surprise happens if the speaker reacts by surprise to something extralinguistic, and the example is as below:

A> I don't think I've ^\oh#  
There ^\is milk#  
(Aijmer, 2002, p. 112)

The example above shows that speaker A has just realized that there is milk for the coffee.



### b. Arriving at a realization

The use of 'oh' as arriving at a realization happens if 'oh' is produced even before the speaker has finished talking. We can see from the example below:

A> *And he was there [?] and he was with-.he was working for the chap who wrote-Martin-Luther's Crusade for\*the people\**  
 B> \*^oh#;\*;  
 ^Edward S\omerset#.  
 A> *That's right*

(Aijmer, 2002, p. 114)

From the dialogue above, it can be seen that things suddenly fall into place when speaker B realizes who speaker A has in mind.

Meanwhile, (Schegloff, 1979) states that another use of 'oh' including in *Arriving at a realization* is 'oh' that functions as a success marker. It is used very often on the telephone when the answerer recognizes the caller. It can be seen from a dialogue below:  
 (Situation: C= the answerer; B= the caller)

C>^hell/o#  
 B>hel^lo]\o#  
 it's ^Bridget L\adbroke#  
 C>^oh hell/o#  
 B> [əm]. ^ look my d/ear#  
 ^it's!\awful' of me#  
 but ^do you\_mind t\erribly#  
 if I^pass\ up the 'meeting on\_Wednesday\_aftern/oon#

(Schegloff, 1979, p. 38)

The dialogue above shows us that C as the answerer knows B as the caller, therefore he uses 'oh' as a success marker to show his familiarity with her or the caller.

### c. Oh in clarification sequences

Oh performs important tasks in clarification sequences as has been mentioned by Schiffrin (1987). It happens when the request for clarification or correction comes from the hearer. If it takes place, it is customary for the speaker to signal the change of state from 'misinformed' into informed by using 'oh'. The application of 'oh' in clarification sequences can be seen below:

A> ^ did you 'also' scotch that : other st\ory#  
 which is^ something 'like-^was he ^wasn't he  
 refused the: ch\air in/Oxford#  
 a> who  
 A> ^SK/eat#  
 ^ wasn't he re\*'fused\*  
 a> \*that's Meak\*  
 A> oh M\eak#  
 ^y\es#  
 and ^he said!d\amn you 'sir#



*^d\amn 'you#  
a> \*yes this is this is\* Meak to Seddon and this\*\* is true\*\*  
A> \*\*"^oh#\*\*  
^ that "is !tr\ue 'is it#  
^y\es#*

(Aijmer, 115:1996)

The other core meanings of 'oh' as 'surprise' are: 'oh' in clarification sequences, and it happens if the request or correction comes from the hearer. Another core meaning is 'assertion and emphasis that expresses a surprised reaction at something big, or something positive. The next core meaning of 'oh' as a 'surprise' is reaction or objection (oh but, oh because).

Another function of 'oh' is, it may function as a 'topicalizer' or 'newsmark' to promote topic development 'oh are you?' 'Oh' can be used as backchannel device to register reception and recognition as a sign of assessment such as: 'oh that's good', or 'oh' can be used as a signal of endorsement as: 'oh yes', and 'oh no'. Those core meanings of 'oh' above will not be described by the researchers because they are not found in the data.

In addition, Aijmer (2002) states that 'oh' has a variety of politeness functions in inviting, thanking, apologizing, and expressing appreciation.

For example:

A: 'Will you give me a favour?'  
B: '**Oh**, I am sorry. I have something to do'.

(Trihartanti, 2013)

From the conversation above, we can see the use of 'oh' has similar function as mitigator to avoid face threatening act (FTA), though B, has used negative politeness, *I am sorry* that has the same meaning that is, to avoid FTA. We can compare with the conversation below in which there is no 'oh.'

A: Will you give me a favour?  
B: I am sorry. I have something to do.

(Trihartanti, 2013)

For the second conversation, we can see the hearer tries to avoid FTA by using negative politeness strategy, apologizing, but the first conversation is considered to be more polite than the second one. The first conversation is considered to be more polite because it uses the discourse marker 'oh' that has function to mitigate the utterance, so that it minimizes or avoids the FTA.

### 'Well' as discourse marker

The next theory of a discourse marker used in this research is from Jucker (1997). He states that the use of 'well' as a discourse marker can be applied in four English periods, namely: in Old English, in Middle English, in Early Modern English, and in Modern English. In this research, the use of 'well' will be taken from the use in Modern English as the data is also Modern English. Jucker (1977) defines that in modern English the discourse marker 'well' has four distinct uses. The first is 'well' as a frame marker; it introduces a new topic or prefaces direct reported speech. For example:



A: I think it is not a big problem because our financial report will be shown by the simple graphs. Are you going to present it?

B: It's ok. 'Well' did you study marketing also during your training?

(Trihartanti. 2013)

The conversation above shows us, 'well' marks the starting of a new topic in a conversation. The hearer (B) recognizes the explanation of the speaker (A) by responding 'it's ok' and then the hearer introduces a new topic in a question form.

