

A Study on the Usage Patterns and Discourse Functions of the Modern Chinese Discourse Marker "Zenmezhao"

Zhang Yijing^{1,a,*}

¹College of Chinese Language and Literature, Xinjiang University, Shengli Road, Urumqi, China
a. zyj2001@stu.xju.edu.cn

*corresponding author

Abstract: As an important area of pragmatic research in recent years, discourse markers play an important role in chapter coherence and information transmission. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" (怎么着) has rich usage patterns and distinctive discourse functions in different forms and is of great value for research. This paper selects the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" (怎么着), and analyzes a total of 196 Chinese dialogue materials in the CCL corpus that meet the discourse marker standard through corpus analysis and qualitative and quantitative methods. and analyzes its usage patterns and discourse functions in different situations according to its different positions in the turn of talking. It is found that the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" is often accompanied by an emphatic tone and has a guiding effect on the opening of the next turn of talking, but there are still specific differences in different usage patterns, which complements the research on questionable discourse markers and serves the development of chapter teaching.

Keywords: Discourse Marker, "Zenmezhao", Usage Pattern, Discourse Function.

1. Introduction

Discourse markers refers to a linguistic and non-linguistic means (such as body gestures and other behavioral means) used in live impromptu discourse to mark discourse coherence, convey information about discourse interaction, and infer the information chain to understand the world, which helps to reveal the expression and development of subjectivity of the conversational parties in the discourse. From the semantic point of view, the words that act as discourse markers in conversation often evolve from real words, and their basic lexical meaning is gradually deflated and their conceptual meaning is weaker, and their removal has less impact on the overall propositional meaning of the discourse; from the perspective of linear position, discourse markers appear in a more flexible position and are not attached to a basic syntactic component; from the phonological point of view, discourse markers are often accompanied by obvious phonological gaps or pauses [1].

In modern Chinese, with the gradual change of semantic and the gradual independence of phonetics and syntax in conversational contexts, "Zenmezhao" (怎么着) has become a discourse marker. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" has rich discourse functions depending on its location and usage pattern and has greater research value, so this paper selects the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" as the object of study. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" studied in this paper should meet all the characteristics of the above-mentioned discourse marker, such as example (1).

(1) When the boss came to deliver the material, he saw it and teased, "What's the matter, you want to be a number one scholar? It's a pity that there is no artemisia growing on your family's graves!"

In example (1), "what's the matter" is phonetically accompanied by gaps and pauses and formally solidified, and no other components may be inserted between syllables; although the rhetorical tone of "want to be a number one scholar" has been strengthened, it contributes less to the propositional meaning of the sentence, and its removal still does not affect the content of the sentence. In the linear position, the change of its position has no effect on the semantics. Therefore, the "Zenmezhao" in example (1) is consistent with the characteristics of discourse markers and is the target of this paper.

(2) "No, it would be good to see the problem as you do! Guess what, they disagreed and said that public toilets are public, so you should pay for their repair. "

In example (2), the word "Zenmezhao" acts as the object of the predicate verb "guess" in the sentence, and has the real meaning of "what happened, how things are,". As an interrogative pronoun asking about the action or situation that occurs later in the sentence, the semantic meaning is incomplete after it is removed, so it does not conform to the characteristics of discourse marker, and is not in the research scope of this paper.

Schiffrin defined discourse markers as sequential dependency components that function as cut-off discourse units in *Discourse Markers* [2]. Since then, research on discourse markers has been richly developed from a variety of perspectives covering syntax, semantics, and meta-linguistics. According to Lu Shuxiang, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" used at the beginning of a sentence mainly expresses the emotional attitude of surprise and includes "Zenmezhao" in the category of "Zenme", which has become a new category of discourse markers [3]. This was the beginning of the study of "Zenmezhao" markers. Since then, Guo Juan, Liu Ting, Xing Xin, Jin Yunjing, and Guo An have briefly explained the conversational meaning and function of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" [4-6]. Nowadays, the pragmatic function of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in the three different discourse modes of eliciting, responding, and feeding back the turn of talking, as proposed by Xu, has become a consensus in the academic community [7].

However, the current research on the discourse marker, "Zenmezhao", is mostly focused on the definition, and the different pragmatic functions and pragmatic meanings of different usage patterns are less explored. Based on this, this paper will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and corpus analysis to compare and analyze the usage patterns of "Zenmezhao" as a discourse marker and its discourse functions under different usage patterns, to supplement the study of "Zenmezhao" and better serve the teaching of modern Chinese chapters.

