Discourse Markers Language, Meaning, and Context

Chapter · April 2015
DOI: 10.1002/9781118584194.ch9

CITATIONS
27

READS
1,597

2 authors, including:

Yael Maschler
University of Haifa
40 PUBLICATIONS 344 CITATIONS

All content following this page was uploaded by Yael Maschler on 15 January 2016.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file. All in-text references underlined in blue are added to the original document and are linked to publications on ResearchGate, letting you access and read them immediately.
Discourse Markers

Language, Meaning, and Context

YAEL MASCHLER AND DEBORAH SCHIFFRIN

0 Introduction

The production of coherent discourse is an interactive process that requires speakers to draw upon several different types of communicative knowledge that complement grammatical knowledge of sound, form, and meaning per se. Two aspects of communicative knowledge closely related to one another are expressive and social: the ability to use language to display personal and social identities, to convey attitudes and perform actions, and to negotiate relationships between self and other. Others include a cognitive ability to represent concepts and ideas through language and a textual ability to organize forms, and convey meanings, within units of language longer than a single sentence.

Discourse markers – expressions such as oh, well, y’know, and but – are one set of linguistic items that function in cognitive, expressive, social, and textual domains. Although there were scattered studies of discourse markers in the early 1980s, their study since then has abounded in various branches of linguistics and allied fields. Markers have been studied in a variety of languages besides English, including Catalan (Cuenca and Marin 2012), Chinese (Biq 1990; Ljungqvist 2010; Miracle 1989; Wang, Tsai, and Ya-Ting 2010), Croatian (Dedaic 2005), Danish (Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010), Dutch (Mazeland and Huiskes 2001; van Bergen et al. 2011), Estonian (Keevallik 2003, 2006, 2012, in press), Finnish (Hakulinen 1998, in press; Laakso and Sorjonen 2010; Sorjonen 2001), French (Cadiot et al. 1985; Degand and Fagard 2011; Hansen 1998), German (W. Abraham 1991; Barske and Golato 2010; Golato 2010, forthcoming; Imo 2010), Hebrew (Ariel 1998, 2010; Livnat and Yatsiv 2003; Maschler 1997a, 2009, 2012; Miller Shapiro 2012; Ziv 1998, 2008), Hungarian (Der and Marko 2010; Vasko 2000), Icelandic (Hilmisdóttir 2011, in press), Indonesian (Wouk 1998, 2001), Italian (Bazzanella 1990, 2006; Bruti 1999; Mauri and Giacalone Ramat 2012; Visconti 2005,
2009), Japanese (Cook 1992; Fuji 2000; Matsumoto 1988; McGloin and Konishi 2010; Onodera 2004), Korean (Ahn 2009; Park 1998), Latin (Kroon 1998; Ochoa 2003), Mayan (Brody 1987, 1989; Zavala 2001), Portuguese (da Silva 2006; Macario Lopes 2011), Russian (Bolden 2003, 2008, in press; Grenoble 2004), Spanish (Koike 1996; Roggia 2012; Schwenter 1996; Torres 2002), Swedish (Lindström in press; Lindström and Wide 2005), Taiwanese (Chang and Su 2012), and Yiddish (Matras and Reershemius forthcoming) as well as in sign languages (McKee and Wallingford 2011; Perez Hernandez 2006). They have been examined in a variety of genres and interactive contexts, for example narratives (Koike 1996; Norrick 2001a; Perez Hernandez 2006; Segal, Duchan, and Scott 1991), political discourse (Dedaic 2005; Wilson 1993), healthcare consultations (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994), courtroom discourse (Innes 2010), games (Greaseley 1994; Hoyle 1994), computer-generated tutorial sessions (Moser and Moore 1995), newspapers (Chen and He 2001; De Fina 1997; Tyler, Jefferies, and Davies 1988), and service encounters (Merritt 1984) as well as in a multitude of different language contact situations (see Section 2). Synchronic studies have been supplemented by diachronic analyses of first (Andersen 1996; Andersen et al. 1999; Choi 2010; Gallagher and Craig 1987; Jisa 1987; Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp 1999; Kyratzis, Guo, and Ervin-Tripp 1990; Sprott 1992, 1994) and second language acquisition (Aijmer 2011; Flowerdew and Tauroza 1995; Fung and Carter 2007) as well as in the field of language change (see Section 2).

