

Expressing Attitudinal Stance on Irish Local Radio Through the Use of *You Know*

Eamonn Hickson, Independent researcher

Abstract

You know aids communication through a variety of functions, such as inviting addressee inferences, directing thematic changes or hedging. This study examines the role of *you know* in conveying the attitudinal stances expressed by guests on Radio Kerry, an Irish local radio station, during interviews and contributions between June 2021-March 2022. Each instance of *you know* is categorised according to function and its role in expressing attitudinal stance. The study shows a tendency for the use of *you know* to increase when a speaker is on live radio; its use is twice that of its use in a comparative corpus. It is considered that the multifunctionality of *you know* is the primary reason for its prevalence; it firstly organises one's speech, whether it be through hesitation, discourse or thematic marking, and then aids in expressing attitudinal stance. These uses of *you know* grant speakers a degree of control over the conversation. Speakers under 40 years of age used *you know* to hedge most often, while those over 40 tended to use *you know* to hesitate more frequently. The older group of speakers also had a greater use of *you know* to express attitudinal stance. Politicians most frequently used *you know* to control the thematic direction of the conversation. Furthermore, the prevalence of *you know* in this corpus was considerably greater than in the Limerick Corpus of Irish English and the British National Corpus. The corpus created for this study is the first to consist solely of language used on an Irish local radio station.

Keywords: Irish radio, you know, attitudinal stance, thematic marker, local radio.

Introduction

You know aids communication through a variety of functions, such as inviting addressee inferences (Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002), directing thematic changes or hedging (Erman, 2001). The Limerick Corpus of Irish English (hereafter the LCIE) has shown it is common in spoken English in Ireland (Farr et al., 2019).

This study investigates if this frequency extended to the language used by speakers on a local Irish radio station and how, if at all, speakers expressed attitudinal stance through the use of this two-word unit.

A corpus was created to examine the language used by speakers on Radio Kerry, an Irish local radio station. Speakers from County Kerry and neighbouring County Cork are often considered to share linguistic features to such an extent that they are categorised as one variety (Hickey, 2013; Lucek & Garnett, 2019). Kerry is predominantly a rural county, save for a number of small towns with populations not exceeding 25,000.

The corpus, which comprises over 47,900 words, contains 24 one-to-one interviews and contributions, all of which aired on Radio Kerry during the period June 2021-March 2022. While there have been studies conducted on the language used on national and international radio, this is the first corpus created solely from the language used on an Irish local radio station.

Literature Review

You Know

Schiffrin (1987) claims *you know* (also *y'know*) is useful in participation frameworks through its function of marking transitions. She suggests that the two primary functions of *you know* are centred around meta-knowledge: it marks the knowledge which is common between speakers and listeners, and that which is understood to be generally known. Fox Tree and

Schrock (2002) claim *you know* is a means to invite addressee inferences. They say it does not carry the variety of meanings put forward by some and, to counter the plethora of potential other uses, they add *you know* can be re-examined in terms of basic meanings. For example, they claim that when *you know* is seemingly used to hesitate, repair or manage turns, it is merely a speaker using different methods to invite addressee inferences. They also say that there is an increased prevalence of this two-word unit in spoken language when compared to written language because its functions in the former are tied to the “naturalistic, unplanned, unrehearsed, collaborative nature of spontaneous talk” (Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002, p. 745). Kallen (2006) understands the primary function of *you know* being to reference the existence of shared knowledge between a listener and speaker, whether that information be implied or presumed. Kallen also argues that *you know* acts in opposition to *I mean* in that it serves to downgrade a speaker’s assertion.

Laserna et al. (2014) conducted a study on what they termed *filler words*. They analysed the use of five words, including *you know*, in spoken conversations. They argue the use of discourse markers is associated with age and gender, with speakers who are young, female or both among the most likely to use them. However, the authors claim the impact of gender on the use of discourse markers lessens with age, while discourse marker use is connected to conscientiousness. Buysse (2017) says previous research revealed *you know* is more common with native speakers as opposed to non-native speakers. He claims both native speakers and learners of English use the pragmatic marker most often as an intersubjective marker, but the latter group also has a high preference for using *you know* to edit. Clancy (2018) undertook a study on family conflict sequences by examining markers that co-occur with disagreement strategies. He found *you know* to be among the most frequent markers of conflict sequences in family discourse.

Various authors argue over the number of functions *you know* possesses. If Schiffrin (1987) and Fox Tree and Schrock (2002) are at one extreme, Erman is at the opposite. She asks if adolescent speakers use *you know* to a greater extent than adult speakers in spoken, spontaneous language (2001). To ascertain this, she provides three domains which help identify the varying uses of *you know*. These are the textual, social and metalinguistic domains. Pragmatic markers in the textual domain provide speakers with an opportunity to organise their discourse into a coherent unit. Social monitors relate to keeping channels open and clear between speakers (similar to Fox Tree & Schrock), while metalinguistic “are basically modal” (Erman, 2001, p. 1,339). This is an indication of the stance a speaker is taking in relation to an utterance. These domains are elaborated upon by Erman: textual monitors can show hesitation, discourse marking, thematic marking or repair; social monitors can indicate turn opening or closing, along with comprehension securing; while metalinguistic monitors can function as hedges, approximators or emphasisers. Erman found that adult speakers tended to use *you know* primarily as a textual monitor, while adolescent speakers tended to use *you know* as both social and metalinguistic monitors.