A: Did he ask you to train him how to play polo?

B: Yes, and he said 'well' tell me more about polo?

(Trihartanti. 2013)

The response from the hearer uses 'well' to introduce direct speech. Jucker (1997) admits that 'it' separates the reported speech from the immediately preceding reporting clause 'he said.' The switch from the reporting clause to the reported speech entails a deictic reorientation.'

The second use of 'well' in Modern English is as a face-threat mitigator (Jucker's term). This use shows some problems between interlocutors. Both the face of the speaker and the face of the hearer are threatened. According to Owen (1981) 'well' signals and mitigates some sort of confrontation. For instance, an assessment followed by disagreement rather than agreement; a request which is refused rather than granted; or an offer which is rejected rather than accepted. In those situations, no matter what the speaker and the hearer utters, it will threaten participants of conversation, and both of them might do FTA. These situations, therefore, are called face-threats, while Brown & Levinson (1987) call those situations as face-threatening acts or FTAs. The conversation below is the example of a face-threat mitigator:

A: I think you need a doctor to make your legs walk better.

B: Well, I can handle my legs because I know them well.

(Trihartanti, 2013)

From the conversation above, we can see that actually it is very difficult for A to suggest a therapist to B, because A is afraid that B will be offended. On the other hand, B thinks that A's utterance makes him upset because actually, he has had many consultations with different doctors to cure his legs, and none of the doctors has succeeded in curing his legs. To avoid a face threatening act (FTA), B uses the discourse marker 'well' to mitigate the effect of his utterance.

The third use of 'well' in Modern English is 'well' as a qualifier. It shows some problems on the content level of the current or the previous utterance. The use of 'well' as a qualifier has been much discussed in literature. Lakoff (1972, 458-463) who deals with the discourse marker 'well' in the context of questions and answers, notes 'that it is used in cases in which respondents know that they are not providing directly the information the questioner asked for, or in other words in cases in which they sense 'some sort of insufficiency' in their replies. The replies are not sufficient because speakers leave it up to the questioners to add in some of the details, or because the respondents are going to give some additional information themselves. For example:



A: What do you think about the way to get out from this isolated place?

B: **Well**, there does seem to be difficult to get out from here, we are really tired.

(Trihartanti, 2013)

The conversation above shows us that speaker (A) asks a question that is difficult to answer. Hearer (B) therefore, prefacing his reply with 'well.' This sort of 'well' functions on an interpersonal level that shows a problem between the speaker and the hearer.

The fourth use of 'well' in Modern English is 'well' as a pause filler to bridge interactional silence. In this use, it marks a speaker's claim to the floor. The example can be seen from the reply of speaker below:

A: What do you think about the way to get out from this isolated place?

B: **Well**, there does seem to be difficult to get out from here, we are really tired.

A: '**Well**' there you are'

'Yes' ...

'Quite' ...

(Trihartanti, 2013)

Each answer of 'A' stands for a separate tone and it indicates the speaker's hesitation. 'A' tries hard to find something to say or 'A' thinks about the correct words to answer it, but 'A' wants to keep the floor and 'A' does so to fill the silence between them.

## Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) are famous for their theory of politeness. They regard politeness as a compensation action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effort of face-threatening acts (FTAs). In other words, politeness is the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts (FTAs) toward another. Furthermore, they divided politeness into two types, namely: positive politeness and negative politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of the hearer, the positive self-image that he claims for himself. Thus, positive politeness is concerned with demonstrating closeness and affiliation such as a compliment. On the other hand, negative politeness is concerned with distance and formality, for example: hedges and deference. Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) state that politeness consists of three notions, namely: face, face threatening acts (FTAs), and politeness strategies.

The first basic notion of politeness is face, and it is known that politeness consists of efforts to save face for another. In accordance with Brown and Levinson (1987), face is the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself. The term 'face' could be translated as a public self-image. The concept of face derives from earlier work by Goffman (1967), and from the English folk term used for example in the idea of 'losing face'. Hence, face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. Then, Brown and Levinson (1987) classified 'face' into two kinds. First, negative face is the want to have freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Second, positive face is the want to be approved of or to be appreciated.

The next basic notion of politeness is the face threatening act (FTAs). Face threatening acts are acts that infringe on the hearers' need to maintain his/her self-esteem, and



be respected. If we do or are about to threaten someone's positive or negative face, but we don't mean it, we need to minimize it by applying politeness strategies. Then, politeness strategies are the last basic notion of politeness. They try to repair or compensate in some ways for threats to positive and negative public self-image when performing a specific act, or it can be said that politeness strategies are strategies used to minimize or to avoid the threat on the interlocutor's face. For the two reasons above, politeness strategies are developed to save the hearer's face. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987) divided politeness strategies into two strategies: positive and negative strategies. Positive politeness strategies are addressed to the hearer's positive wants, such as expression of solidarity, informality, and familiarity. Meanwhile, negative politeness strategies are aimed at minimizing the imposition on the hearer, and it can be described as an expression of restraint, formality and distancing.