2. Analysis of the Usage Patterns of the Discourse Marker "Zenmezhao"

2.1. Analysis and Description of the Corpus

The source of this paper is the Modern Chinese Corpus of Peking University. The CCL corpus is a large, purely academic, and non-profit corpus developed by the Chinese Linguistics Research Center of Peking University. The corpus contains part of the spoken (Beijing dialect survey) corpus, part of the corpus of film and television works (e.g., *Bacchus*, Stephen Chow's movies, etc.), the Internet corpus, the written corpus, and so on. To ensure a solid corpus basis for this analysis, we searched the CCL corpus by typing "Zenmezhao" and got 998 corpora, among which 196 Chinese conversational corpora conforming to the discourse tagging criteria were selected.

The discourse wheel is composed of different linguistic units such as words, phrases, and sentences, and it is usually marked by the silence of one party or the conversation of the other party [8]. In this paper, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the discourse wheel is represented by "Zenmezhao+X"; the discourse marker in the middle of the discourse wheel is represented by "X1+Zenmezhao+X2"; and the discourse marker in the middle of the discourse wheel is represented

by "X1+Zenmezhao+X2". and "X+Zenmezhao" for the discourse marker at the end of the discourse wheel. At the same time, the discourse markers in different positions have a different directionality, and the discourse markers need to be phonetically coherent with the information they refer to and have a connection in content.

2.2. Usage Pattern of "Zenmezhao" Discourse Markers

By classifying the 196 discourse markers in the CCL corpus according to the discourse marker criterion, the frequency of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the discourse round was the highest, accounting for 59% of the total discourse round, while the frequency at the end of the discourse round was the lowest, accounting for only 10%. The specific usage patterns and frequencies are shown in Table 2-1.

Table 1. Pattern of use of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" Pointing to the previous information.

	Number of example sentences referring to the previous information	Proportion of information pointing to the front	Number of sentences pointing backward	Backward-pointing Proportion of information
Zenmezhao+X	0	0	117	59.1%
X1+Zenmezhao+X2	28	14.1%	33	16.7%
X+Zenmezhao	20	10.1%	0	0
Total	48	24.2%	150	75.8%

The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the sentence points to the information in the later text, and this usage pattern is the largest in the total, nearly 60%. For example, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" is located at the beginning of the discourse wheel in example (3).

(3) The professor thinks that he is using quantity for quality and weighs his paper, saying, "What's the matter, laughing at Lin? You see that I have more time, right? "

In example (3), the discourse marker "what's the matter?" appears at the beginning of the sentence and is located at the beginning of the discourse wheel, which is phonetically linked to the title "Xiaolin" that follows it and is related to "You see, I have a lot of time, right? ", which enhances the sarcastic and rhetorical tone of the professor's response to the student's perfunctory task. Thus, the discourse marker that appears at the beginning of the discourse wheel has the function of pointing to the later information and enhancing the tone of the later text.

When the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" appears in the middle of the discourse round, there are two kinds of discourse markers, one pointing to the preceding information and the other pointing to the following information, both of which account for about 15% of the total corpus and nearly 1/3 of the total. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in example (4) enhances the effect of the preceding text, while the one in example (5) builds up the momentum for the following text.

(4) One day, the two of them were walking in the imperial garden and were having fun and enjoying themselves when they were bumped into by the old ancestor, who was too late to change her clothes and was furious: "Well! Even though I have not been able to use so many pearl-beaded robes, you, a consort, dare to do so. Do you want to be the queen? Well, who made it? The emperor also spoiled you! " Guangxu and Zhen Fei immediately kneeled on the ground and bowed, pleading guilty.

(5) The group took a look at Erhu to hit He Shiqing, also angry: "Erhu! What's wrong? Whom are you scolding? How dare you hit someone? You stabbed and chopped your hands and claws to..."

In example (4), there is no pause between "what's wrong" and the preceding text, and there is a gap between it and the following text; it is phonetically recognizable, and the tone of "what's wrong" makes the question of "wanting to be the queen" more forceful. It is more forceful and emphasizes the preceding text, which reveals the semantic characteristics of the semantic expression. In example (5), the word "Zenmezhao" gives the audience a clear direction and raises their attention to "two tigers," so that the audience's attention is further focused on "who are you cursing" in the later text. This enhances the momentum of the conversation. Thus, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in example (4) points to the previous information, while "Zenmezhao" in example (5) points to the later information.