Stance

Hyland describes stance as the way a writer “intrudes to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement” (2005, p. 176). Gray and Biber say “stance can be marked through evaluative or value-laden lexis, in which individual words indicate attitudes or emotions and evaluations” (2015, p. 220). Haselow (2020), like Hyland, expands on the notion of stance by delineating epistemic from attitudinal stance. He says the former relates to a speaker’s assessment of how certain they are as regards the validity of a particular proposition, while the latter implies a speaker’s opinion of how right, good, desirable, necessary or important a state of affairs is considered. He adds that while epistemic

stance can be overtly marked by a speaker (such as the inclusion of *no doubt*), attitudinal stance can often be more implicit. In particular, he says this is possible when devices which are typically used to convey stance are omitted (such as evaluative adjectives).

Stance also influences the creation of a speaker's public persona and identity.

Hutchby (2001) says that when interviewees or contributors speak on radio, they often aim to validate their presence through strengthening their position, displaying their authenticity, or by clearly expressing a stance. White (2003) claims that attitude and stance are social as opposed to personal, as when a speaker/writer adopts a stance, they are creating an identity or persona. This study examines how speakers on Radio Kerry used *you know* for a variety of functions, one of which was to express attitudinal stance.

Radio Corpora

Few previous studies on the spoken English used in Ireland involved the construction of a corpus of language used on an Irish radio station. Anne O'Keeffe (2005) compiled a corpus of language used on *Liveline*, a radio phone-in show broadcast on Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) for over three decades. That corpus, comparable in size to the corpus created for this study, had 55,000 words taken from 44 interviews. It also forms part of the LCIE, which was used in providing a comparison for initial findings in this study. The LCIE is a collection of one million words spoken by speakers of English in Ireland (Farr et al., 2019). Joan O'Sullivan (2015), in her longitudinal study on pragmatic markers, collected 160 radio advertisements which had been broadcast on RTÉ during the period 1977-2007. Other studies on Irish radio (such as Walsh & Day, 2021; Kerrigan & O'Brien, 2018) relied on focus groups or semi-structured interviews and therefore did not require the creation of a corpus.

Corpora of approximately 50,000 words are relatively small when compared to similar spoken language corpora (The Limerick Corpus of Irish English, SPICE-Ireland).

Daniel Ross (2018) says that when large corpora are not available nor practical to use, small corpora can be considered, should they have specialised types of data. In relation to corpus size, Clancy (2010) says it is advisable to focus not on the size of the corpus, but rather on the structure of the corpus in relation to one's aims.

Corpus Data and Process

This study involved the creation of a spoken language corpus from radio interviews and contributions given on Radio Kerry during June 2021-March 2022. Radio Kerry broadcasts to people living in the county of Kerry. The station broadcasts 24 hours per day, covering topics such as sport, music, politics, current affairs, local matters, and community events.

Prior to extract selection, interviews conducted and topics covered on the radio station were documented to ascertain the approximate proportion of time committed to each topic and subject. This analysis was conducted during the week 24th-30th January 2022. The time period (7-am-7pm) was chosen as the station primarily broadcasts either music or pre-recorded shows outside of these hours. The results of this analysis, which are contained in Table 1, provided the basis for the subsequent extract selection in terms of topic and interview type.

Table 1

Relative frequency of topics covered during 24th-30th January 2022

topic/INTERVIEW type	Approximate % of total airtime (7am-7pm)
PERSONAL STORIES	25
POLITICS	17
LOCAL EVENTS	13
SPORTS	13
CURRENT AFFAIRS	8
ARTS/MUSIC (EXCL. SONGS)	8
SELF-HELP/IMPROVEMENT	5
BUSINESS	3
AGRICULTURE	3
RELIGION	2
OTHER	<3

The following information was collected during the one-week period:

- 1) The shows broadcast on Radio Kerry comprised current affairs, local matters, chat shows/magazine shows, sports programmes, special interest (agriculture, business, religion), and music shows. The analysis revealed a near even split in terms of whether the interviewees/contributors were public figures or private individuals (45% public figures, 55% private individuals). It was also noted that politicians (both national and local) were regularly interviewed on both the daily current affairs and magazine shows.
- 2) In terms of categorising speakers by age, an arbitrary dividing line of 40 years was adopted during the analysis in January 2022. From this, a ratio was found (see Table 2). The following approach was taken to collect accurate information on speakers' ages: If a speaker was a public or well-known figure, their age was found through an online search; where the speaker was a private individual, the author received information from the radio station.
- 3) There were daily fluctuations in terms of the male/female split. However, the weekly ratio was approximately even (56% male, 44% female).

Using the information gained during the analysis, 24 extracts were selected. The following guidelines were followed to ensure representativeness:

- a. The male/female speaker ratio was 1:1 (see Table 2).
- b. The under 40/over 40 age ratio was 1:2 (see Table 2).
- c. The public/private personae ratio was 1:1, with a minimum of four political interviews included (due to findings in Table 1). Three interviews involved elected public representatives, while the fourth involved a political journalist.
- d. All speakers were from the county of Kerry. This was determined both through the author's knowledge of public figures, along with information provided by Radio Kerry.