The studies just mentioned have approached discourse markers from a number of different perspectives. After reviewing and comparing three influential perspectives (Section 1), we summarize a subset of recent studies that have provided a rich and varied empirical base that reveals a great deal about how discourse markers work and what they do (Section 2). Our conclusion revisits one of the central dilemmas still facing discourse-marker research (Section 3).

1 Discourse Markers: Three Perspectives

Perspectives on markers differ in terms of their basic starting point, their definition of discourse markers, and their method of analysis. Here we describe Schiffrin’s discourse perspective (Schiffrin 1987a, 1994a, 1997, 2001, 2006) (Section 1.1); Fraser’s pragmatic approach (1990, 1998, 2006, 2009a) (Section 1.2); and Maschler’s interactional linguistics perspective (1994, 1997a, 2009, 2012) (Section 1.3). We have chosen these approaches not only because they have been influential but also because their differences (Section 1.4) continue to resonate in current research.

1.1 Markers and discourse

Schiffrin’s analysis of discourse markers (1987a) was motivated by several concerns. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Schiffrin was interested in using methods for analyzing language that had been developed by variation theory to account for the use and distribution of forms in discourse. This interest, however, was embedded within a view of discourse not only as a unit of language but also as a process of social interaction (see Heller 2001; Schegloff, this volume). The analysis thus tried to reconcile both methodology (using both quantitative and qualitative methods) and
underlying models (combining those inherited from both linguistics and sociology). Unifying the analysis was the desire to account for the distribution of markers (which markers occurred where? why?) in spoken discourse in a way that attended to both the importance of language (what was the form? its meaning?) and interaction (what was going on – at the moment of use – in the social interaction?).

Schiffrin’s initial work defined discourse markers as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (1987a: 31) – that is, non-obligatory utterance-initial items that function in relation to ongoing talk and text. She proposed that discourse markers could be considered as a set of linguistic expressions comprising members of word classes as varied as conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or), interjections (e.g., oh), adverbs (e.g., now, then), and lexicalized phrases (e.g., y’know, I mean). Also proposed was a discourse model with different planes: a participation framework, information state, ideational structure, action structure, and exchange structure. The specific analyses showed that markers could work at different levels of discourse to connect utterances on either a single plane (1) or across different planes (2). In (1a) and (1b), for example, because connects actions and ideas respectively. In (1a), because connects a request (to complete a task) and the justification for the request:

(1a) Yeh, let’s get back, because she’ll never get home.

In (1b), because connects two idea units or representations of events:

(1b) And they holler Henry!!! Cause they really don’t know!³

In (2), however, but connects an utterance defined on several different planes simultaneously, and hence relates the different planes to one another:

(2) Jack: [The rabbis preach, [“Don’t intermarry”
Freda: [But I did— [But I did say those intermarriages
that we have in this country are healthy.

Freda’s but prefaces an idea unit (“intermarriages are healthy”), displays a participation framework (non-aligned with Jack), realizes an action (a rebuttal during an argument), and seeks to establish Freda as a current speaker in an exchange (open a turn at talk). But in (2) thus has four functions that locate an utterance at the intersection of four planes of talk.

Another aspect of the analysis showed that markers display relationships that are local (between adjacent utterances) and/or global (across wider spans and/or structures of discourse; cf. Lenk 1998). In (3), for example, because (in d) has both local and global functions.

(3) From Schiffrin (1994b: 34); also discussed in Schiffrin (1997)
Debby: a Well some people before they go to the doctor, they talk to a friend, or a neighbor.
   b Is there anybody that uh ...
Henry: c Sometimes it works!
   d Because there’s this guy Louie Gelman.
   e he went to a big specialist,
192  Yael Maschler and Deborah Schiffrin

f and the guy...analyzed it wrong.
[narrative not included]
o So doctors are - well they're not God either!