When the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" appears at the end of a sentence, it marks the end of a complete discourse round. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" at the end of a discourse round is all about the preceding information, and the preceding text is phonetically coherent, which is the least frequently used pattern, with only 10%. For example, in example (6), the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" at the end of the discourse wheel points to the preceding information.

(6) -"This young man, why is he so dumb? Where can I find this pot if I drop it? This is my grandfather's stuff; it's been in my hands for 50 years! It's been in my hand for 50 years!

Where can I find it?"

"Hey, old man, my arm is not as valuable as your pot."

In example (6), the preceding text of "what's the matter" is dissatisfaction and questioning of the audience's words, and "what's the matter" ends the round of words and cuts off the other options besides the preceding text "the arm is not as valuable as the pot". "What's the matter?" ends the discourse round and also cuts off other options besides the absurd fact that "arms are not as valuable as pots", which is related to the content of the previous text. At the same time, it helps the declarative phrase "my arm is not as valuable as your jug" to clarify the tone of the rhetorical question, which is phonetically coherent with the preceding text. Therefore, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in example (6) points to the preceding information.

3. Analysis of the Discourse Function of the Discourse Marker "Zenmezhao"

3.1. Analysis of the Discourse Function of the Discourse Marker "Zenmezhao+X"

The "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the discourse wheel is mainly responsible for opening the discourse wheel, making the interlocutor take control of the discourse and drawing the audience's attention, and has the function of introducing the topic. At the same time, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao + X" often follows the rhetorical question, expressing the unquestionable intention of the conversation and enhancing the expression effect.

(7) But Frost was not nervous at all, and kept walking in. Liu Baoxin yelled again, "What's the matter? You're still going in! "

In example (7), the conversationalist uses the discourse marker "what's the matter" to clarify the direction of the conversation "still going in" based on the original context of "Frost is not nervous at all and keeps going in. The conversation direction of "still going inward" is clarified, and the conversation intention is strong, which opens a new round of conversation and leads to the rhetorical question "still going inward" to enhance the rhetorical tone. Therefore, the "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the turn is usually used by the conversationalist to attract the audience and remind them of the beginning of the turn.

3.2. Analysis of the Discourse Function of the Discourse Marker "X1+Zenmezhao+X2"

The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in the middle of the discourse wheel has two types of pointing: to the preceding information and to the following information, which usually has the function of following up the above and leading to the following.

3.2.1. Analysis of the Discourse Function of the Discourse Marker "X1+Zenmezhao+X2" Pointing to the Previous Information

The discourse function of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao," which points to the preceding information, is to strengthen the tone of the preceding information and emphasize the role of the preceding text, while the following information is often consistent with the meaning of the preceding proposition. For example, the "Zenmezhao" in example (8) reinforces the rhetorical tone.

—"A housewife!"

—"Not a housewife, what else do you want her to be?"

"What's the matter?"

in example (8) is located in the middle of the response, which strengthens the tone of the rhetorical question "not a housewife" and expresses the certainty of the fact that "she is a housewife." The phrase "she is a housewife" is used to express the certainty of the fact that she is. At the same time, the subsequent phrase "what else do you want her to be" not only expresses the view that "she can only be a housewife" from the side, continuing the meaning of the previous proposition, but also expresses the inquiry of the other party's attitude in a questioning tone.

In addition, some of the discourse markers "Zenmezhao" point to the previous information while linking the preceding and following sentences, and have the discourse function of explaining the preceding text and leading to the role of the following text. For example, in example (9), the later explanation of "Zenmezhao" explains the meaning of "big mines" in the previous text.

(9) Yang Jinwen says, "I have said for a long time that China's high savings rate is a big landmine, so what?" "High savings, low social security, the people's money in the bank on the root of life, the wind will certainly produce a mass panic."

In example (9), "what's the matter?" belongs to the expected discourse marker, which continues the conversation proposition, firstly expressing the satisfaction of the conversationalist for his preconceptions, and then introducing the potential danger of a high savings rate on this basis to supplement the meaning of the previous "big mine." This is a way of interacting with the reader outside the text. From another perspective, the preceding phrase "China's high savings rate is a big landmine" can be seen as the background information provided by the interlocutor to the audience before the explanation, first helping the receiver to recall the known information that he or she had said "China's high savings rate is a big landmine." This information is then extended.