Table 2

Speakers' ages and genders, ratio and distribution

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	RATIO
UNDER 40	4	4	1
OVER 40	8	8	2
TOTAL	12	12	
RATIO	1	1	

The final Radio Kerry Corpus (RKC) contained 47,903 words from 24 guests and 10 presenters. A sub corpus containing solely guest speech was compiled and titled Contributor Sub Corpus (CSC). This corpus of 34,606 words was used for the analysis of interviewee/contributor speech.

Methodology

This study employs a framework first used by Erman (2001) to provide qualitative data on the particular uses of *you know* (Table 3).

Table 3

Domains (adapted from Erman, 2001)

Textual Domain	Social Domain	Metalinguistic Domain
Textual monitors	Social monitors	Metalinguistic monitors
Discourse markers	Interactive markers	Approximators
Thematic markers	Comprehension-securing markers	Hedges
Hesitation markers		Emphasisers
Repair markers		

Erman’s work could reveal *how* the two-word unit was used, but it was insufficient in showing *why* it was used. To examine why *you know* was used, a second framework was also consulted.

Hyland, in his work on stance and engagement in academic discourse, suggests a model which attempts to reveal how writers use linguistic resources to represent themselves, their positions and their readers (2005). He claims stance comprises four elements: *hedges*, *boosters*, *attitude markers* and *self-mentions*.

Hedges are devices which serve to mitigate the force of an utterance (Farr & O’Keeffe, 2002) or serve to lessen a speaker or writer’s commitment to a proposition (Hyland, 2005). In an analysis of hedges and boosters in English academic articles, Takimoto says hedges are “considered to be markers of uncertainty” (2015, p. 96). *Boosters* are similar to Erman’s *emphasisers*. These allow a speaker to show their certainty about an utterance or topic and include words such as *clearly*, *obviously* and *undoubtedly*. *Attitudinal markers* are items which can reveal attitudinal stance, a feature which Haselow concisely defines as “the display of personal attitude” (2020, p. 7). Hyland said these markers serve to convey a writer’s frustration, surprise, agreement or more (2005). Biber (2006) lists *amazingly*, *importantly* and *surprisingly* as common words used to express attitudinal stance. *Self-mention* was not analysed as its frequency was negligible.

The designations in Table 3 required defining prior to a close analysis of each *you know*. According to Erman (2001): *Discourse markers* help to create coherence; *thematic markers* guide the addressee in the decoding of the message through highlighting particular elements; *hesitation markers* are used when a speaker is stalling while planning their utterance; *repair markers* may show a repair of an utterance or signify a new direction; *interactive markers* signal the beginning or ending or a turn; *comprehension-securing markers* are used to check if the speaker has been understood; *approximators* give general but sufficient information about a state of affairs in order to continue the conversation; *hedges* allow the speaker to not commit fully to the truth of a proposition; and *emphasisers* (Hyland's *boosters*) generally underscore and strengthen a speaker's commitment to a proposition. Meanwhile, Hyland says *attitude markers* indicate one's "affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions" (2005, p. 180). This amalgamated framework was used to analyse *you know*.

Results and Discussion

The language contained in the CSC required both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Table 4 shows the relatively high dependency on *you know* by contributors/interviewees on Radio Kerry, when compared to the unit's use in the LCIE. On normalised results, *you know* was used nearly 2.3 times more often by speakers in the CSC than in the LCIE and nearly 20 times more frequently than in the British National Corpus (BNC). This prevalence supports a finding by Kallen (2006), who found its use in ICE-Ireland was over 1.5 times that of its use in ICE-GB.

You know was used 1.5 times more often in the CSC than in the radio phone-in cell of the LCIE data (8,813 v. 5,764 PMW) (Farr et al., 2019, p. 20). One may consider that comparing the findings in the CSC solely with the radio phone-in data contained in the LCIE

to be the preferred option. However, it is noted that there exists considerable differences between radio interviews and phone-in shows, such as level of preparation by both presenter and guest, degree of formality, and typical conversation duration.

Table 4

Top 5 most frequent two-word units in the csc and the lcie (pmw)

Rank	Item	Number	FREQUENCY - PER MILLION WORDS (PMW)	
			Contributor Sub-Corpus	LCIE (Full Corpus)
1 st	you know	305	8,813	3,849
2 nd	i think	159	4,595	2,509
3 rd	in the	155	4,479	3,456
4 th	of the	139	4,017	2,367
5 th	and i	129	3,728	2,020