In (3), because has a local function: it opens a justification (that takes the form of a brief [three-clause] narrative about a friend’s experience) through which Henry supports his claim to a general truth (going to someone other than a doctor works – i.e., can help a medical problem). But notice that Henry then follows this justification with a longer (eight-clause) narrative detailing his friend’s experience. Thus, because also has a global function: because links Sometimes it works (defined retrospectively as an abstract) with a narrative (whose coda is initiated with the complementary discourse marker so also functioning at a global level).

Also considered in Schiffrin’s analysis was the degree to which markers themselves add a meaning to discourse (i.e., as when oh displays information as “new” or “unexpected” to a recipient) or reflect a meaning that is already semantically accessible (e.g., as when but reflects a semantically transparent contrastive meaning). Markers can also occupy intermediate positions between these two extremes: because and so, for example, partially maintain their core meanings as cause/result conjunctions even when they establish metaphorical relationships on non-propositional planes of discourse (cf. Schwenter 1996; Sweetser 1990).

Although the analysis was initiated with an “operational definition” of markers (as mentioned above, “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk”), it concluded with more theoretical definitions of markers. First, Schiffrin attempted a specification of the conditions that would allow a word to be used as a discourse marker: syntactically detachable, initial position, range of prosodic contours, operate at both local and global levels, operate on different planes of discourse (Schiffrin 1987a: 328). Second, she suggested that discourse markers were comparable to indexicals (Schiffrin 1987a: 322–5; cf. Levinson’s 1983: ch. 2 notion of discourse deictics), or, in a broader sociolinguistic framework, contextualization cues (Schiffrin 1987b). This view “provides a way of breaking down two of the key barriers in the definitional divide between markers and particles [in the field of discourse-marker research]” (Schiffrin 2006: 336): the barriers (1) between the view of displaying meaning (markers) and creating it (particles) and (2) whether markers/particles can also portray speaker stance and attitude. Viewing markers as indexicals allows for both the displaying and the creating functions, as well as for anchoring the center of deixis on the speaker, therefore including speaker stance functions. Finally, Schiffrin proposed that, although markers have primary functions (e.g., the primary function of and is on an ideational plane and the primary function of well in the participation framework), their use is multi-functional. It is this multifunctionality on different planes of discourse that helps to integrate the many different simultaneous processes underlying the construction of discourse, and thus helps to create coherence.

1.2 Markers and pragmatics

Like Schiffrin’s approach, Fraser’s (1990, 1998, 2006, 2009a) perspective on discourse markers is embedded within a larger framework that impacts upon the analysis of markers. Fraser’s theoretical framework concerns the meaning of sentences, specifically how one type of pragmatic marker in a sentence may relate the message conveyed by
Discourse Markers

that sentence to the message of a prior sentence. And, in contrast to Schiffrin’s (1987a) approach – whose starting point was to account for the use and distribution of markers in everyday discourse – Fraser’s starting point is the classification of types of pragmatic meaning, and, within that classification, the description of how some pragmatic commentary markers (discourse markers) “signal a relation between the discourse segment which hosts them and the prior discourse segment” (Fraser 2009a: 296).

Fraser’s framework depends upon a differentiation between content and pragmatic meaning. Content meaning is referential meaning: “a more or less explicit representation of some state of the world that the speaker intends to bring to the hearer’s attention by means of the literal interpretation of the sentence” (1990: 385). Pragmatic meaning concerns the speaker’s communicative intention, the direct (not implied) “message the speaker intends to convey in uttering the sentence” (1990: 386). It is conveyed by three different sets of pragmatic markers: basic pragmatic markers (signals of illocutionary force, e.g., *please*), commentary pragmatic markers (encoding of another message that comments on the basic message, e.g., *frankly*), and parallel pragmatic markers (encoding of another message separate from the basic and/or commentary message, e.g., *damn*, vocatives). In a later work, Fraser proposed a fourth type of pragmatic marker – discourse management markers – “which signal a metacomment on the structure of the discourse” (2009b: 893). Discourse markers are one type of commentary pragmatic marker: they are “a class of expressions, each of which signals how the speaker intends the basic message that follows to relate to the prior discourse” (1990: 387), and they all fall into only one of three functional classes: contrastive (prototypically, *but*), elaborative (prototypically, *and*), and inferential (prototypically, *so*) (2009a: 300–1). Fraser (1998) builds upon the sequential function of discourse markers such that discourse markers necessarily specify (i.e., provide commentary on) a relationship between two segments of discourse: this specification is not conceptual but procedural (it provides information on the interpretation of messages; see also Ariel 1998).

