

Pragmatic Markers

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1. The tradition and the present state of research on pragmatic markers

Conversations in English contain a lot of small words such as *well, you know, I mean, sort of* which have been referred to as pragmatic markers.

Although they have recently received a great deal of attention, our understanding of the class of pragmatic markers is still incomplete. To start with, it is difficult to choose among different approaches, terminologies and classifications. A recent monograph describes the state of art in this field of research as follows:

For a newcomer to the field, it is (...) often very difficult to find the bits and pieces that constitute an original model of the meanings and functions of discourse particles. Moreover, the studies available so far are hardly comparable; the approaches vary with regard to very many different aspects: the language(s) under consideration, the items taken into account, the terminology used, the functions considered, the problems focussed on, and the methodologies employed. (Fischer 2006: 1)

In 1995 Jan–Ola Östman published an article called 'Pragmatic particles 20 years after' reminding us that the present upsurge of interest in pragmatic markers only goes back to the late 1960s, early 1970s, although we find some early landmarks such as Denniston's *The Greek particles* (1934) and Arndt's article 'Modal particles in Russian and German', published in 1960.

The real break-through in particle or pragmatic marker studies came with Weydt's *Abtönungspartikel* (1969). Also other early works have a German focus and deal with modal particles rather than with what are known in the Anglo-Saxon tradition as discourse particles (or discourse markers). In another early work Elizabeth Gülich (1970) discussed French discourse markers, which she referred to as *Gliederungssignale* within the framework of 'Macrosyntax'.

An impetus to study pragmatic markers came from articles showing that there were grammatical phenomena which seemed to be dependent on context rather than on rules formulated in syntax. For example Corum (1975) showed that certain pragmatic markers (adverbs in her terminology) could be inserted almost anywhere in the sentence depending on pragmatic factors. Another factor in the development of the field was the possibility to record and study authentic spoken language, an important locus for pragmatic markers.

From a slow beginning the study of pragmatic markers has exploded. Several publications have been influential in shaping our view of the nature of expressions variously referred to as pragmatic markers, discourse markers or discourse particles (see Section 3 below). The importance of Deborah Schiffrin's pioneering *Discourse markers* (1987) can probably not be exaggerated. It has been followed by other monographs such as Schourup (1985), Jucker and Ziv (1998), Lenk (1998), Hansen (1998), Andersen and Fretheim (2000), Fischer (2000), Aijmer (2002). Other monographs focus on specific markers, such as Erman (1987) on *you know, I mean, you see* and Östman (1981) on *you know*.

The study by Jocelyne Fernandez (1994) stands out from the other works because it deals with pragmatic markers ('particules énonciatives') in the languages of the world. Independently of the European work on pragmatic markers there has also been research on particles with a modal or evidential meaning in non-European languages (Chafe and Nichols 1986; Aikhenvald 2004).

There are several new tendencies in the study of pragmatic markers which will be discussed below. Present-day research on pragmatic markers is characterised by a broadening of the field to include new phenomena, as well as by a wide spectrum of approaches. The number of elements which are treated as pragmatic markers is growing

and there is more interest in pragmatic markers which are less prototypical. It is for instance not unusual to describe connectives and vocatives as pragmatic markers (Fraser 1996).

Research on pragmatic markers is expanding in different directions. Such markers are found in many languages and are therefore of interest to cross-linguistic and typological research. They are also studied diachronically, although natural spoken data is not available. Moreover, a synchronic analysis is often combined with a diachronic analysis focusing on the origin of the markers, to show how their pragmatic functions have evolved as the result of systematic semantic processes associated with the grammaticalization of lexical elements or constructions. Finally, there is more interest in considering sociolinguistic factors: who uses pragmatic markers and in what situations?

2. Defining the field

Pragmatic marker is an unclear term and many different definitions are found in the literature.

Schiffrin (1987) characterises discourse markers (her term) as deictic and suggests that they have indexical functions. What discourse markers or pragmatic markers generally do is to indexically point to features of the context. The context to which markers index utterances

can be referred to as different discourse planes: the ideational structure (ideas and propositions), action structure (the way in which speech acts relate to preceding and following or intended actions), exchange structure (turns), information state (management of knowledge and meta-knowledge) and participant framework (the speaker-hearer relationship). Ochs (1996) further mentions social identity (the social persona), social act (e.g. request, offer), activity (e.g. arguing) and stance (affective and epistemic) as crucial situational dimensions. In contrast with prototypical deictic elements such as pronouns, temporal and spatial expressions, however, pragmatic markers index elements which are less concrete and not yet fully understood in their full complexity. (Cf. Aijmer et al. 2006.)