In addition, "X1+Zenmezhao+X2", which points to the previous information, also has the discourse function of continuing the response to the inquirer when it is in the respondent's discourse. For example, in example (10), "what's the matter" reinforces the sarcastic tone while responding.

(10) -The man with the colander stretched out his arm to block the curtain and asked, "What is your name?"

"My surname is Na. Ah, why do you listen to the thing? You also need to report the account. "

In example (10), "what's the matter" is located in the respondent's speech, and after responding to the inquirer's surname query, "what's the matter" leads to the rhetorical question, "I have to report to the household for listening to things." This is not only a continuation of the previous response but also reinforces the sarcastic tone of the latter rhetorical question.

This shows that when the conversationalist uses "Zenmezhao" in a sentence to point to the previous message, it is a way to explain the previous message to the audience, continue the meaning of the proposition, and introduce the later message.

3.2.2. Analysis of the Discourse Function of the Discourse Marker "X1+Zenmezhao+X2" Points to the Latter Information.

Unlike "Zenmezhao", the discourse function of "X1+Zenmezhao+X2" is mostly related to the content and tone of the latter text.

Among them, "X1+Zenmezhao+X2", which is located in the respondent's discourse, is usually accompanied by disbelief and questioning of the other party's discourse while responding to it. Unlike "X1+Zenmezhao+X2", which points to the preceding information and leads the conversationalist to explain the preceding statement, "X1+Zenmezhao+X2", which points to the following information, has the intention of leading the other party to further explain and justify the previous discourse. The intention is to lead the other party to further explain and justify the previous discourse. For example, the "Zenmezhao" in example (11) is the king's attempt to lead his men to further verify the comment "it is good".

(11)—"Your Majesty, don't think too much about it; it's a good thing!"

"Ah, what's the matter, boy? Can you still live the dream? "

"Ah, yes. I think it's a good thing. "

"Zenmezhao"

In example (11) is the king's response to the remarks made by his subordinates, first expressing his surprise with an "ah" and then with the words "what's up boy." The phrase "what's the matter" plus the title "kid" draws the opponent's attention and sets the stage for his disbelief and questioning later on, "You can still live the dream, can't you? The questioning is intended to lead to a further explanation of the "good thing" statement, which is still a continuation of the previous topic, although it points to the later information in a propositional sense.

Unlike "X1+Zenmezhao+X2", which is consistent with the previous topic, "X1+Zenmezhao+X2", which is inconsistent with the previous topic, often has the discourse function of opening a new topic and changing to a later topic. For example, the "Zenmezhao" in example (12) is two completely different topics before and after.

(12) "Hey, this is a big road product, we just want a small profit and more sales. The holidays are closed for a few days, and the money earned is our own. Why, for the holidays, do you not come on two..."

In example (12), "What's the matter?" is the answer to the question of why the roses they sell are so cheap, while "What's the matter" marks the end of the conversation and opens up a new topic of asking the other person if they want to buy roses. Unlike the uncomfortable and questioning tone of questioning that follows the discourse marker in example (11), the "Zenmezhao" in example (12) has a more pure and strong interrogative tone, and because it opens a new topic of conversation that lacks information known to both parties, the "Zenmezhao" in example (12) has a more pure and strong interrogative tone. The answer to the "Zenmezhao" question in example (12) is more uncertain.

Therefore, the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in the middle of the sentence, which points to the information that follows, has the function of guiding the audience to explain the previous turn of speech or to open a new topic.

3.3. Analysis of the Discourse Function of the Discourse Marker "X+Zenmezhao"

The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" is only used at the end of the discourse round to point to the previous message, and it is used less frequently than in the other cases. It is mostly used after a strong

rhetorical question in the feedback round to make the semantic feature of negating the other party's speech more distinct and has the function of qualifying the topic.

Unlike the expected discourse marker "Zenmezhao," which expects the audience to respond in the affirmative, "X+Zenmezhao," which points to the preceding information, is often used after the discourse in which the interlocutor wants to negate. It is usually used after the fact that the interlocutor wants to deny, to enhance the polarizing effect of the previous question by semantically eliminating other possibilities for the audience and to force the audience to answer it, so it has a threatening tone. For example, in example (13), the word "Zenmezhao" is a clear indication of negative expectation.