As suggested earlier, Fraser’s framework presumes a strict separation between semantics (his content meaning) and pragmatics (his pragmatic meaning): speakers’ use of commentary pragmatic markers – including, critically, discourse markers – has nothing to do with the content meaning of the words (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976; Schiffrin 1987a; see also Norrick 2001b). Similarly, although discourse markers may be homophonous with, as well as historically related to, other forms, they do not function in sentential and textual roles simultaneously: “when an expression functions as a discourse marker, that is its exclusive function in the sentence” (1990: 189).

One consequence of these disjunctive relationships is that multiple functions of markers – including, critically, social-interactional functions – are downplayed (if noted at all) and not open to linguistic explanation. What some scholars (e.g., Ariel 1998, 2010; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Maschler 2002b, 2009, 2012; Pons Bordería 2008; Schiffrin 1987a, 1992; Schwenter 1996) suggest is an interdependence (sometimes clear, sometimes subtle) between content and pragmatic meaning – explained by well-known processes such as semantic bleaching (Bolinger 1977) or metaphorical extensions from a “source domain” (Sweetser 1990) – becomes, instead, a matter of chance (e.g., homophony). Likewise, what scholars working on grammaticization (Brinton, this volume; Traugott 1995a) and particularly grammaticization of discourse markers (see Section 2) have found to be gradual changes in form–function relationships would have to be viewed, instead, as a series of categorical and functional leaps across mutually exclusive classes of form and meaning.
Fraser’s classification of types of pragmatic meaning also has the important effect of redefining the set of expressions often considered as markers. Different markers are excluded for different reasons: whereas oh, for example, is considered akin to a separate sentence, because is viewed as a content formative or an interjection, y’know is identified as a parallel pragmatic marker, and anyway is regarded as a discourse management marker. These classifications create sets that end up containing tremendous internal variation. The large and varied group of interjections (Fraser 1990: 391), for example, includes not only oh but also ah, aha, ouch, yuk (what Goffman 1978 has called response cries); uh-huh, yeah (what Yngve 1970 calls back channels and Schegloff 1981 calls turn-continuers); hey (a summons; see DuBois 1989); and because (which is an interjection when it stands alone as an answer [Fraser 1990: 392] and elsewhere is a content formative [but see Sanders and Stukker 2012; Schlepegrell 1991; Stenstrom 1998]).

1.3 Markers and interactional linguistics

Maschler takes a functional interactional linguistics (Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001) perspective, which, like Schiffrin’s approach, always begins with the text rather than with a theory and asks what a particular discourse marker is doing in the particular contexts in which it is employed. This has led to a focus on the process of metalinguaging. The term builds on Bateson’s concept of metacommunication (1972) and on Becker’s (1988) distinction between language and languaging – a move from an idea of language as something accomplished to the idea of languaging as an ongoing process. Languaging is always performed at two levels of discourse: one can use language to look through language at a world one perceives to exist beyond language, but one can also employ language in order to communicate about the process of using language itself. Discourse markers accomplish languaging about the interaction as opposed to languaging about the extralingual world. Thus, for an utterance to be considered a discourse marker, first and foremost, it must have a metalingual interpretation in the context in which it occurs (Maschler 1994). Rather than referring to the extralingual realm, discourse markers refer to the realm of the text, to the interpersonal relations between its participants (or between speaker and text), and/or to their cognitive processes.

One of the things human beings metalanguage about are the frame shifts (Goffman 1981) in which they are about to engage during interaction. And they tend to do so with constructions that over time are repeated and may eventually grammaticize (Hopper 1987) into discourse markers. Participants thus employ discourse markers at conversational action (Ford and Thompson 1996) boundaries, in order to construct the frame shifts taking place throughout their interaction (Maschler 1997a; cf. Grenoble 2004), often by projecting (Auer 2005) the nature of these shifts (Maschler 2009, 2012). Metalanguaging is thus argued to be the semantic-pragmatic process found at the heart of both employment and grammaticization of discourse markers.