Another feature characterising pragmatic markers is reflexivity, in the sense that they comment on the utterance and thus assist in the interpretation of that utterance. The marker in that sense has a 'meta' status and an understanding of its functioning involves defining its metalinguistic or metapragmatic role (Aijmer et al. 2006).

Pragmatic markers can also be seen as heteroglossic, in the sense of the term as used by White (2003). Aijmer et al (2006) argue that markers have the interactional and argumentative function in the discourse to signal the speaker's position vis-à-vis the hearer's, his or her expectations or contextual assumptions (see also Aijmer and Simon-

Vandenberg 2004 on an application to the semantic field of expectation).

Other scholars have suggested more features, some of which are different, although there is a great deal of agreement and overlap.

Östman (1995:100) refers to the class-identifying function of pragmatic markers as implicit anchoring: they are “windows” through which one can make deductions about the speaker’s attitudes and opinions.

Hölker (1991) focuses on four features defining pragmatic markers, of which the first two are negative. Pragmatic markers do not affect the truth conditions of an utterance and they do not add anything to the propositional content of an utterance. Moreover, they are related to the speech situation and not to the situation talked about. They can also be defined functionally: they have an emotive, expressive function rather than a referential, denotative, or cognitive function.

Rühlemann (2007) mentions five partly overlapping features in his definition of discourse markers: 1) they indicate how discourse relates to other discourse; 2) they do meta-lingual work; 3) they are discourse-deictic and indicate how the utterance containing them is a response to preceding discourse; 4) they create discourse coherence and 5) they are oriented to the hearer’s needs.

Another line of approach is to characterize ‘prototypical’ pragmatic markers as fully as possible using phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, functional, sociolinguistic and stylistic features.

The following list of features is based on Brinton (1996) and includes formal and functional criteria. The criteria also refer to the type of data where pragmatic markers are typically found (i.e. in speech – and particularly conversation - rather than in writing).

- Phonological and lexical features:
 - a) they are short and phonologically reduced;
 - b) they form a separate tone group;
 - c) they are marginal forms and hence difficult to place within a traditional word class.
- Syntactic features:
 - d) they are restricted to sentence-initial position;
 - e) they occur outside the syntactic structure or they are only loosely attached to it;
 - f) they are optional.
- Semantic feature
 - g) they have little or no propositional meaning.
- Functional feature

h) they are multifunctional, operating on several linguistic levels simultaneously.

• Sociolinguistic and stylistic features:

i) they are a feature of oral rather than written discourse and are associated with informality;

j) they appear with high frequency;

k) they are stylistically stigmatised;

l) they are gender specific and more typical of women's speech.

(cf Hölker 1988; Jucker and Ziv 1998; Östman 1982)

3. The terminology: pragmatic marker or discourse marker?

The question of terminology is important because the terms often reflect different perspectives on the functions and status of the markers and on what to include in and exclude from the class. It appears, though, that there is little consensus here, which is partly due to the fact that pragmatic markers are analysed from many theoretical perspectives. Not surprisingly, pragmatic markers have been called by many different names including *hesitation marker* and *filler* when describing specific functions that they can have in context. Some of the best known terms are *pragmatic marker* (used e.g. by Brinton 1996), *discourse marker* (used

e.g. by Schiffrin 1987 and Jucker & Ziv 1998), *discourse particle* (Hansen 1998, Aijmer 2002), and *pragmatic particle* (Östman 1995).

Discourse marker is probably the most frequently used term and is therefore also found as a broad covering term (Lewis 2006; Jucker and Ziv 1998). However the term is tricky because it is also used narrowly to define markers which are ‘sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk’ (Schiffrin 1987). Cf. also Fraser (1990, 1996, 1999) for a similar definition of discourse markers.

Pragmatic marker is preferred to *discourse marker* when the markers have a pragmatic rather than a discourse-marking function. This is the case when markers serve to mark illocutionary force or have an interactional function, for instance taking the turn or yielding it.

Pragmatic marker is, however, most commonly used as a general or umbrella term covering forms with a wide variety of functions both on the interpersonal and textual levels. Here also there is a notable lack of agreement on what to include in this class. This is particularly the case with pauses and hesitation markers that do not seem to qualify as words (*uhm, erm*). In contrast, Stenström (1990a) has shown that both pauses and ‘verbal fillers’ serve as interactional devices in conversation with functions such as turn-taking, turn-holding and turn-yielding.

Both *marker* and *particle* have given rise to discussion. The term *marker* captures the fact that an element functions as a signpost or signal

instructing the hearer how the message should be interpreted. It is used more broadly than *particle*, which is above all a well-established grammatical term for a part-of-speech. *Marker* also has the advantage of not suggesting the formal restrictions of the term *particle*, which tends to refer to short monosyllabic items (Andersen and Fretheim 2000: 1).