Positive politeness strategies consist of 15 strategies, among others, are give hints, give association clues, presuppose, understate, overstate, and many more. Negative politeness strategies consist of 10 strategies such as hedges, apologies, minimizing the imposition, being pessimistic, giving deference. It was Lakoff, who introduced the term 'hedges' in 1972, referring to words that "make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (1972:195). Then Brown and Levinson (1987) described hedges as one of the negative politeness strategies, and they divided hedges into four kinds: quality, quantity, manner and relevance hedges.

### Quantity hedges

There are many English expressions used in quantity hedges. One of the uses of quantity hedges is to express a piece of information given by the speaker that is not precisely the same, or the information provided is not the same as it might be expected to be by the hearer. Another use of quantity hedges is to express clear politeness functions, as we can see from this short conversation:

A: How far is it?  
 B: **Well**, it's too far to walk.

(Lakoff ,1972: 167)

The conversation above shows us 'well' as a mitigator in order to create the mitigation of the utterance. Jucker (1997) states that the discourse marker 'well' can function as a face threat mitigator, but in the conversation above, the function of 'well' is as a mitigator to lessen the imposition of the utterance. Without using 'well', the conversation above will change its politeness level as we can see below:

A: How far is it?  
 B: It's too far to walk.

From the conversation above, we can see that the imposition of the utterance in the second conversation is stronger than the first conversation.



## Relevance hedges

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), relevance hedges are used to mitigate the imposition of utterance; for example, when a speaker wants to change the topic since it is very sensitive and can impose on the hearer's face. Hedges which mark the change and perhaps partially apologize for it are:

*Sorry ...*

*Oh...*

*By the way...*

*Oh I know...*

From those expressions, it can be seen that the discourse marker 'oh' can be used as a mitigator to reduce the imposition on the hearer's face.

## Research Method

In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods were used by the researchers to analyze the data. The study was carried out by analyzing the conversation of students of Bandung Polytechnic. The topics of conversation were 'asking for and giving opinions' and 'making arrangements' and it was the lecturer who decided on the topics. There were 62 conversations spoken spontaneously by 62 students from the Banking and Finance Study Program. All the students worked in pairs, and each pair had 2 conversations of about 5 to 10 minutes for each conversation. Each student had two roles, both as a speaker and a hearer, in order to get more uses of discourse markers. That strategy was carried out because students had different characters in acting either as a speaker or hearer, and from their differences, it was expected to have the more variant uses of discourse markers throughout the conversations spoken spontaneously. After student conversations were recorded, discourse markers were analyzed. It was found that students only used two discourse markers: 'oh', and 'well'.

The researchers accomplished this task, firstly by utilizing quantitative methods to identify the basic and generalizable function of 'oh' and 'well', which we discerned via an analysis of the discourse contexts in which the variable occurs. Secondly, from qualitative analysis, we exposed the nature of the conducting in the case of each individual 'oh' and 'well'.

## Findings and Discussions

After having analyzed the data from students' conversation, the findings found can be seen in the table below:

No	Conversation		Meaning
1.	Fitri:  Seruni:  Fitri:	Alright. I don't mind. I can postpone doing my homework till evening. What kind of film is it? It's an adventure story. The paper says it's awfully thrilling. It's called abduction. <b>Oh.</b> I like adventure film. Let's go and see it.	<i>Pure surprise</i> <b>oh</b> has the function of signaling that this is new and unexpected information and terminates the small The exchange. ( <b>oh</b> as a follow-up signal)



No	Conversation		Meaning
2.	Yolanda: Widya: Yolanda:	6026524, Yolanda's speaking. I'm Widya. <b>Oh</b> , Widya. What's going on?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
3.	Widya: Yolanda: Widya:	Really? That sounds great! Congratulation, Widya! Thank you. Are free at 01.00 p.m. now? <b>Oh well</b> . Actually, I must meet with my client this afternoon. Hmm, how about tomorrow? I'm free at 12.00 p.m.	Mitigator
4.	Anggi: Raina: Anggi:	Hello, this is Anggi's speaking. Hi, Anngi. It's me Raina. <b>Oh</b> . Hai Raina! What's up?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
5.	Anggi Raina: Anggi:	7 p.m. will be great. We can have a little bit chit chat before that. Absolutely. Hey, I have to go right now. Give my warm to your parents. Oke. <b>Oh</b> by the way, Raina. Thanks a bunch for your sweet invitation	Hedges (changing the topic)
6.	Lina: Ida: Lina:	Why? My boyfriend has an accident yesterday so I must take care of him in the hospital. <b>Oh</b> I'm sad to hear that. What happen with him?	<i>Mitigator</i>
7.	Hapsari: Anggi: Hapsari: Anggi:	Yes. Hello. Can I speak to Anggi Fitrian, please? Speaking <b>Oh</b> . Hello, Miss Anggi. My name's Hapsari. I work for Arena Records. <b>Oh yes</b> , Arena. Is it about last week's article?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller) <i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh yes</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
8.	Anggi: Hapsari: Anggi:	Thank you. I am glad you all approved. Well, I'm currently designing a website for Arena, and I have 1 or 2 questions. <b>Oh yes</b>	<i>Expressing agreement</i> ( <b>Oh</b> as a response of statement)