Examine, for example, the following excerpt from an interaction between two young colleagues at work.

(4) “Doctor’s order” (recorded in 2010)

1 Orit: …xayevet lesaper lax, must tell you
[I] gotta tell you,
what happened to my brother.

3 Meshi: nu.
go on.

4 Orit: 'e--m,
        u--hm,

5 ...xatsi shana lifney ha--,
half [a] year before the--,

6 ...lifney hagiyus?,
before the draft[to the army]?,

7 ....risek ta'regel,
smashed the leg
[he] smashed his leg,

8 Meshi: yo--w!
        wo--a!

9 Orit: ..ke--n,
yea--h,

10 'eh.
uh,

11 mamash risek ta'--karsol,
completely smashed the-- ankle,

12 be--,
i--n,

13 ..beshalosh mekomot,
in three places,

14 Meshi: ..rega,
moment
one sec,

15 'ex?
how?

16 Orit: ..'asa salta,
[he] did a flip in the air,
Turn beginnings constitute one common location of frame-shifting. Indeed, many of the discourse markers in this excerpt occur at turn-initial position (lines 3, 4, 8, 9, 14, 21, 23). However, frame shifts may also occur turn-medially (e.g., line 10 between acknowledging an interlocutor’s contribution and returning to one’s narrative).

Textual discourse markers signal relations between prior and upcoming discourse – for example, ve- (“and,” line 23), here connecting in the least marked way (Chafe 1988) the conversational action of responding to a clarification request (lines 16–20) and the continuation of the narrative (line 24 onwards). They include referential discourse markers, comprising deictics (e.g., now) and conjunctions, which prototypically mark relations between conversational actions in a way that mirrors semantic relations in the extralingual world marked by those conjunctions (e.g., so, and, but, because, or, if, although). Also included in the textual category are structural discourse markers, signaling relations between conversational actions in terms of order and hierarchy (e.g., first of all, anyway, Heb. zehu [“that’s it”]).

Interpersonal discourse markers negotiate relations between speaker and hearer (e.g., hastening a co-participant with nu [“go on,” line 3], expressing enthusiasm toward an interlocutor’s talk via yow [“woa,” line 8]). As in Schiffrin’s approach, they may also negotiate relations of speaker to text (“stance discourse markers”) such as epistemic discourse markers (e.g., loydat [“I dunno”]; Maschler 2012) or other modal markers (e.g., letsa’ari [“regretfully,” lit. “to my sorrow”]).

Cognitive discourse markers display the speaker’s cognitive processes
taking place during frame-shifting; these processes are often verbalized in spoken discourse (Chafe 1994) (e.g., "'ah," line 21] realizing new information; 'e–m ["uhm," line 4] processing information). As in Schiffrin’s approach, a particular marker need not operate in only a single realm – for example, rega ("one sec," line 14) functions both in the textual realm to stop the ongoing conversational action (here, for requesting clarification) as well as in the interpersonal realm, interrupting the interlocutor producing the current action. A marker generally has several different functions, which must be discovered through careful analysis considering the actions leading up to its use in various contexts. Indeed, it is this multi-functionality, often across realms, that may eventually bring about the grammaticization of discourse markers – a topic Maschler explores from a synchronic perspective (see Section 2).

Non-stand-alone discourse markers project (Auer 2005) the nature of the upcoming frame shift. Thus, when the narrator hears rega ("wait a sec," lit. "moment") at line 14, she knows that her talk is about to be interrupted, most likely with some request. Discourse markers carry very weak grammatical projection: unlike a preposition, for example, which strongly projects a noun phrase in Hebrew, any syntactic category may follow a discourse marker. At the same time, synchronic grammaticization studies show that discourse markers carry very strong interactional projection: the nature of the particular upcoming frame shift is projected by the metalingual utterance, be it a full-fledged one (e.g., 'im lomar bekitsur [lit. "if to say succinctly"] or a crystallized version (e.g., bekitsur [lit. "in short," "anyway": Maschler 2009]).