4. Classification

Pragmatic markers have little in common formally. Many elements which have been categorized as belonging to other word classes can be categorized as pragmatic markers when they are not part of the propositional content. As a result the class of pragmatic markers is large. It includes connectives, modal particles, pragmatic uses of modal adverbs, interjections, routines (*how are you*), feedback signals, vocatives, disjuncts (*frankly, fortunately*), pragmatic uses of conjunctions (*and, but*), approximators (hedges), reformulation markers (Gülich and Kotschi 1983, Rossari 1994).

We can expect pragmatic markers to function differently depending on their origin. It is therefore helpful to distinguish between different types. Fraser (1996, 2008) has proposed a taxonomy of pragmatic markers which distinguishes between basic pragmatic markers (signalling the illocutionary force of the utterance), commentary markers

(signalling a comment on the basic message), parallel markers (including some vocatives) where the message signalled is different from the basic message, and discourse markers. Basic markers are illustrated by performative expressions (*'I promise that I will be there on time'*) and by pragmatic idioms such as *please*. Commentary markers can be of several kinds. For example, *frankly* comments on the manner in which the message is conveyed. *Fortunately* is an assessment marker signalling the speaker's evaluation of the basic message. Evidential markers are illustrated by *certainly* and *conceivably*. On the other hand, *after all* would be a discourse marker since it signals the relationship of the utterance in which it is placed to the preceding utterance:

Mary has gone home. After all, she was sick.

Parallel markers can be illustrated by vocatives and by conversational management markers such as *now* or *okay*.

Many pragmatic markers do not fit easily into this framework. Fraser (1996) did for instance not include *well* or *oh* as pragmatic markers and there is no consensus about what to do with pauses or hesitation and reformulation markers, especially if they do not seem to qualify as words (*uhm, erm*).

5. Pragmatic markers and multifunctionality

Pragmatic markers have a number of different functions depending on the context. This raises the question whether they have one meaning or many meanings. The problem is accentuated by the fact that most items described as pragmatic markers also have uses which can be described in syntactic terms as clausal constituents, although there are differences between individual markers in this respect. Stenström (1990b:162) illustrates this by means of a comparison between *yeah*, which occurs as a pragmatic marker (Stenström's 'discourse item') in 100% of the examples in the London-Lund Corpus, *of course* which occurs as a pragmatic marker in 11% of the examples and *well* as a pragmatic marker in 86% of the instances. Furthermore, some items have clause-constituent and pragmatic marker functions which are clearly distinguishable from each other (compare the manner adverb *well* and the pragmatic marker *well*), while for other items the distinction is less clear-cut (compare the epistemic adverb *surely* and the pragmatic marker *surely*). To complicate the picture, even in their use as pragmatic marker most items are multifunctional.

What first comes to mind as a solution to the multifunctionality of the pragmatic markers is homonymy. Homonymy would imply that the number of markers is multiplied in order to establish a one form – one function relationship. In the monosemy approach, on the other hand, each pragmatic marker is associated with a single abstract meaning functioning

as the common denominator for the different contextually determined meanings or functions of the marker (meaning minimalism rather than meaning maximalism).

An alternative to monosemy is to explain multifunctionality as the result of polysemy: different meanings or functions can be related as extensions from a core (prototype). Kroon (1995) and Hansen (1998) both advocate polysemy. The polysemy approach is often combined with or a prerequisite for the diachronic analysis of pragmatic markers in the framework of grammaticalization theory (Traugott and Dasher 2002; Schwenter and Traugott 2000 on the development of the discourse marker *fact*₃).

A promising approach to describing the multifunctionality of pragmatic markers is to regard them as constructions. Constructions are pairings of form and meaning, including the pragmatic constraints associated with the form (Östman 2006).

Finally, it should be mentioned that the notion of a unitary meaning of pragmatic markers is also compatible with relevance theory. In this case relevance-theoretical principles are used to provide a unified account of the different functions of pragmatic markers. See e.g. Jucker (1993) on *well*, which is shown to serve the function of restoring a breach of common ground.

6. Theoretical approaches to the study of pragmatic markers

Pragmatic markers can have an almost infinite number of functions depending on the context. Moreover they can overlap with other markers in some of their meanings. Describing and constraining the multifunctionality of pragmatic markers is therefore a challenging task. This is reflected in the richness of theoretical frameworks which have been suggested. Pragmatic markers can be accommodated in speech act theory, as shown by Brown and Levinson's (1987) analysis of them as markers of illocutionary force (illocutionary force indicating devices 'ifids') or as speech act adverbials (Mittwoch 1976; Andersson 1976). In more recent descriptions the context has been extended beyond the utterance in which the pragmatic marker is situated and also includes social and contextual factors. Östman (1995) has for instance suggested that pragmatic markers can have meanings with regard to social and cultural parameters such as politeness, discourse coherence or involvement.