No	Conversation		Meaning
9.	Andriansyah: Ryan:  Andriansyah:	Can I help you Mr. Ryan? Yes, of course. I want to talk to your boss Mr. Bigger <b>Oh I 'm sorry</b> Mr. Bigger have lunch, in 15 minutes. He'll back again. You can call back again	Mitigator
10.	Rizki: Iqbal: Rizki:	Hallo Hallo, good morning Sir <b>Oh</b> , good morning. Who's talking?	Error in use It seems that the use "oh" in this dialogue is arriving at realization but it actually doesn't have any meaning here.
11.	Rizki:  Iqbal: Rizki:  Iqbal:	Hmm Iqbal. What can I do for you Iqbal? Is Bongky home, Sir? <b>Oh I'm sorry</b> Iqbal. He's already gone about twenty minutes ago. Do you want to leave a message for him? <b>Oh yes</b> , Sir. Please tell him, don't forget to bring the shoes and the gloves for tonight, Sir. We will be playing football.	(1) <i>mitigator</i> (2) <i>Signaling confirmation</i> the speaker may be to ask for confirmation and the hearer signals confirmation ( <b>Oh</b> as a response of yes/no question)
12.	Siti: Happy: Siti:	Hello, Siti speaking. Who is there? Hello, Siti. It's me Happy. <b>Oh</b> , Happy. What's up?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
13.	Happy:  Siti:	... Maybe I will call you back later if he has been able to be contacted. <b>Oh great</b> . My name Siti Nurfarijah and my number is 085793018696	Error in use. "Oh great" is usually used to accept something for example invitation but here the word "oh great" shows that the caller shows her gratitude by saying "oh great" that someone will call her later on.
14.	Rizki: Hapsari Rizki:	Speaking. Who's calling? Hapsari. <b>Oh yeah</b> . What's going on?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
15.	Hapsari:  Rizki:	Are you free on Saturday at 7 p.m.? I'm afraid I've got something else at 7 p.m.?	Error in use. In this conversation, speaker A asked speaker B for going somewhere on Saturday, But speaker B declined the



No	Conversation		Meaning
	Hapsari: <b>Oh how pity I am.</b> So how, minda?		invitation. To show her disappointment, speaker A said “Oh how pity I am”. It should be “It’s too bad”.
16.	Taufik: Andri: Taufik:	Hello. This is Taufik speaking. Who is it? Hi, Taufik. It’s me Andriansyah. <b>Oh.</b> Hi, Andriansyah. What happen?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
17.	Taufik: Andri: Taufik:	Sure. See you on Friday. Ok. I’m sorry about today. <b>Oooh</b> , forget it. That’s wasn’t your fault.	<i>Mitigator</i>
18.	Budhi: Rezky: Budhi:	(Phone ringing) ... 6014588. Budhi’s here. Who’s calling? I’m Rezky, Rezky Riaddy. <b>Oh</b> , Rezky. How are you? What’s going on?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
19.	Rezky: Budhi:	I’m fine Budhi. I need your help for my business. <b>Oh yes.</b> What’s your problem Rezky?	<i>Signaling confirmation</i> the speaker may be to ask for confirmation and the hearer signals confirmation ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up signal)
20.	Rezky: Budhi:	I have a plan to open new restaurant, and I need you to join with me? <b>Oh it’s great.</b>	<i>Signaling a strong marker of interest.</i> ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up signal)
21.	Budhi: Rezky: Budhi:	Merdeka Street number 37 okay. What? Can you repeat? <b>Oh yes</b> ... Merdeka street ... number ... 37...	Error in use. “Oh yes” is used to show agreement or confirmation. In this conversation the speaker asked the other speaker to repeat the address. But he/she started the conversation by saying “oh yes”. The existence of “oh yes” can be influenced by the L1.
22.	Rezky: Budhi: Rezky:	Ok. Budhi tomorrow I come to your company. Ok. But I need your phone number Rezky. What’s your number? <b>Oh yes.</b> 10134556	Error in use. Error in use. “Oh yes” is used to show agreement or confirmation. In this conversation the speaker asked the other speaker to repeat the number. But