Maschler (2009) shows that, from the emic perspective of participants, discourse markers, besides sharing the overarching functional property described above, also form a distinct syntactic category no different in categorial status from “more established” categories, such as noun, verb, or adjective. Like other syntactic categories, discourse markers form a system, and they exhibit three types of patterning: distributional (when in interaction are discourse markers employed?), functional (what types of function, besides the overarching one, do they fulfill?), and structural (what structural properties do they exhibit?).

As for distribution, there is a general tendency in Maschler’s data of casual conversations in Hebrew to employ more discourse markers, and particularly more discourse-marker clusters, the more prominent the frame shift between two conversational actions (Maschler 1997a, 1998b; cf. Clover 1982; Enkvist and Wårvik 1987). As for structure, discourse markers often exhibit morphophonological reduction phenomena characteristic of other grammaticized elements (Hopper 1991). More importantly, they share structural properties in terms of prosody and sequential positioning. This observation has led to an operational definition.

A prototypical discourse marker is defined as an utterance fulfilling two requirements: semantically, the utterance must have a metalingual interpretation in the context in which it occurs (see above); structurally, “the utterance must occur at intonation-unit [Chafe 1994] initial position, either at a point of speaker change, or, in same-speaker talk, immediately following any intonation contour other than continuing intonation [unless it follows another marker in a cluster]” (Maschler 1998b: 31; 2009: 17). For instance, in our example above, all discourse markers fulfill both requirements and thus constitute prototypical discourse markers, as is the case with 94 percent of the 613 discourse markers throughout Maschler’s (1997a) database (excluding stance
discourse markers\textsuperscript{12}). Non-prototypical discourse markers (i.e., those not fulfilling the structural requirement) often construct lower-order frame shifts, such as those between constructed dialogue (Tannen 1989) and the utterance presenting it into the discourse (Maschler 2002a). The system of discourse markers permeating interaction can thus be seen to constitute part of a larger, iconic system of grammatical and prosodic (and kinesic: Kendon 1995) features, aiding participants in distinguishing prominent frame shifts from those that are more subtle in nature.

\subsection*{1.4 Comparison of approaches}

Along with the specific differences between approaches noted in interim comparisons above, we can also compare the approaches in relation to six recurrent themes.

First, the source of discourse markers: although the three perspectives agree that markers have various sources, they differ on the contribution of word meaning and grammatical class to discourse-marker meaning and function (Fraser positing the least contribution).

Second, the relationship between discourse markers and contexts: although all agree that markers can gain their function through discourse, different conceptualizations of discourse produce different kinds of discourse functions. Fraser’s focus is primarily how markers indicate relationships between messages (propositions); Schiffrin and Maschler explicitly include various aspects of the communicative situation within their discourse models (Maschler including also the display of cognitive processes involved in frame-shifting), such that indexing propositional relations is only one possible function of discourse markers.

Third, metalanguage: Fraser does not consider discourse markers metalingual. Rather, he refers to metacommments on the structure of the emerging discourse when exploring discourse-managing markers, a fourth type of pragmatic marker in his approach (2009b). According to Schiffrin (1980, 1987a: 328), meta-talk expressions such as \textit{this is the point} and \textit{what I mean is} can function as discourse markers. By contrast, in Maschler’s approach, all discourse markers are metalingual – this is their basic defining feature.

Fourth, prosody: the first two decades of discourse-marker research saw very little attention to their prosody (Aijmer 2002: 262). More recently, however, there have been some studies of the correlation of various functions of a discourse marker with particular intonation contours and durational features (e.g., Aijmer 2002; Dehé and Wichmann 2010a, 2010b; Ferrara 1997; Kärkkäinen 2003; Lam 2009; Tabor and Traugott 1998; Wichmann, Simon-Vandenbergen, and Aijmer 2010; Yang 2006). Whereas Schiffrin and Fraser do not relate much to prosodic properties of discourse markers, these features figure prominently in Maschler’s definition of a prototypical discourse marker. Furthermore, prosodic properties of a particular marker are then correlated with its different functions (e.g., Maschler and Dori-Hacohen 2012; the collection of articles in Auer and Maschler in press).

