



ABANT 6th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CURRENT ACADEMIC STUDIES

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The Pragmatic Use of Hyperbole in Student Communication

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Abstract

- Study examines pragmatic use of hyperbole among university students.
- Focus on emotional expression, solidarity, humor, and group identity.
- Data collected through questionnaire (N = 40).
- Combines quantitative analysis and pragmatic interpretation.

Hyperbole in Pragmatics

- Hyperbole = intentional exaggeration for communicative effect.
- Non-literal language dependent on context and shared knowledge.
- Contributes to evaluative and interpersonal meaning.

Gricean Framework

- Hyperbole as flouting the Maxim of Quality.
- Literal falsity triggers conversational implicature.
- Meaning derived through inferential interpretation.

Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson)

- Hyperbole as loose use of language.
- Hearer adjusts literal meaning to achieve optimal relevance.
- Signals strong attitudes and evaluations.

Brown & Levinson – Positive Politeness

- Exaggeration intensifies approval or sympathy.
- Hyperbolic compliments support positive face.
- Common in close and familiar relationships.

Methodology

- Questionnaire administered during pragmatics workshop.
- 5-point Likert scale (Always – Never).
- Focus on exaggerated compliments among close friends.

Participants

- 40 students (18–22 years old).
- Native speakers of Macedonian.
- Voluntary participation, anonymity ensured.

Results – Frequency Distribution

- Always: 20% (8 students)
- Often: 40% (16 students)
- Sometimes: 32.5% (13 students)
- Rarely: 7.5% (3 students)
- Never: 0%

Response option	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Always	8	20.0%
Often	16	40.0%
Sometimes	13	32.5%
Rarely	3	7.5%
Never	0	0.0%
Total	40	100%

Interpretation of Results

- 92.5% use hyperbolic compliments at least sometimes.
- Hyperbole is highly conventionalized in student discourse.
- Reinforces solidarity and emotional closeness.

Conclusion

- Hyperbole is a salient pragmatic strategy among students.
- Functions as positive politeness strategy.
- Strengthens interpersonal bonds and peer relations.