

Work Package 4: Discourse Markers

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Research question: what does a detailed analysis of this formally and functionally highly complex category tell us about the process of intersubjectification and its correlation with grammaticalization?

Empirical and theoretical research on discourse markers has exploded in the last 20 years. Seminal books in this area include Schifffrin (1987), Jucker & Ziv (1998), Lenk (1998), Hansen (1998), Andersen & Fretheim (2000), Fischer (2000, 2006), and Aijmer (2002). Nevertheless, there are still major theoretical and descriptive challenges in this field of research. First, we need synchronic monolingual studies to deepen our insight into the multifunctionality of individual discourse markers in order to arrive at a satisfactory account of meaning relations on the semantic and pragmatic levels. Second, we also need more cross-linguistic studies to see to what extent similar discourse functions are expressed in the languages of the world (see also Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberghe 2006), and what are the major linguistic means (lexical, grammatical, syntactic) to express those functions in individual languages. Third, we want to know more about the way discourse markers develop. The present project specifically addresses the third, diachronic challenge, but as there is no diachrony without synchrony, the synchronic challenges will also be met.

Various studies of individual discourse markers have shown that they develop from lexical words and gradually acquire a basically pragmatic function. Such new meanings arise through the conventionalization of pragmatic inferences (see e.g. Schwenter & Traugott 2000). An example is the word *indeed*, which originated as a prepositional phrase in which the noun had full lexical content and which then developed into an adverb and discourse marker via different implicatures. Such changes have been shown to typically involve grammatical shifts (changes of syntactic position) as well as semantic ones (from concrete to more abstract, from propositional to textual and interpersonal meanings). An essential factor in the development is the rhetorical use of the words. A characteristic of pragmatic markers is their polysemy and multifunctionality, and indeed is a case in point.

There are several issues to be addressed with respect to the grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification of discourse markers. One is the question whether or to what extent 'grammaticalization' is an appropriate term to characterize these changes. That such words undergo changes in their meaning (type) is obvious, and so is the relevance of the concept (inter)subjectification. But it is less obvious that we can in always speak of grammaticalization. The usual parameters and criteria need to be examined closely in general and in individual cases. The study of discourse particles will thus directly focus on the relations between the processes of grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification (cf. Diewald 2006, Diewald in press).

A second issue is to what extent the same processes take place in words with similar functions in different languages, i.e., the question of cross-linguistically valid

grammaticalization channels (if the term is appropriate) for discourse markers, leading from definable sets of source items via comparable stages of development to similar, more grammatical target items. In order to answer this question it is useful to look at a semantic or functional field and study cross-linguistic equivalents. Within the domain of causal connectives, it has indeed already been shown that often cross-linguistic equivalents do not show a similar synchronic semantic distribution (Degand & Pander Maat 2003, Degand 2004, 2005, Willems & Demol 2006, Simon & Degand in press). The question remains however to what extent these semantic divergences are the result of different stages of development.

One semantic field which is rich in discourse markers is that of 'expectation'. This field is furthermore at the cross-roads with evidentiality and modality (WP1 and WP2; cf. Chafe 1986, Delancey 1997, Nuyts 2001b). In the terms of Chafe (1986), these markers reflect the speaker's view on the match between his or her own knowledge and that of the addressee. Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg (2004) propose to refine Chafe's knowledge-based framework into a more rhetorically oriented one (White 2003), in which the focus is on how speakers position their utterances for various rhetorical purposes vis-à-vis other utterances. By studying translations of three English expectation markers (in fact, actually and really) into Dutch and Swedish, cross-linguistic data were instrumental for enlarging the semantic field as well as for gaining insight into the multifunctionality of the individual markers. In this work package we want to extend this research to include more markers and more languages. We will focus on words which emphasize the common ground as well as those which express the speaker's awareness that the common ground has been fractured - this will not only include such 'obviously' related words as in actual fact, as a matter of fact, in truth, but also corrective items such as or rather, particularizing ones such as in particular, especially, dismissive ones such as anyway and distractive ones such as by the way, incidentally.