Individual Use of *You Know*

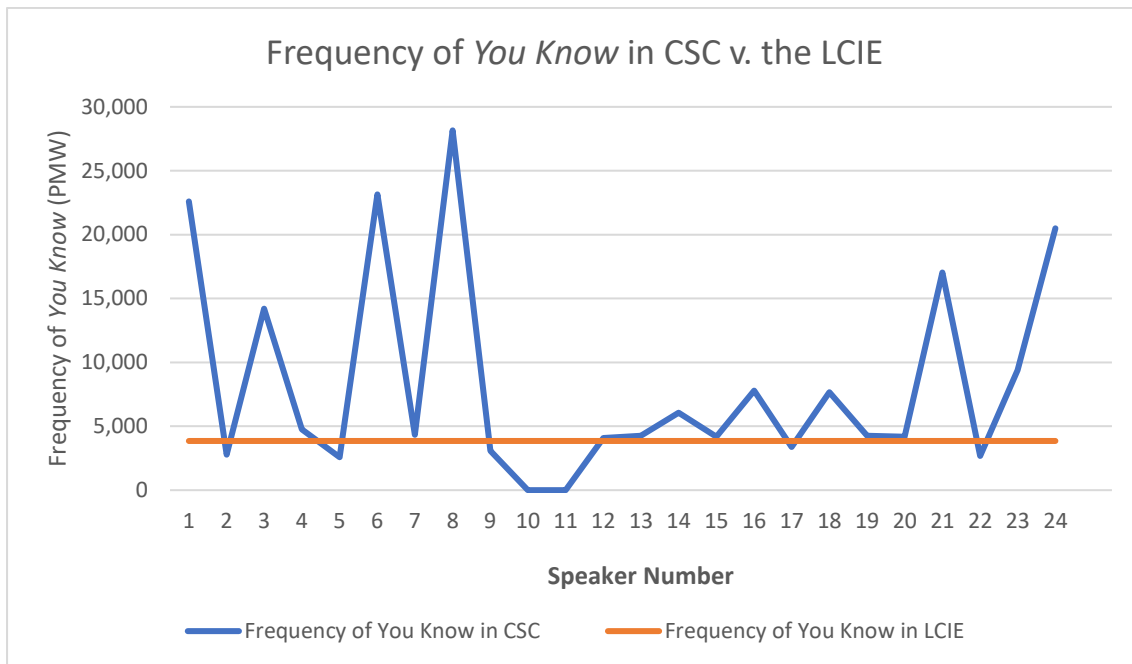
You know was used 305 times (8,813 PMW) in the CSC, nearly double that of the second most common two-word item (*I think*). Each speaker's use of *you know* was examined to reveal frequency of use PMW (Table 5). Of 24 speakers, 22 used *you know* at least once. The top five users of *you know* comprised one male and four female speakers. Of the 305 instances of *you know*, female speakers had 199, giving a rate of 11,869 PMW, twice as great as male speakers' use (5,946 PMW). Additionally, those aged 40 and older tended to use *you know* to a greater extent than younger speakers. In terms of relative frequency, speakers aged over 40 had a rate nearly twice as great as those under 40 (10,425 v. 5,916 PMW). In particular, females aged over 40 had the greatest use of *you know*. 17 of the 24 speakers in the CSC had a greater use of *you know* than the unit's average use in THE LCIE (Figure 1).

Table 5***Speaker use of you know in the CSC***

Speaker Number	Frequency of <i>you know</i> (number)	Frequency of <i>You Know</i> (PMW)	Usage rank (of 24)	Gender	Over 40/Under 40
1	43	22,596	3	F	Over
2	5	2,787	20	M	Over
3	28	14,213	6	F	Under
4	8	4,756	11	M	Under
5	3	2,584	22	M	Over
6	42	23,153	2	F	Over
7	9	4,325	12	M	Over
8	45	28,160	1	M	Over
9	3	3,083	19	F	Over
10	0			F	Under
11	0			M	Over
12	6	4,073	17	F	Under
13	3	4,267	13	M	Over
14	6	6,061	10	M	Over
15	10	4,177	16	F	Over
16	12	7,787	8	M	Over
17	5	3,374	18	M	Under
18	5	7,669	9	F	Over
19	3	4,267	14	M	Under
20	4	4,193	15	F	Over
21	18	17,045	5	F	Over
22	7	2,668	21	M	Under
23	16	9,390	7	F	Under
24	24	20,495	4	F	Over
LCIE		3,849			

Figure 1

Frequency of you know in the CSC v. The lcie



Analysing the Use of *You Know*

Each instance of *you know* was analysed through the lens of both Erman's and Hyland's frameworks. Due to the hedging and boosting/emphasising functions being common, some instances of *you know* received only one designation. However, most were best described through using one of Erman's descriptors and Hyland's designation as an attitudinal stance marker. The following examples display instances where Erman's descriptors worked in isolation (in this instance, as a comprehension-securing device) (example 1) and where Hyland's framework was used to reveal *you know*'s role in displaying attitudinal stance (example 2) (in addition to the hesitation revealed by Erman's framework).

(1) Former psychiatric nurse speaking about mental health facilities – Contributor #7

*And it had empathy and understanding for that young man that young teenage boy or girl **you know** what I mean?*

(2) Relative of a deceased explorer from County Kerry - Contributor #21

*You're looking at it and you're going how in the honour of God did they get there in a 22 and a half foot open boat with rocks for ballast **you know** amm it's incredible it's incredible amazing amazing.*

In addition, the following factors were taken into account: *You know*'s position in an utterance (initial, middle, final); context; function and meaning of words immediately following its use; repetition before and after; and topic changes. For example, a sentence-final *you know* could indicate it was used to mark the end of a speaker's utterance or turn, while repetition in advance of its inclusion could indicate hesitation or repair. As shown in Table 6, the use of each function was relatively even across the age groups, with two exceptions: Speakers under 40 years of age used *you know* to hedge more often, while those over 40 tended to use *you know* to hesitate more frequently.