No	Conversation		Meaning
			he/she started the conversation by saying “oh yes”. The existence of “oh yes” can be influenced by the L1.
23.	Ida: Lina: Ida:	Yes, sure. Can I help you? Yes, I want to talk with your boss. <b>Oh I'm sorry.</b> My boss is going to Sydney now. He will be back tomorrow.	<i>Mitigator</i>
24.	Iqbal: Rezky: Iqbal:	120345 Ibay here. Who's calling? Hi Ibay. I'm Rezky. Rezky Riaddy. <b>Oh</b> , Rezky. What's up bray?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> ( <b>oh</b> as a success marker at the moment when the answerer recognizes the caller)
25.	Iqbal: Rezky: Iqbal:	Hmmm, a night club. Not bad. Where's the place? The club is behind Caffe Tonggos. <b>Oh yeah I know.</b> When?	<i>Signaling acceptance</i> ( <b>Oh</b> category is acceptance signals with the function of claiming understanding of the propositional content of the preceding utterance) ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up response)
26.	Ninis: Fuzi: Ninis:	Yes, why? How about watching a movie? <b>Oh. That sounds great.</b> What movie we will watch?	<i>Signaling a strong marker of interest</i> ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up response)
27.	Ninis: Fuzi: Ninis:	I will go with my boyfriend too. That's good, so we will have a double date. <b>Oh yes.</b> Where would suit you?	<i>Claiming something more than simply attention and interest</i>
28.	Listriani: Nurwinda: Listriani:	Yes, of course. By the way. What's up? <b>Oh yes</b> , Nurwinda. I, Nova and other will go to the movie in Regent on Friday night. We'll watch Cars 2. Do you fancy going to the movie with us?	Error in use. “oh yes” showed speaker’s doubt whether she wanted to join or not. That why she used the word “oh yes” but it’s not appropriate in this dialogue.
29.	Lina: Ida: Lina:	Hai. Ida Hai. Long time no see. Where have you been? I was send you text yesterday. Why don't you reply it? <b>Oh I'm sorry</b> Ida. I'm busy. I	<i>Mitigator</i>



No	Conversation		Meaning
	must to finish my assignments, my tasks. <b>Oh...</b> It's make me haven't much time for go with friends.		
30.	Ida:  Lina:  Ida:	How about watching "The Smurf" film?  I'd love to but I was watch that film.  <b>Oh...</b> Is there any other movies are more exciting?	<i>Pure surprise</i> <b>(Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). <b>(Oh</b> is in reaction question) <b>(Oh</b> as a follow-up response)
31.	Victa:  Server:  Victa:	I think I'll order a glass of mineral water, please.  ... And for the drink you have a glass of <i>Dom Perignon</i> and a glass of mineral water. Do you need anything else?  <b>Oh yes.</b> I want garlic bread, please.	<i>Signaling confirmation</i> the speaker may be to ask for confirmation and the hearer signals confirmation <b>(Oh</b> as a response of yes/no question)
32.	Dwiyanti:  Dwi Yan:  Dwiyanti:	Yes, I believe that only 10 % weight reduction helped obese patients ....  ... Negative impact on the health of the body are common due to this diet dehydration, weight loss occurs drastically, and disturbances in sleep patterns.  <b>Oh.</b> Are you sure? Yes, may be the diet has negative and positive impact.	<i>Pure surprise</i> <b>(Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). <b>(Oh</b> is in reaction question)
33.	Minda:  Hana:  Minda:	You mean behave like royal highness?  Okay. That's it. I run out of time. And how's your assignment?  <b>Oh.</b> I forgot about that. Would you mind to help me out, please?	<i>Arriving at a realization</i> <b>(Oh</b> as a response of wh-question)
34.	Rezky:  Ida:  Rizky:	Ok. I'll try it. Hmm... I think you often come here, don't you?  Yes. I often come here, because the dishes are delicious.  <b>Oh I see.</b>	<i>Signaling acceptance</i> <b>(Oh</b> has a function of claiming understanding of the propositional content of the preceding utterance). <b>(Oh</b> as a follow-up response)



No	Conversation		Meaning
35.	Raina:  Server: Marlina:  ... For entrees we would like carribean salmon and vegetable lasagna and for dessert we would like apple dream and mango dessert. Okay, anything else? <b>Oh yeah...</b> 1 lemon tea for me please.		<i>Signaling confirmation</i> the speaker may be to ask for confirmation and the hearer signals confirmation ( <b>Oh</b> as a response of yes/no question)
36.	Ninis: Anggi:  Anggi! Right here! <b>Oh.</b> Hi Ninis. I'm terribly sorry I'm late.		Error in use. “Oh” must be omitted. The use of it was wrong.
37.	Intan:  Dita:  Hi, Dita. I'd like to discussion to you and want to know your view. <b>Oh</b> , what topic?		<i>Pure surprise</i> ( <b>Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). ( <b>Oh</b> is in reaction question)
38.	Susy:  Happy:  Susy:  Exactly, for example Gayus. He can go holiday when he is in jail. It's so tragic for law of Indonesia. Yes. I think so. By the way, have you order some drink? I think. I'm getting thirsty. <b>Oh yes.</b> Let's have some drinks.		Error in use. The word “oh yes” should be admitted. And it had L1 influence.
39.	Server:  Iqbal:  Good evening, Sir. Here is our menu in this restaurant. <b>Oh yes.</b> Thank you. What's special menu for today?		<i>Signaling confirmation</i> the speaker may be to ask for confirmation and the hearer signals confirmation
40.	Iqbal:  Server: Iqbal:  And then a glass of “Broken Melon” Sure. How about the dessert, Sir? <b>Oh yes.</b> I think Strawberry pancake is good.		<i>Signaling confirmation</i> The speaker may be to ask for confirmation and the hearer signals confirmation. ( <b>Oh</b> as a response of wh-question)
41.	Iqbal:  Server:  Iqbal:  No. I think that's enough So that's some cheese Balls, one meat lover, a glass of broken melon and strawberry pancake, Sir? Yes, that's right. <b>Oh ya.</b> Can you put one scoop of ice cream on the pancake?		Error in use. “Oh ya” is used to show his forgetfulness about ice cream that he should say it before.