The importance of a deeper understanding of what goes on in discourse is illustrated by Schiffrin (1987). According to Schiffrin, we must go beyond a surface description of discourse and study the layers of meaning of which it is made up: exchange (turns, adjacency pairs), information structure (the speaker's and hearer's knowledge state), action

(speech acts), participation framework (speaker, hearer). Pragmatic markers (discourse markers) achieve coherence by indexically pointing to and integrating these domains or meanings in discourse (See Section 2 above). Cf. also Redeker 1990 for a coherence approach to pragmatic markers.

The development of grammaticalization theory has led to many innovative studies of pragmatic markers. Diachronic research into the origin and development of pragmatic markers has tended to explain multifunctionality as the result of grammaticalization. In grammaticalization theory the focus is on the systematic semantic and syntactic developments of lexical elements into elements which have lost most of their semantic content and gained pragmatic meaning, and have undergone grammatical changes at the same time. Traugott (1995) and Traugott and Dasher (2002) have for instance illustrated the different stages in the semantic development of *in fact*, *besides*, *indeed* into pragmatic markers and the conditions leading to their grammaticalization. The term used by Erman & Kotsinas (1993) and Aijmer (1997) to describe the development of lexical elements to pragmatic markers is *pragmaticalization*, which focuses on the semantic bleaching and pragmatic enrichment characteristic of the changes to pragmatic markers. The term *pragmaticalization* is also used in the model proposed by Dostie (2004). Degand and Simon-Vandenberghe (forthcoming) takes up the

issue of the connection between grammaticalization, pragmaticalization and (inter)subjectification.

Relevance theory also provides a useful framework for analysing pragmatic markers. In particular, this theory (see especially Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995) draws attention to the role of pragmatic markers of facilitating the hearer's task of decoding the message. Pragmatic markers are viewed as signals guiding the hearer's utterance interpretation. They thus contribute to relevance understanding by reducing the processing effort needed by the hearer to reach the intended interpretation. Examples of approaches using a relevance-theoretical framework to analyse pragmatic markers are Blakemore (1987), (1992), Watts (1988). Blass (1990), Jucker (1993), Ifantidou (2000), Andersen (2001), Ler (2006).

Conversation analytic approaches (CA) (see e.g. Tsui 1994) capture the fact that pragmatic markers need to be described in relation to the conversational or discourse context. In CA the relevant context is formed by the turn and the exchange (adjacency pair) as well as by larger sequences of action. A well-known study is Heritage's analysis of *oh* as a change-of-state token marking a change of knowledge-state from uninformed to informed (1984). Cf. also Hakulinen's (1998) analysis of the Finnish *nyt* ('now') using conversation analytic notions. Pragmatic markers can also mark pre-closing in a (telephone) conversation.

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) for example identified ways in which pragmatic markers such as *OK* and *well* can signal that the participants want to move to farewells and close the conversation. Another important function of pragmatic markers is to mark a response as dispreferred, for instance because it disagrees with a preceding assessment (Pomerantz 1984).

The multifunctionality of pragmatic markers has also been analysed in the framework of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Travis 2006). The different meanings and functions of pragmatic markers are described by a set of definitions in terms of semantic components or features (cf. also Wierzbicka 1976, 1994; Goddard 1994; Fischer 1998).

Many approaches to pragmatic markers have been influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), in particular by the distinction of three metafunctions: experiential, interpersonal and textual (see for instance Halliday 2004). In Halliday's model pragmatic markers are textual or interpersonal (rather than experiential). They are typically placed in initial position in the clause, which is regarded in SFL as thematic, so that they form then, together with the experiential Theme, a 'multiple Theme'. Pragmatic markers with a textual function, which are called *continuatives* in SFL, are said "to signal a move in the discourse: a response, in dialogue, or a new move to the next point if the same speaker is continuing" (Halliday 2004: 81). Common continuatives are said to be

yes, no, well, oh, now. Interpersonal elements, on the other hand, are modal comment adjuncts (e.g., *certainly, in my opinion, frankly, honestly*), which express “the speaker or writer’s judgement on or attitude to the content of the message” (Halliday 2004: 81). Also vocatives are considered as interpersonal elements, not contributing to the experiential content of the clause.

The distinction between interpersonal and textual has been used by Brinton (1996, 2008) to group pragmatic markers into two main classes. For example, discourse markers have a discourse-marking or textual function which relates to the structuring of discourse as text and an interpersonal function which relates to the expression of speaker attitudes. Among the textual functions are initiating and ending discourse, marking boundaries in the discourse, signalling topic shift and repairing discourse. The interpersonal function describes the use of pragmatic markers to express responses and attitudes as well as solidarity and face-saving.