Table 6

Functions of you know according to age of speakers in the CSC

Function (% of speakers' total uses)	Under 40	Over 40
Approximator	2%	3%
Attitudinal Marker	32%	30%
Booster	7%	8%
Comprehension Securing Device	5%	3%
Discourse Marker	14%	13%
Hedge	18%	11%
Hesitation Marker	9%	21%
Interactive Marker	2%	0%
Repetition Device	1%	4%
Reported Speech Marker	5%	1%
Thematic Marker	5%	5%

An examination of all 305 instances of *you know* showed that 166 (54%) contained evidence of the attitudinal stance of the speaker, 94 (31%) functioned as hesitation markers, 71 (23%) served as discourse markers, 69 (22%) showed evidence of hedging, while 43 (14%) were used to boost or emphasise. Table 7 provides a breakdown of all uses in the CSC.

Table 7

Individual and grouped functions – based on Erman’s (2001) and Hyland’s (2005) frameworks

Individual Function	Total	Grouped Functions	Total
Approximator	6	Approximator (+)	17
Approximator-Attitudinal	10		
Approximator-Hedging	1		
Attitudinal	0	Attitudinal (+)	166
Booster	9	Booster (+)	43
Comprehension Securing	6	Comprehension securing (+)	17
Comprehension-Attitudinal	8		
Comprehension-Booster	3		
Discourse	5	Discourse (+)	71
Discourse-Attitudinal	48		
Discourse-Booster	14		
Discourse-Hedging	4		
Hedging	30	Hedging (+)	69
Hedging-Attitudinal	6		
Hesitation	10	Hesitation (+)	94
Hesitation-Attitudinal	55		
Hesitation-Hedge	19		
Hesitation-Booster	10		
Interactive Marker-Attitudinal	2	Interactive Marker (+)	5
Interactive Marker-Booster	1		
Interactive Marker	1		
Interactive Marker-Hedging	1		
Repair	4	Repair (+)	17
Repair-Attitudinal	7		
Repair-booster	1		
Repair-hedging	5		
Reported Speech-Attitudinal	10	Reported Speech (+)	12
Reported speech-booster	2		

Thematic	1	Thematic (+)	27
Thematic-Attitudinal	20		
Thematic-Hedges	3		
Thematic-booster	3		
Total instances of you know	305	Total functions	538

You Know and Attitudinal Stance

Of the 22 speakers who used *you know*, 20 used it to express attitudinal stance at least once. This included, among other expressions, a speaker's judgement of importance, advisability, rightfulness, necessity, emotion or desirability. There were no instances where a speaker used the two-word unit to solely express attitudinal stance, although this did not preclude the speaker from expressing stance in adjoining sentences. In most cases, the presence of an evaluative adjective in the sentence predicate indicated stance (example 2, above), however, as noted by Gray and Biber (2014), the proposition's true stance must also be considered by examining preceding or following discourse.

In (example 3), the speaker used *you know* to cast his daughter's farming interest in a positive light.

(3) A retired farmer speaking about his life and future prospects for the farm - Contributor #14

*She's interested in the suckling part of it and the calving part of it **you know** and interest is the main thing.*

All 166 expressions of attitudinal stance co-occurred with another function, with the two most common being hesitation (example 4) and discourse marking (example 5).

(4) Politician speaking about the arrival of Ukrainian refugees to a Kerry town - Contributor #24

*There there'll be room and there'll be **you know** the the most wonderful welcome you can possibly imagine.*

(5) Prominent member of a religious community - Contributor #5

*A soothing word calms things an anxious word upsets those around us. **You know** myself in the last 10 days I've been thinking that what we need is a special Christmas for children.*

Considering that part of the amalgamated framework used came from Hyland's (2005) work on stance in written academic discourse, it was noteworthy that the early findings differed from his work. He found that hedging was by far the greatest indication of a writer's perspective. In the CSC, expressions of attitudinal stance through the use of *you know* were twice the number of hedges. Discourse functions (hesitating, repairing, marking asides) were very prominent features in spoken academic discourse, a feature which was not common in written academic discourse (Ädel, 2010).

This could have been an indicator that the contributors/interviewees were more comfortable committing to their utterances or had a greater desire to attach a clear stance to some event or state of affairs. The older group of speakers had a greater use of *you know* to express attitudinal stance, which shows similarities to Reilly et al's finding (2005) that older speakers tended to express attitudinal stance to a greater degree than younger speakers. However, this study created an age divide at 40, while the aforementioned study examined attitudinal markers across primary school students, secondary school students and adults.

Hesitation and Attitudinal Stance

An example of *you know* being used to firstly hesitate and then introduce a speaker's attitudinal stance is shown in (example 6).