No	Conversation		Meaning
42.	Restu:  Marcell:  Restu:	Wow.. you're diligent read a newspaper in the morning. Do you have hot news in newspaper? Yes, I do. Hmm.. Now, hot news is about protecting environment from pollution. <b>Oh...</b> What happen with protecting environment from pollution?	<i>Pure surprise</i> ( <b>Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). ( <b>Oh</b> is in reaction question) ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up response)
43.	Ryan:  Teguh:  Ryan:	Yes. I agree with you. If all supporters can do that, the better football in this country can be achieved. Yes. That's our task and government's task. <b>Oh..</b> my mom is calling. I have to go now. Good bye.	<i>Mitigator</i>
44.	Gustian:  Andri: Gustian:	Hey, Andrian. What happen to you? I have a problem with my eyes. <b>Oh...</b> What have you done so it can be like that?	<i>Pure surprise</i> ( <b>Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). ( <b>Oh</b> is in reaction question) ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up response)
45.	Andri:  Gustian:	I don't know. Hmm maybe because I have played computer too long. Do you have ideas? <b>Oh...</b> in my opinion. You should not play computer too long. It's bad for you health especially for you eyes	<i>Pure surprise</i> ( <b>Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). ( <b>Oh</b> expresses surprise mixed with the answer's belief).
46.	Gustian: Andri: Gustian:	Is it including you? Absolutely no!! I'm very diligent! Hahaha, just kidding. <b>Oh</b> by the way I have to go now. I have important meeting. See you later.	<i>Mitigator + hedging</i>
47.	Fuji: Widya:  Fuji:	Who is he? Are you sure you don't know him? He is a person who mutilated 9 people after he killed them. <b>Oh my God!</b> He is very dangerous man.	<i>Pure surprise</i> ( <b>Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). ( <b>Oh</b> marks more listener involvement). ( <b>Oh</b> as a follow-up response)



No	Conversation		Meaning
48.	Ismail: Saeful:	<b>Oh no</b> , the smoke is very annoying. I hate it! I think smoking in public places is not good. What do you think?	Error in use. The speaker was very upset about the smoke in a canteen. Instead of saying “the smoke is very annoying and I hate it”, he started the conversation with “oh no”. “Oh no” is used to show a surprise not to show someone’s dislike.
49.	Rika: Nurul: Rika:	Hello Nurul... Please come in. Rika, I am sorry if I brother you. I go to your house because I want to discuss and ask my tasks. <b>Oh please</b> Nurul as long as I can, I will definitely help you. So what is the task?	Error in use. In this conversation, there was L1 influence. Speaker B wanted to come speaker A’s house to ask about the tasks. And the speaker didn’t care about it by saying “oh, please”.
50.	Nurul: Rika:	An essay about discipline. Do you have any ideas? <b>Oh I think</b> .... How about the traffic discipline in our country?	<i>Signaling a mitigator</i> ( <b>Oh I think</b> is a typical mitigator. In the answer to a question it comes to implicate that the answer is of little importance). ( <b>Oh</b> as a response of yes/no question)
51.	Visitor: Waiter: Visitor:	I’d like to see your desserts menu, please! Of course. These are sweet and fruit pudding, apple dream and pie for our popular dessert menu, but unfortunately we aren’t serving pie today, because our baker will be out at least 3 days. <b>Oh unfortunately</b> . I like pie very much, not it’s no problem. I’ll take fruit pudding for my desert.	<i>Pure surprise</i> ( <b>Oh</b> expresses a reaction to something heard which is unexpected). ( <b>Oh</b> expresses surprise mixed with the answer’s concern).
52.	Nurwinda: Listriarini: Nurwinda:	Ok. Thank you. Let’s see. Nurwinda, do you like colonel beef? <b>Oh no</b> . I don’t like beef. I prefer chicken.	Error in use. In this dialogue the speaker wanted to show her dislike to colonel beef. She used the word “oh no” to show it. The word “oh no” is used to show “surprise”.