7. Methodology

In studies of pragmatic markers the emphasis is on (preferably spoken) corpus data. Corpora make it possible to investigate the distribution of

pragmatic markers in speech and writing and in different registers.

English pragmatic markers have for instance been studied in the London-Lund Corpus (Aijmer 2002, Stenström 1990a and b, Svartvik 1980) and in the Bergen Corpus of London Teenager language (COLT) (Andersen 2001, Stenström and Andersen 1996). The MICASE corpus (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) has been used to study hedges (see e.g. Mauranen 1994). Van Bogaert (in press) relies on the spoken component of the International Corpus of English – Great-Britain (ICE-GB).

We are now also able to study pragmatic markers in earlier periods of the language thanks to the availability of historical corpora such as *A corpus of English dialogues 1560-1760* (Kytö and Walker 2006). The dialogues come from such text types as trial proceedings, witness depositions, drama comedy, didactic works and prose fiction over a 200-year period. The corpus has for instance been used to study hedges in older English (Culpeper and Kytö 1999).

Pragmatic markers have been studied in a cross-linguistic perspective on the basis of parallel corpora, which allow one to set up inter-linguistic equivalents, going from source to target language and back to source. (For English-Swedish and English-Dutch, see e.g. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg 2003; Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer

2002/2003); further, comparative work is done on the basis of learner corpora (corpora of non-native speakers' English, see below).

Recently the development of multi-modal corpus resources has made it possible to study the use of gestures co-occurring with linguistic elements such as backchannels which are used to mark 'active listenership' (Knight and Adolphs 2007).

8. Pragmatic markers in the languages of the world

The largest number of detailed studies deals with pragmatic markers in English. Some English markers have been researched extensively. For example, *well* has been examined by Svartvik (1980), Carlson (1984), Schiffrin (1987), Watts (1989), Schourup (1985, 2001), Jucker (1993), Greasley (1994), Norrick (2001), Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg (2003), amongst others.

Regional and social varieties of English are a rich source for the study for pragmatic markers. Among the non-standard markers *like* has attracted a lot of interest (Romaine and Lange 1991, Miller and Weinert 1995, Andersen 2001), especially the sociolinguistic spread of the quotative *like* (Dailey-O'Cain 2000). *Like* has been associated with non-standard varieties as well as with American English. Both *like* and

innit are frequent in adolescent language (Andersen 2001 and Stenström and Andersen 1996). In a number of studies Janet Holmes has investigated the use of several pragmatic markers by speakers of New Zealand English, with particular reference to gender differences (*sort of* (1980), *you know* (1986), *of course* (1988)). Vivian de Klerk has studied *well* in Xhosa English, a subvariety of Black South African English (2004) and shown that there are both similarities and differences with Standard English. The characteristics of pragmatic markers in Singlish (Singapore English) have been dealt with by Gupta (2006). According to Gupta, pragmatic markers can become stereotypes marking the group and hence be used in fiction and for humorous effects. Sebba and Tate (1986) have studied how agreement markers such as *you know what I mean* are used in British Black English.

French linguists have taken an interest in pragmatic markers for a long time. An early contrastive study involving French is Albrecht (1976), which looks at French equivalents of the German marker *eigentlich*. In French linguistics the focus has been primarily on connectives and reformulation markers, as exemplified by studies such as Roulet (1983, 2006) and Rossari (e.g. 1994, 2000, 2006), which deal primarily with connectives ('connecteurs pragmatiques') such as *donc*, *après tout*. Roulet adopts a modular methodology with modules restricted to information which can be interrelated in the discourse organisation

(Roulet, Filliettaz and Grobet 2001). Drescher and Frank-Job (2006) is a theoretically and methodologically oriented study of discursive markers in the Romance languages.

Important research has been carried out on the so-called 'ponctuants' (Vincent 1993) in Canadian French. In Vincent's mainly sociolinguistic study the markers are treated as discourse variables which are realised differently depending on the social context. Vincent (2005) discusses the non-standard *par exemple*, *genre* and *style* in their function to signal discourse relations. Within the same sociolinguistic tradition Dines (1980) and Dubois (1993) have written about so-called extension particles (e.g. *tout ça* 'and all that') in a corpus of spoken Montréal French.

Other pioneering work on pragmatic markers, both synchronic and diachronic, has been carried out by Hansen. In her 1998 monograph she discusses the markers *bon*, *ben*, *eh bien*, *puis*, *donc*, *alors*. Pragmatic markers are characteristic of French dialects. Pusch (2000) discusses preverbal pragmatic markers in Gascon traditionally referred to as 'enunciatives' which have long been a puzzle to Romance linguists.