(6) Analyst reviewing a Gaelic football game – Contributor #8

Presenter: *But again off the back of the second half collapse if I can call it that against Kildare last week we need a 70 minute performance.*

Speaker: *Yeah we do Joe and I think that that **you know** we we have to say as well it is the training schedule and the block of training.*

The hesitation in (6) which *you know* provides is preceded by the speaker's repetition of *that* immediately prior to the unit's introduction. The subsequent repetition of *we* signifies that he may have needed to "stall for time for the planning of the continuation of the utterance", as Erman (2001, p. 1,340) noted in defining *you know*'s role in hesitation. The central role *you know* played in the allowing the speaker to express his attitudinal stance was shown by its syntactic position at the head of the next clause:

(7) **Speaker:** *Yeah we do Joe and I think that that [x].*

*[x] = **you know** we we have to say as well it is the training schedule and the block of training.*

In (example 7) the subclause began with *you know*. The speaker, having used *you know* firstly to hesitate, then expressed his judgement of necessity shortly afterwards through the use of *have*. While attitude can be expressed in a number of ways, including subordination, punctuation and text location in writing, it is most clearly expressed by attitude verbs (Hyland, 2005). The speaker in (6-7) expressed his belief that it was necessary to take into account that the team in question was going through a particular training schedule. Furthermore, from context it is evident he was attempting to speak positively about the team by countering the presenter's use of "collapse" with an acknowledgement that the team may be training hard at the time and that they are better than their performance against Kildare showed.

An argument could be made that there was an element of hedging in (6-7) as the speaker referenced the team's training schedule in an effort to counter criticism of their previous performance. It is noted that Erman said the domains in which *you know* operates

“are not discrete, with clear-cut boundaries between them” (2001, p. 1,342). However, it is argued that the use of *you know* to convey attitudinal stance was considerably greater than its use as a hedge.

Fox Tree and Schrock’s (2002) claim that *you know* does not serve a multitude of meanings must be addressed here. They say that the supposed functions of *you know* to hesitate or initiate repair during problematic speech can be better explained. In these situations, the authors believe *you know* is merely co-occurring with problematic speech for addressee-inference reasons rather than for buying time. Put another way, the speaker does not use *you know* for their need to construct a particular proposition, but in order for the addressee to understand what is being said or inferred. This study disputes that, based on the uses of *you know* in the CSC.

Discourse Marking and Attitudinal Stance

You know was used 48 times first as a discourse marker and then to show a speaker’s attitude to a proposition.

(8) Basketballer speaking about her sporting career - Contributor #3

Presenter: *You're the coach of the under 14 division one and division three teams in the club. Is that something that you got into quite young?*

Speaker: *Yes I know yeah but I think it's important **you know** like all the knowledge that I have in basketball I want to give it to the girls that are younger than me now.*

The speaker in (example 8) answered the presenter’s question in one word: *Yes*. However, she then used *you know* to provide coherence and further explanation to her short answer:

The two-word unit introduced her reasoning for training young basketballers. The attitudinal

stance was realised through the use of *important*, followed by revealing her desire to do (*I want*).

The speaker also created a sense of distance to the proposition by focusing on her need to pass on knowledge to the younger players, as opposed to achieving coaching goals or excelling in her role. Aside from the initial utterances in reply, she also did not address the presenter's reference that she was coaching two teams at once, nor the indication that she started coaching at a young age. After she gathered her thoughts, she diverted the conversation away from her personal achievements, so as to avoid indirectly praising herself. Such politeness is not uncommon in Irish English, according to Vaughan and Clancy. They claim that "Research into discrete expressions that encode politeness in Irish English appears to support this hypothesis of indirectness as a characteristic of its pragmatic profile" (2011, p. 49). This basketballer was not the only speaker to use *you know* to first create coherence and then express their stance towards an object or state of affairs.

(9) Journalist speaking about national politics – Contributor #16

*And ahh there's a bit of the St. Augustine thing about the opposition at the moment **you know** Lord make me pure but not just yet.*

Coherence is not a property which is inherent in a text but is created through the result of work between the speakers and hearers (Erman, 2001). Therefore, language must create this coherence and organise the discourse. Prior to the use of *you know* in (example 9), the journalist had described the opposition party's stance on a political topic by comparing the political party's outlook to that of St. Augustine. To some listeners, that reference would have been vague and incoherent. To expand both on the reference and his stance towards the opposition's actions, the journalist used *you know*. He had given his stance prior to the use of *you know* through the reference in and of itself, but by quoting the saint's reported speech, the

journalist left the listener in no doubt as to his judgement of the rightfulness and desirability of the opposition's actions. This particular use of *you know* as a discourse marker granted speakers greater control of the conversation.

Thematic Marking and Attitudinal Stance

You know was used both as a thematic marker and a marker of attitudinal stance 20 times in the CSC. It functioned as a thematic marker 27 times, with three elected public representatives using this function 16 times and a political journalist using it twice.

(10) Government minister speaking about COVID-19 restrictions and outbreaks – Contributor #1

Presenter: We see outbreaks of COVID-19 in Limerick arising in workplace settings social gatherings and indoors and also the scenes we saw in Dublin in some parts of Kerry with large crowds of people gathering that it's a very delicate balance that the government has to strike and local authorities have to strike this weekend.

Speaker: Yes Jerry you're you're quite correct it is a very delicate balance but and on the plus side **you know** enormous progress has been made it is so so positive that we are in the throes of a phased reopening of society. And the vaccination program is going really really well.

Prior to the use of *you know*, the conversation was about the government and local authorities providing the direction and resources to lessen the risk of COVID-19, while also managing a reopening of society. The minister (example 10) first repeated the presenter's use of *balance*, before signalling a disagreement or change of direction with a false-start *but*. *You know* afforded the speaker a degree of hesitation, however, its primary function in this instance was to change the theme or topic of the conversation. Following *you know*, the topic became a positive endorsement of the current easing of COVID-19 restrictions and the progress of the vaccination program, two items over which the government had full control. The minister's attitudinal stance, which was preceded by *on the plus side*, was expressed clearly following

you know by the phrase *enormous progress*. This stance continued in subsequent sentences with *so so positive* and *really really well*.