From the table above, it can be concluded the use of ‘oh’ is as follows:

Types of marker	Functions of marker	Number of markers
Oh Oh my God Oh in my opinion	Pure surprise	11
Oh Oh yes Oh yeah	Arriving at a realization	10
Oh Oh well Oh by the way Oh I’m sad to hear that Oh I’m sorry Prolonged “oh” Oh I think	Mitigator	9
Oh yes	Expressing agreement	1
Oh yes Oh yeah	Signaling confirmation	6
Oh it’s great Oh that’s sounds great	Signaling a strong marker of interest	2
Oh yeah I know Oh I see	Signaling acceptance	2
Oh yes	Claiming something more than simply attention interest	1
Oh	Error in use	13
Total Number		55

There were 13 errors in the use of ‘oh’ in students’ conversation and their analysis can be seen in the tables above; two examples are:

A: *Merdeka Street number 37, okay?*

B: *What? Can you repeat?*

A: **Oh yes...** Merdeka... number .... 37.

One of the uses of ‘oh’ is to clarify something which had been mentioned previously, but in the conversation above, ‘B’ just wants to make sure that the address given by ‘A’ is correct without repeating it. Another example of “oh” used not in the correct way can be seen from the conversation below:

A: *Anggi! Right here!*

B: **Oh.** *Hi Ninis. I’m terribly sorry I’m late.*

In the conversation, ‘A’ states her position by saying ‘Anggi! Right here!’ and ‘B’ replies to ‘A’s’ invitation by using the discourse marker ‘oh’ and then she says ‘Hi’ as a greeting. In fact the use of ‘oh’ here is not correct because it would be enough for ‘B’ to say ‘Hi’. From the two conversations above, we can see that the use of discourse marker “oh” do not have any meaning or function.



From the students' conversations, it was found that students used the discourse marker 'oh' as a mitigator for two different new functions. We can see the functions in the following conversations:

A: *Absolutely no! I'm very diligent.*

B: *Ha...ha...ha, just kidding. Oh, by the way I have to go now. I have important meeting, see you later.*

A: *Ok, see you.*

A: *I don't know what to do. I am confused with this situation.*

B: *You may discuss it with your parents.*

A: *I don't know...*

B: *Oh, my mom is calling. I have to go now.*

The conversation above used the discourse marker 'oh' as a mitigator to change the topic because the speakers want to end the conversations. In the first conversation, the speaker uses the quantity hedge 'by the way', and in the second conversation, the students add 'oh' as a discourse marker to lessen the imposition of the conversation because 'B' as a speaker wants to end it, but 'B' does not want to impose on the hearer's face.

Another function of 'oh' used by the students is to change the topic without wanting to end the conversation:

A: *Absolutely. Hey, I have to go right now. Give my warm hugs to your parents.*

B: **Ok. Oh by the way, Raina.** *Thanks a bunch for your sweet invitation.*

A: *You're welcome. I know that you have liked this show since we were at the same high School.*

The above conversation shows us that 'A' wants to finish the conversation, but B remembers something to be told. Therefore, 'B' used 'oh by the way' to change the topic so that B's utterance does not impose on the hearer's face.

Another finding in this study is, the speaker used 'oh' although he/she was disappointed. We can see from the conversations below:

A: *I want to ask you joining me*

B: *I am sorry, I can't. I have to do something else.*

A: **Oooh, forget it. That wasn't your fault.**

A: *I am sorry, Ira. Tomorrow I have an appointment with my client. How about another day?*

B: **Oh...no problem. When it suits you?**

From the above conversations, we could see that 'oh' can be used to hide speakers' disappointment, in order not to impose the hearers' face.

The next table shows the use of 'well' in the students' conversation

1	Anggi Raina  Anggi	Oh, Hi Raina? What's up? <b>Well</b> , I want to ask you. What Are you doing this Friday night? This Friday night? Uuummm... nothing, I guess. Why?	Well as a pause filler
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2	Anggi Raina	Yes, still and always. So why you ask me to go the Broadway with you? The tickets are sold out, Raina. All of them. <b>Well</b> , guess what? My friend just gave me two tickets for " Breakfast at Tiffany's....	Well as a pause filler
3	Anggi Raina	No way! You're joking, right? <b>Well</b> . I'm not. I'm totally seious, Anggi...	Well as a pause filler
4	Anggi Hapsari Anggi Hapsari Anggi Hapsari Anggi	Thank you. I am glad you all approved (1) <b>Well</b> , I'm currently designing a website for Arena and I have 1 or 2 questions Oh yes (2) <b>Well</b> , first of all, can we quote from the article that you wrote? (3) <b>Well</b> , it's subject to copyright. It's subject to copy right? What does that mean? (4) <b>Well</b> , it's means that you're not not allowed to copy the article without permission	(1) Well as a frame marker (2) Well as a pause filler (3) Well as a qualifier (4) Well as a qualifier
	Hana Minda	What? This one. "None applicants in one of Bali's School". <b>Well</b> , I remember about first time we met when we were signing...	Well as a pause filler
	Hana Minda	Me, too. Hey, look over here. "Parents prefer private school than public school for their children". What do you think about that? <b>Well</b> , I think private school is not enough. Cause the student does not socialize with ordinary people...	Well as a qualifier
	Server Raina	(Raina calls server to order and server comes to the table) <b>Well</b> ... have you decided? Yes, for appetizer we would like garlic crab and yakitori. For entrees we would like...	Well as a pause filler
	Ninis Anggi	I still don't get it for the event <b>Well</b> , bottom line, on the 1 <sup>st</sup> December, we will give free condom to the people...	Well as a face-threatening mitigator
9	Anggi	No, I don't teach them. I just give the protection.	Well as a face-threatening mitigator