Schwenter (2001) discusses additive particles in Spanish. Moreover, much work on pragmatic markers in Spanish has been carried out by the research group Val.Es.Co (Valencia Colloquial Spanish) by Pons Bordería (2006), Briz (1993a and b), Martín Zorraquino and

Portóles (1999), Ferrer and Pons Borderia (2001). Italian discourse markers have been discussed in several works by Bazzanella (e.g. 1990 and 2006).

In the Swedish tradition pragmatic markers have often been referred to as speech act adverbials (Andersson 1975). Pragmatic markers are difficult to distinguish from modal particles and are often treated together. Pragmatic markers in Swedish have been discussed by Eriksson (1988), Ottesjö (2005), Lehti-Eklund (2003), Saari (1984), Erman and Kotsinas (1993) and Eriksson (1992) discuss the Swedish particle *ba* used by adolescents and a close functional correspondence to *you know*. Lindström and Wide (2005) are interested in pragmatic markers of the *you know* type and their derivation as pragmatic markers. Among lesser known varieties we can mention Östman's study of pragmatic markers in Solv, a dialect of Finland Swedish (e.g. 2006).

Danish discourse particles have been described by Davidsen-Nielsen (1996). He distinguishes between grammatical discourse particles related to modality and evidentiality which can be regarded as modal particles and lexical discourse markers.

In the Finnish tradition the Conversation Analytic approach is strong. Hakulinen (1998) has studied the particle *nyt* ('now') in different sequential contexts and Sorjonen (1997) has devoted her doctoral dissertation to response markers in Finnish.

Hebrew pragmatic markers have interested a number of scholars, for example Ariel (1998), Shloush (1998) and Ziv (1998). Yael Maschler (1998) has described the Hebrew markers occurring at frameshifts in casual Hebrew talk-in-interaction. See also Maschler (in press).

Among other studies of non-European languages we can mention Nicolle's (2000) study of particles in Amharic and Swahili using the relevance-theoretic notion of 'interpretive use'.

9. The diachronic study of pragmatic markers

Two tendencies can be noticed in the study of pragmatic markers in historical pragmatics. On the one hand, there is a lot of interest in pragmatic markers at earlier stages of the language. Culpeper and Kytö have for example studied hedges in Early Modern English (1999). Bertin (2002) looks at the emergence of the connector *en effet* in medieval French. On the other hand, researchers have taken an interest in the semantic evolution of pragmatic markers from diverse lexical and grammatical sources by processes such as grammaticalization (Traugott 1995 and Traugott and Dasher 2002) or pragmaticalization (Erman and Kotsinas 1993, Aijmer 1997). Schwenter and Traugott (2000) have demonstrated how the development of *in fact* to a pragmatic marker can be explained by invoking the notion of (pragmatic) scalarity. Brinton

(1996) has studied a number of pragmatic markers diachronically and more recently (2008) so-called comment clauses (comment clauses with *say, I mean, if you will, as it were*, comment clauses with *look, what's more* and *what's else, I gather* and *I find*). Historical analyses of individual pragmatic markers also include *well* (Finell 1992, Jucker 1997, Defour forthcoming) and *now* (Defour 2008). Diachronic analyses are furthermore found of markers in languages other than English. To give an example, Hakulinen and Seppänen (1992) discuss the Finnish verb *kato*'s path from a verb to a particle.

10. The contrastive study of pragmatic markers

From an intra-linguistic point-of-view pragmatic markers can be compared on the basis of similarities and differences. Smith and Jucker (2000) group together *actually, in fact* and *well* on the basis of their function to mark discrepancy between propositional attitudes. The subtle differences between the functions of *actually* and *in fact* are also the topic of Oh's detailed study of these words in American English (Oh 2000).

Another intra-lingual contrastive study is Jucker and Smith's examination of *yeah, like, you know*. *Yeah* can be analysed from the addressee's perspective as a reception marker, *like* is a speaker-oriented information-

centred presentation marker and *you know* as an addressee-oriented presentation marker (Jucker and Smith 1998).

Cross-linguistic comparisons often concern cognates. Pragmatic markers may have cognates in other languages. The Germanic languages provide many such cases. An example is Swedish *alltså* (Aijmer 2007), Norwegian *altså* (Vaskó and Fretheim 1997), German *also* (Fernandez-Villanueva 2007). It is therefore of interest to compare them semantically and pragmatically. Cognates also exist across language families as a result of borrowing. Simon-Vandenberg and Willems (forthcoming) study the semantic-pragmatic development of English *actually* ~ French *actuellement*, and English *in fact* ~ French *en fait/de fait/au fait*. Such diachronic contrastive studies throw light on general principles furthering or hindering grammaticalization.