Usage of *You Know*

The use of *you know* as a hesitation or discourse marker and an expression of attitudinal stance was widespread, showing no pattern in relation to speaker role, gender or age.

However, the use of *you know* as a thematic marker and an expression of attitudinal stance was most closely related to political topics and politicians. Furthermore, known interviewees tended to use *you know* to a greater extent than unknown interviewees, while politicians and interviewees speaking on political topics had the greatest relative usage of *you know* (Table 8).

Table 8

Use of you know by known, unknown & political interviewees in the CSC

INTERVIEWEE/ CONTRIBUTOR	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	% OF ALL SPEAKERS	FREQUENCY OF YOU KNOW	% OF ALL USES
KNOWN	12	50%	185	61%
UNKNOWN	12	50%	120	39%
Total	24	100%	305	100%
pOLITICAL	4	17%	84	28%

The two-word unit offered a considerable degree of control to elected public representatives during live radio interviews. The prevalent use of *you know* by political interviewees here conflicts with findings by O’Keeffe (2006), who found political interviews to have the lowest use of *you know* across three interview types (known interviewee, unknown interviewee, political interview). Haselow (2020) notes that in political discourse speakers used parentheticals in order to achieve two tasks in a single turn: to say something about a

particular topic or event and express their stance on that topic or event. *You know* served a similar function in the examined political interviews.

Conclusion

This study showed a tendency for the use of *you know* to increase when a speaker was on live radio. Its use was 2.3 times that of its use in the LCIE and 1.5 times that of the radio phone-in cell of the same corpus. The prevalence of *you know* in the CSC was considerably greater than in the BNC. These comparisons may reveal differences in the variety of English spoken by people in County Kerry. This point requires further examination across multiple situations and platforms.

Female speakers over 40 had the greatest use of *you know*. This concurs with the work of Laserna et al. (2014). They suggest that young or female, or both young and female speakers are more likely to use discourse markers. However, Laserna et al. claim the impact of gender on the use of discourse markers lessens with age. This was not found in the study. The older group of speakers had a greater use of *you know* to express attitudinal stance, which concurs with Reilly et al.'s finding (2005) that older speakers tended to express attitudinal stance to a greater degree than younger speakers. However, this study created an age divide at 40, while the aforementioned study examined attitudinal markers across primary school students, secondary school students and adults.

The particular function of each *you know* in the CSC was derived though using a combination of two existing frameworks (Erman, 2001 and Hyland, 2005). However, as noted by Erman (2001), the division between varying functions of a pragmatic marker may not be easily identifiable. Therefore, one's interpretation of a function may differ from another's in certain circumstances. It considered that the multifunctionality of *you know*, to firstly organise one's speech, whether it be through hesitation, discourse or thematic marking,

and then express an attitudinal stance, was the primary reason for its prevalence in the sub corpus. These uses of *you know* granted speakers a degree of control over the conversation. This supports a finding by Erman (2001), who found adult speakers predominantly tended to use *you know* in the textual domain to create cohesion and organisation.

Much of the literature argues that *you know* primarily functions to aid in speaker-hearer inferences and mark transitions (Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002; Schiffrin, 1987). This study found these uses to be rare. While acknowledging the particular medium, it is argued here that *you know* serves, at the very least, the number of functions outlined by Erman (2001). Additionally, there were a small number of occasions where it was used to introduce reported speech. This could be the basis of future work.

The use of *you know* as a hesitation/discourse marker and an expression of attitudinal stance was widespread, showing no pattern in relation to speaker role, gender or age.

The use of *you know* as a thematic marker and express an attitudinal stance was most closely related to political interviews. Three politicians and one political journalist accounted for 67% of all uses of *you know* as a thematic marker, despite accounting for only 17% of all contributors. This may highlight the ability of *you know* to aid in controlling or changing the theme of a conversation. Additionally, some uses of *you know* functioned similarly to parentheticals, allowing politicians to add extra information to their responses.

Hyland (2005) found that in written academic discourse hedging was by far the greatest indication of a writer's perspective. In the CSC, expressions of attitudinal stance through the use of *you know* were twice the number of hedges. Known and political interviewees tended to use *you know* to the greatest extent, with the latter accounting for 61% of all uses despite comprising 50% of contributors. These results could indicate that known and political contributors/interviewees were more comfortable committing to their utterances or had a greater desire to attach a clear stance to some event or state of affairs.

The role *you know* played in expressing stance has been highlighted to a large degree. However, this study argues that engaging with a medium such as radio is a marker of stance in and of itself. The speakers whose language was examined would have known the medium, the general conversation topic and focus, and the approximate reach of the broadcasts. Their decisions to speak on air indicates they were open to expressing their thoughts, views and opinions.

Limitations

This study had a number of limitations. Firstly, as the corpus was mono-modal, information could have been gleaned were it possible to examine facial expressions and speaker intonations. Secondly, as attitudinal stance was the focus, a number of other aspects had to be overlooked. These include the prevalence of *just*, *in regard to*, and *I think*, along with expressions of stance relating to other words/units. The position of *you know* in utterances could also be an area for future examination. Presenter speech, while forming part of the qualitative analysis, could have provided more information in relation to the variety of language used on Radio Kerry and been used for comparative studies. Again, this could be an area for future research. Finally, a larger corpus could have provided more information about the prevalence and use of *you know*.