(13) "Don't feel aggrieved! You've got two kicks for a puppy. What do you think it's worth? "

The discourse marker "what's the matter" in example (13) responds to the audience's aggrieved emotion by first stating its attitude with "You don't feel aggrieved" and posing the indisputable fact that "you received two kicks for a puppy" to the audience. Then, we use "you think it's worth it" to ask a rhetorical question, and finally, we use "what's the matter" to further clarify the negative expectation contained in this rhetorical question and enhance its effect.

In summary, the "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the discourse round usually contains negative expectations and is used by the interlocutor to guide the audience to give negative answers in the discourse round.

4. The Similarities and Differences in the Functions of the Discourse Marker "Zenmezhao" in Different Modes of Use

The discourse marker "what's up" is used in different modes to enhance the tone, emphasize the preceding or following text, and is highly accessible. The discourse marker "what's up" is always accompanied by strong conversational intentions and has a leading role in the opening of the next turn. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" is always accompanied by a strong conversational intention and plays a leading role in the opening of the next discourse. However, there are some differences in the discourse functions under different usage patterns, as shown in the following table.

Table 2. Comparison of the different points of the discourse marker " Use

Use Location	Pointing Information	Discourse function
Open end of the wheel	Point to the back of the message	Opening the discourse wheel, introducing a new proposition, drawing the audience's attention and expressing a strong desire to converse
Middle of the wheel	Point to front information	emphasizing the preceding text, enhancing the tone of the rhetorical question, and continuing the meaning of the proposition Explaining the preceding text, enhancing the ironic tone and leading to the following text
Middle of the wheel	Point to the back	responding to the previous turn of conversation, while leading the audience to further proof of the previous turn of conversation Opening up a new topic, leaving both sides without a shared information context and greater uncertainty in the conversation
End of the wheel	Point to front information	Closing the round, limiting the topic and expressing a strong desire for a negative response from the audience

From the above table, we can see that the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" differs in terms of tone and conversational intention. The "Zenmezhao" at the beginning of the discourse wheel often contains a strong intention of active conversation; the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" in the middle of the discourse wheel and pointing to the preceding information usually enhances the rhetorical and sarcastic tone to express flirtation, reproach, etc.; the discourse marker in the middle of the discourse wheel but pointing to the information behind is usually used to express disbelief and doubt, and the discourse marker "what's the matter" at the end of the discourse wheel usually has a strong negative leading tone.

5. Conclusion

Discourse markers, as a bridge between context and discourse, are of great value in the study of discourse comprehension and coherence, as they serve as a bridge between context and discourse and as a guide marker in conversational communication. As a typical word with a questioning tone in modern Chinese, "Zenmezhao" expresses a richer type of tone and has a distinct discourse function when used as a discourse marker. Based on the previous research, this paper adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and corpus analysis to investigate the discourse functions of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao" under different usage patterns and draws the following conclusions.

1. The discourse marker "what's up" is mostly used at the beginning of the discourse round, which conveys a strong conversational intention to attract the audience's attention while starting a new topic and mostly expresses an affirmative tone.

2. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" is sometimes used in the middle of the discourse wheel, and has two modes of use: pointing to the previous information and pointing to the next information. Those pointing to the preceding information usually have the discourse function of explaining the preceding text and continuing the topic, while those pointing to the following information are usually intended to lead the audience to add to the previous discourse or open a new proposition, mostly in a rhetorical tone.

3. The discourse marker "Zenmezhao" is rarely used at the end of a discourse round to symbolize the end of a discourse round and mostly expresses a strong negative tone.

However, there are some shortcomings in this paper: Firstly, due to the time limitation, this paper only selects the Chinese dialogue corpus in the CCL corpus and does not compare it with another corpus, so there may be some errors; secondly, due to the capacity limitation, this paper only explores the usage pattern and discourse function of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao". Secondly, due to the limitation of our ability, this paper only explores the usage pattern and discourse function of the discourse marker "Zenmezhao", but does not explore whether "Zenmezhao" belongs to the category of "Zenme", and the study of its discourse function still needs to be deepened. In the future, we will continue to study the above shortcomings in depth to better serve the study of modern Chinese discourse markers and chapter teaching.

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