Also non-cognate words which are semantic-pragmatic equivalents have been the object of contrastive studies. Fleischman and Yaguello (2004) were interested in showing that French *genre* and English *like* had developed the same pragmatic functions although their lexical origin was different. That markers in different languages can develop in similar ways is also shown in a study by Fraser & Malmaud-Makowski (1996). They investigated pragmatic markers in English and Spanish and showed that the functions of denial and contrast corresponded closely.

Contrastive research in this area has shown that relationships between so-called equivalents (whether cognates or not) are complex, and that there is most often partial rather than complete overlap in semantic and pragmatic meanings. This is for instance the case with relational markers such as English *on the contrary* or French *au contraire* (Lewis 2006a). An early contrastive study of Italian *infatti* and English *in fact* based on the Italian speaker's intuitions showed some similarities of function but mostly differences (Bruti 1999). Paul Takahara (1998) has studied *anyway* and its equivalents in Japanese. As demonstrated by Angela Downing (2006), etymological cognates are not a guarantee of functional similarities. The correspondences of English *surely* are not Spanish cognates such as *seguro*, *seguramente* and we need to look for equivalents which are not etymologically related (2006). While English *actually* and French *actuellement* have the same origin, the former but not the latter developed into a pragmatic marker (though there are signs of emergent pragmaticalization in spoken French), as shown in Simon-Vandenberg and Willems (forthcoming). Stenström (2006) has suggested English correspondences for the Spanish markers *o sea* and *pues*. Willems and Demol (2006) used a multilingual corpus (English, French, Dutch) to carry out a contrastive analysis not only of *vraiment* and *really* but also of their Dutch counterparts *echt* and *werkelijk*.

Well has been the object of several contrastive studies: English-Swedish-Dutch, Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003); English-Norwegian, Johansson (2006); English-Italian, Bazzanella and Morra (2000); English-Spanish, García Vizcaino and Martínez-Cabeza (2005), English-Spanish-Catalan, Cuenca (2008). For the study of *well*, Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2003) used the translations in the other language as ‘semantic mirrors’. The same methodology was used to investigate the comparisons of *of course* in Swedish and Dutch (Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2002/2003, Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg 2004, Aijmer et al. 2006). Comparisons between German and Dutch are for instance Westheide (1985) on German *wohl* and Dutch *wel*, and Foolen (2006) on German *doch* and Dutch *toch*.

The methodology may involve the use of parallel or contrastive corpora (Altenberg and Aijmer 2001). On the basis of the English – Norwegian Parallel Corpus) Hasselgård compares English *now* and Norwegian *nå* using the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Celle (1999), on the other hand, contrasts *now* with the German *nun* and *jetzt*. Italian *allora* and French *alors* are studied in terms of convergence and divergence by Bazzanella et al. (2007). Roméro-Trillo (2007) shows that involvement markers such as English *I mean*, *you know* and *you see* are used differently in English and Spanish and Matamala (2007) studies the functions of *oh* in English sitcoms and their translations into Catalan.

For a contrastive study of pragmatic markers in English and Catalan oral narratives, see Montserrat González (2004).

11. Pragmatic markers in translation studies

Pragmatic markers have also been of interest to translators. Because of their multifunctionality and context-boundness they are difficult to translate. Often they are not translated literally but are rendered by words or constructions from many different word classes. Moreover they are often omitted from the translation (Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg 2003, Altenberg and Aijmer 2002). Matamala (2007) has studied the strategies used to translate *oh* in English sitcoms in the versions dubbed into Catalan. Compare also Chaume (2004) on discourse markers in audiovisual translating. Bazzanella and Morra (2000) stress the specific problems of translating discourse markers, illustrating this with the translations of *well* into Italian. In the study by Cuenca (2008) the focus is on what we can discover about the multifunctionality of *well* on the basis of a contrastive analysis of the film *Four weddings and a funeral* and its translations in Spanish and Catalan.

12. Pragmatic markers in native versus non-native speaker communication

The study of pragmatic markers has entered a number of new fields such as second language acquisition ('interlanguage pragmatics'). We can now take advantage of learner corpora to make comparisons between native and non-native speakers of English. One of the first studies was by Nikula (1996), who compared the use of pragmatic markers with a hedging function in conversations by native (English) speakers with non-native Finnish speakers. It is especially the existence of spoken learner corpora such as the LINDSEI Corpus (Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage) which invites scholars to make comparisons (de Cock 2004).

Simone Müller (2005; cf also Müller 2004) has examined a corpus of German learners' use of *so*, *well*, *you know* and *like* in comparison with native speakers' use. Buysse (2007) examines how Belgian native speakers of Dutch use *so* in different types of question-answer sequences in an English interview setting. The results of such studies show that learners use pragmatic markers differently from native speakers. A similar study by Romero-Trillo (2002) described the situation in non-native language as the pragmatic fossilization of discourse markers. Llinares-García and Romero-Trillo (2006) is a study of discourse markers in the EFL classroom. Another study by the same authors showed that native and non-native teachers used discourse

markers differently in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) contexts and much more frequently than Spanish teachers in a native context (Llinares-García and Romero-Trillo 2008).