References

- Ädel, A. (2010). Just to give you kind of a map of where we are going: A taxonomy of metadiscourse in spoken and written academic English, *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 9(2), 69-97. <https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.218>
- Biber, D. (2006). Stance in spoken and written university registers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 5(2), 97-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2006.05.001>
- Buyse, L. (2017). The pragmatic marker you know in learner Englishes. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 121, 40-57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2017.09.010>
- Clancy, B. (2010). Building a corpus to represent a variety of a language. In: A. O’Keeffe & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, 80-92. Routledge.
- Clancy, B. (2018). Conflict in corpora: Investigating family conflict sequences using a corpus pragmatic approach. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 6(2), 228-247. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.00011.cla>
- Daniel Ross. (2018). Small corpora and low-frequency phenomena: Try and beyond contemporary, standard English. *Journals Open Edition*, 18. Available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/corpus/3574#tocto1n6>
- Erman, B. (2001). Pragmatic markers revisited with a focus on you know in adult and adolescent talk. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(9), 1337-1359. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(00\)00066-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(00)00066-7)
- Farr, F., Murphy, B., & O’Keeffe, A. (2019). The Limerick Corpus of Irish English: Design, description, and application. *TEANGA, the Journal of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics*, 21, 5-29. <https://doi.org/10.35903/teanga.v21i0.172>
- Farr, F., & O’Keeffe, A. (2002). Would as a hedging device in an Irish context: An intra-varietal comparison of institutionalised spoken interaction. In: R. Reppen, S.

- Fitzmaurice, & D. Biber (Eds.), *Using Corpora to Explore Linguistic Variation*, 25-48.
John Benjamins.
- Fox Tree, J. E., & Schrock, J. C. (2002). Basic meanings of you know and I mean. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34(6), 727-747.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(02\)00027-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00027-9)
- Gray, B., & Biber, D. (2015). Stance markers. In: K. Aijmer & C. Rühlemann (Eds.), *Corpus Pragmatics: A Handbook*, 219-248. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139057493.012>
- Haselow, A. (2020). Expressing stance in spoken political discourse —The function of parenthetical inserts. *Language Sciences*, 82.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2020.101334>
- Hickey, R. (2013). *Variation and Change in Dublin English*. Uni-Due.De. Available at:
<https://www.uni-due.de/VCDE/>
- Hutchby, I. (2001). “Witnessing”: The use of first-hand knowledge in legitimating lay opinions on talk radio. *Discourse Studies*, 3, 4481-4497.
- Hyland, K. (2005). Stance and engagement: A model of interaction in academic discourse. *Discourse Studies*, 7(2), 173-192.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605050365>
- Kallen, J. (2006). Arrah, like, you know: The dynamics of discourse marking in ICE-Ireland. *Sociolinguistics Symposium 16, University of Limerick, 1910*. Available at:
[http://www.tara.tcd.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/50586/Arrah like y’know.pdf?sequence=1](http://www.tara.tcd.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/50586/Arrah%20like%20y%27know.pdf?sequence=1)
- Kerrigan, P., & O’Brien, A. (2018). “Openness through Sound”: Dualcasting on Irish LGBT Radio. *Journal of Radio and Audio Media*, 25(2), 224-239.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2018.1477779>
- Laserna, C. M., Seih, Y. T., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2014). Um...Who Like Says You Know:

Filler Word Use as a Function of Age, Gender, and Personality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 33(3), 328-338.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X14526993>

Lucek, S., & Garnett, V. (2019). Perceptions of linguistic identity among Irish English speakers. In: R. Hickey & C. P. Amador-Moreno (Eds.), *Irish Identities: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. De Gruyter Mouton.

O’Keeffe, A. (2005). You’ve a daughter yourself? A corpus-based look at question forms in an Irish radio phone-in. In: K. P. Schneider & A. Barron (Eds.), *The Pragmatics of Irish English*, (pp. 339–366). Mouton de Gruyter.

O’Keeffe, A. (2006). *Investigating Media Discourse*. Routledge.

O’Sullivan, J. (2015). Pragmatic markers in contemporary radio advertising in Ireland. In: C. P. Amador-Moreno, K. McCafferty and E. Vaughan (Eds.), *Pragmatic Markers in Irish English*, 318-347. John Benjamins Publishing.

Reilly, J., Zamora, A., & McGiven, R. F. (2005). Acquiring perspective in English: The development of stance. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37(2), 185-208.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2004.08.010>

Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge University Press.

Takimoto, M. (2015). A corpus-based analysis of hedges and boosters in English academic articles. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 95-105.

Vaughan, E., & Clancy, B. (2011). The pragmatics of Irish English. *English Today*, 27(2), 47-52. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078411000204>

Walsh, J. & Day, R. (2021). “New speakers” on Irish language community radio: new understandings of linguistic variation on Raidió na Life. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1955893>

White, P. R. R. (2003). Beyond modality and hedging: A dialogic view of the language of intersubjective stance. *Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse*, 23(2), 259-284. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.2003.011>