A second semantic or functional field that will be targeted in the project concerns the so-called 'modal particles' of German and Dutch, i.e., items like ja in (5).

(5) Es soll ja auch schwimmen.

'It is of course meant to float'

The modal particles of German are known to have undergone a far-reaching process of grammaticalization since Old High German (Hentschel 1986, Diewald 1999b, Autenrieth 2000, Diewald & Ferraresi 2005), which more or less follows the known semantic and structural regularities of the development of discourse markers. However, the distribution of modal particles differs markedly from that of discourse markers such as turn-final ja in (6), which asks for agreement and initiates transition of the turn to the hearer.

(6) Und dann kommt der Tisch, ja?

'And the table comes next, right?'

Only the modal particles are syntactically integrated into the sentence and subject to the restriction of occurring only in the middle field. Discourse markers like ja in (6)

are not syntactically integrated, not restricted by syntactic rules, and may appear in any position in a turn. While one might assume at first sight that the modal particles of at least German are simply the equivalents of discourse markers in other languages, this turns out to be wrong: German has discourse markers too, some of which have developed from items which had modal particle functions before (e.g. ja, aber). The hypothesis underlying the investigation is that the modal particles of German cover an intermediate domain between the functions of what could be called 'text-connecting' elements such as conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs, on the one hand, and 'discourse-structuring' elements such as turn signals, hesitation markers, etc. on the other. Taking into account that languages like English, which have been the object of extensive research about discourse marking devices, do not have a functional class comparable to the modal particles in German, the study of these particles will provide important clues for our understanding of the interrelations between 'text-connecting' and 'discourse-marking' elements.

A third functional field that will be covered is that of clausal connectives. We will focus on causals, temporals and contrastives in Dutch, French, English, and German. There has already been extensive research on these connectives, but to our knowledge, no systematic, cross-linguistic studies exist on the way these connectives grammaticalized. For one thing, it remains to be investigated whether (i) the hypothesis that meanings go from objective to subjective holds for all types of connectives, (ii) in more than one language, and, (iii) whether there are restrictions to this process of subjectification. The relevance of these questions has been documented in Stukker (2005). She argues that in their connective functions Dutch *dus* 'so' and *daarom* 'that's why' seem to go against the subjectification hypothesis: modern Dutch *daarom* appears to show a tendency toward 'objectification', and for *dus* subjective and objective uses seem to have arisen simultaneously. A related issue concerns Traugott's (1995) grammaticalization cline for discourse markers: clause-internal adverbial > sentence adverbial > discourse particle (of which discourse markers are a subtype). With respect to this, it is interesting to observe that within the domain of causal connectives some of them have already acquired the status of discourse marker: *dus* and *donc* 'so' in Dutch and French, respectively (Evers-Vermeul 2005, Hybertie 1996), while others clearly have not, like *daarom*, *daardoor*, *want*, *omdat*, *aangezien* in Dutch or *de ce fait*, *c'est pourquoi*, *dès lors*, *car* or *parce que* in French. The issue at stake is to investigate whether these connectives are 'somewhere' on this 'discourse marker cline', in which case we should assume that this cline describes the inescapable general development for connectives, or whether some of these connectives will 'forever' resist such development. In this respect, an interesting line of investigation is to take spoken language into account. If we accept the idea that speech is a better indicator of language development than writing, an initial synchronic intra-linguistic but cross-modal investigation of a given linguistic structure should give us indications of the stage of development a linguistic construction is involved in. In other words, if a linguistic item, say the French causal connective *parce que*, shows significant semantic divergence in the spoken and the written mode, this cross-modal divergence could be interpreted as an indicator of ongoing change. The latter would then be expected to be in agreement with the 'discourse marker cline'. Work supporting the relevance and the feasibility of this type of work includes Simon & Degand (in press) on *parce que* 'because' vs. *car* 'for'. In addition, of course, diachronic data will be taken into consideration in order to confirm or disconfirm the cline of semantic evolution.