	Ninis	<b>Well</b> , you don't directly teach them. On the other hand you're like give the sign to them like "yes, you can have sex with..."	
10	Ninis Anggi	... I bet you'll regret because you already gave the most precious thing in your life. <b>Well</b> , you don't still get a picture, right? Well, in this event I will tell them to be more responsible about what they are gonna do...	Well as a face-threatening mitigator
11	Nurul Rika	Hmmm.... I agree with you. So what do you think of many motorist or motorcycle are often in acts of infringement? <b>Well</b> ... I certain that they are not disciplined in traffic such as not wearing a helmet, do not carry a driver's licence...	Well as a pause filler
12	Visitor Waiter Visitor	What dressing do you have? We have tomato, cheese and spicy. <b>Well</b> , spicy please.	Well as a pause filler
13	Visitor Waiter Visitor	Yeah.. I'll take a medium cola. I'm sorry. We only have large or small. <b>Well</b> , in that case, I'll have a small cola.	Well as a pause filler
14	Andrian Gustian	Tell him that I will meet him at 1 p.m. <b>Well</b> , I'll tell him, sir.	Well as a pause filler
15	Adelia Benjudha	... It's not agreed with my requirement, because it won't useful. Well... If you think the computer your choice is better. What's your opinion on that?	Well as a pause filler
16	Victa Calva	Hmmm...what a shame! It was very interesting, you know? Wow! <b>Well</b> , who was the winner?	Well as a pause filler

From the table above, it can be seen that students used most functions of 'well' as a discourse marker in their conversation. The students used 'well' mostly as a pause filler, and it can be understood because they had a spontaneous conversation so that they used 'well' to fill the pause during the conversation. The students also used 'well' as a face-threat mitigator in the conversation, and most of the students used it when they were talking about the 'Asking for and giving opinion' topic. The reason why the students used 'well' as a face –



threat mitigator could be understood since during the conversation, they wanted to defend their idea or their opinion, and it occurred mostly when the speaker did not agree with the hearer's opinion. Another function of 'well' used by students was as a qualifier. The function of 'well' as a qualifier was used because the students did not supply or provide a sufficient answer or reply as they had difficulty doing that. The last function of 'well' used by the students was a frame marker. This function was used because the hearer introduced the new topic in a question form after he/she had answered in a short reply the question from the speaker. The number of 'well' and its functions can be seen from the table below:

Type of marker	Function of marker	Numbers of markers
Well	Frame marker	1
	a face-threat mitigator	6
	a qualifier	3
	a pause filler	12
Total Number		22

Those findings taken from the data could be used as input to teach students the use of 'oh' and 'well' in more detail to minimize errors in usage made by them. At Polytechnic State of Bandung, teachers of speaking, cross cultural understanding (CCU), and presentation subjects could teach discourse markers more than in other subjects because the three subjects mentioned earlier can give more knowledge on how to communicate both in oral and written language. In particular, the second course, as it introduces how to communicate in multi-cultures as there may be some differences or similarities among cultures in using discourse markers, and surely it will be advantageous not only for students but also for teachers. Teaching students the detailed use of discourse markers can help students understand them better, and they will know how to use any kind of discourse markers better in their daily conversation whether they use them spontaneously or not.

## Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it could be concluded:

1. The discourse marker 'oh' is used by students more frequently than the discourse marker 'well'. There are 55 uses of 'oh', while there were 22 uses of 'well'. 'Oh' is used more frequently than 'well' probably because students are more familiar with 'oh' than 'well'. In addition, it is also often used in Indonesian conversations.
2. 'Oh' is used as a mitigator to end a conversation and change the topic since these two uses are considered to be sensitive, and they can impose on the hearer's face. Therefore 'oh' is used to avoid a FTA (face threatening act).
3. The function of 'oh' used mostly by students is as 'pure surprise'; on the other hand, the function of 'well' is mostly used by students as a face threat mitigator, as one of the conversation topics was about 'asking and giving opinions' which they did spontaneously.
4. Students at Polytechnic should be given information on the use and the function of discourse markers so that they understand them better and they can be explored in some subjects such as: speaking, cross cultural understanding, and presentation.

## Recommendations



1. Discourse markers are interesting points to be researched because they are often present in most conversations; moreover, they make conversation lively. Therefore, discourse markers can be researched on a wider scope by researching more uses of them and using them in more varied students' conversations.
2. The use of discourse markers also could be researched widely by analyzing conversations made not only by commerce students but also by engineering students to find out more different functions and usage, since engineering students and commerce students have different educational backgrounds.
3. English lecturers could teach students in depth the use of discourse markers so that they can apply them in their daily English conversation activities.

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