Hasselgren (2002) studied what she referred to as ‘small words’ as markers of learner fluency focusing on young Norwegian learners of English. Gilquin (2008) has shown that the frequency and distribution of hesitation markers (including *like*, *I mean*, *you know*) was different across native/non-native speaker contexts (see also Fuller 2003).

13. Pragmatic markers and sociolinguistic aspects

Social variation in the use of pragmatic markers is so far a fairly unexplored field. One of the earliest studies to draw attention to the social background (geographical region, education, rurality) of pragmatic markers is Ferrara’s (1997) study of *anyway*. Ferrara suggests that pragmatic markers should be studied from a variationist perspective in the social, historical and functional domains. Compare also Ferrara and Bell (1995) who show that ethnicity is an important factor explaining the spread of *be+like*.

Janet Holmes has shown in several studies that pragmatic markers are used differently by men and by women (cf. Holmes and Stubbe 1995 and the articles by Holmes mentioned in Section 5). Erman

(1992) has focused on male and female usage of pragmatic markers in same and mixed-sex conversation.

Age is another important factor. Dailey-O’Cain (2000) found for instance that younger people use *like* more often than adults. Compare also Andersen (2001), who showed on the basis of a comparison of the material in COLT (the Bergen Corpus of London Teenager Language) with the BNC that adolescents rather than adults are responsible for the spread of *like* as a marker, and that *like* was particularly popular among teenagers from the highest social class. The use of *be like* as a quotative marker in the speech of British and Canadian youth was examined by Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999).

Social class can affect the use of pragmatic markers, as shown in Macaulay’s work along Bernsteinian lines. Macaulay (2002) found age, gender and social class differences in two sets of Scottish data that did not appear to be based on the role of shared information implied by *you know*. A similar study is Huspek (1989). Huspek discusses both *you know* and *I think* with regard to social class. He shows that *you know* and *I think* have different functions for working-class speakers and power-holding speakers. Simon-Vandenberg (2002) also verified Bernstein’s hypothesis (1974) that *I think* is a middle class expression on the basis of conversation data from the BNC. She found indications that there are

social class differences in usage. More work on the link between pragmatic markers and social factors is called for.

Another sociolinguistic line of investigation is the usage of particular pragmatic markers in specific registers and genres. One genre which has received attention from this point-of-view is political discourse. Simon-Vandenberg (1998; 2000) examines the use of *I think* by political speakers as compared with its use in casual conversation and Fetzer (2008) considers the use of cognitive verbs in general in political discourse. Fetzer has also studied politicians' uses of hedges such as *sort of* and *kind of* (Fetzer 2009).

14. Pragmatic markers and the future

So far prosodic features of pragmatic markers have been largely neglected and recent approaches now explore the possibility of integrating prosody into the analysis in a more systematic way. Prosody plays an important role in distinguishing various uses of pragmatic markers. For instance, the temporal adverb *now* and the pragmatic marker *now* tend to be realised differently from a prosodic point-of-view (Aijmer 2002). Different uses of Swedish *men* ('but') have been shown to have different prosodic realisations (Horne et al. 2001). Ferrara (1996) has shown how the intonation pattern differs for the adverbial and the

discourse marker use of *anyway*. A similar study has been carried out by Wichmann et al. (forthcoming), which studies the prosody of *of course* in relation to its position in the clause and its function. An explanation is provided in terms of grammaticalization. It is clear that more work in this area is called for and will yield interesting insights in the connection between grammar and the role of intonation in expressing stance and structuring information.

From a variationist point-of-view we envisage a further expansion of the field to include detailed studies of pragmatic markers in various text types, studies in more languages as well as more studies comparing native and non-native usage. We also need more studies of the diachronic developments of pragmatic markers and studies of pragmatic markers at earlier stages of the language.

Another interesting avenue of further research is the investigation of semantic fields. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg (2004) made a case for setting up a semantic field of ‘expectation’, based on cross-linguistic data (English, Swedish, Dutch) gathered from translation corpora. Lewis (2006b), looking at adversative relational markers (English and French) shows how semantic maps can be set up using comparable corpora. More work in this area using more languages would deepen our insight into principles of semantic-pragmatic developments.

Finally, we need more theoretical reflection on the category of pragmatic markers and its place in the grammar. The concepts of grammaticalization, pragmaticalization, (inter)subjectification need to be used only when the criteria under which they apply have been strictly defined. Such reflection involves defining not only the concepts themselves but also what we mean by grammar and grammatical categories. In the wake of increasingly more thorough research into natural spoken language data the traditional definitions may be in need of reconsideration.

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