Fifth, category boundaries: while Fraser views the distinction between conjunction and discourse marker as clear cut, Schiffrin (1994a, 2001, 2006) has argued that non-intonation-unit medial tokens of the conjunction \textit{and} in lists (for example) simultaneously constitute discourse markers. Maschler argues that, to the extent that
metalinguality is scalar, with utterances ranging from less (conjunction) to more (dis-
course marker) metalingual, so discourse markerhood is scalar, exhibiting prototypical
and non-prototypical members of the category (cf. Ramat and Rica 1994 for adverbs).
Indeed, clause- and phrase-level conjunctions in same-speaker talk will generally
follow continuing intonation.13

Sixth, the integration of discourse-marker analysis into the study of language:
Fraser’s approach rests upon a pragmatic theory of meaning applied both within
and across sentences, Schiffrin’s approach combines interactional and variationist
approaches to discourse to analyze the role of markers in co-constructed discourse,
and Maschler takes a functional interactional linguistics perspective, which leads to a
reconsideration of our theories of grammar.

2 Markers across Contexts, across Languages,
and over Time

Discourse-marker research uses a variety of data sources that allow analysts to focus
on markers across contexts, across languages, and/or over time. These three focal
areas address many different specific issues that are part of several general themes
of discourse-marker research: What lexical items are used as discourse markers? Are
words with comparable meanings used for comparable functions? What is the influ-
ence of syntactic structure, and semantic meaning, on the use of markers? How do
cultural, social, situational, and textual norms have an effect on the distribution and
function of markers? What do discourse markers teach us about grammar? We begin
with a review of some studies of the discourse marker and as an entry point to several
of these issues.

In a later study, Schiffrin (1986, 1987a) revisited her original study of and, restricting
herself to the context of lists, and showed that the additive meaning of and combines
with its status as a coordinating conjunction to have the basic function of “continue
the cumulative set” (2006: 322), where the “set” can be an idea, turn, or act. The
coordinating function of and at both grammatical and discourse levels over a range of
contexts has also been noted in studies of language development and child discourse
(see also Meng and Sromqvist 1999; Kyratzis and Ervin-Tripp 1999; Kyratzis and
Cook-Gumperz, this volume). Peterson and McCabe (1991) show that and has a textual
use in children’s (three years six months to nine years six months) narratives: and links
similar units (i.e., narrative events) more frequently than information tangential to
show how and connects speech acts during the dramatic role-play of four-year-olds.
Sprott (1992) shows that the earliest appearance of and (as well as but, because, and well)
during children’s (two years seven months to three years six months) disputes marks
exchange structures; this function continues as action, and ideational (first local, then
global) functions are added on at later ages.

A conversation-analytic study of and (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994) studied its use as
a preface to questions in clinical consultations. The primary use of and was to preface
agenda-based questions either locally between adjacent turns or globally across turns,
and thus to orient participants to the main phases of the activity. An additional, more
strategic, use of and was to normalize contingent questions or problematic issues (1994: 19–22). Whereas the former use of and was coordinating in both a metaphorical and structural sense (i.e., the questions were the “same” level in the question agenda), the latter use amplifies Halliday and Hasan’s idea of external meaning: the additive meaning of and normalizes the problematic content and/or placement of a question.14

A later conversation-analytic study (Turk 2004) showed that and is frequently used in order to smooth over certain discontinuities in the discourse that may arise from interactional or grammatical disjunctures.15 A more recent study (Bolden 2010) delineates itself to one specific environment in which and is found – preceding a formulation of another speaker’s talk. Bolden shows that and in this position accomplishes the distinct action of “articulating the unsaid.” It does so by constituting an assertion about the addressee’s domain of knowledge. In this way, the speaker performs a repair operation in the form of a request for confirmation, offering an “unarticulated” element of the preceding talk performed on the addressee’s behalf. As in other conversation-analytic studies of discourse markers (e.g., Barske and Golato 2010; Bolden 2003, 2008, in press; Emmertsen and Heinemann 2010; Golato 2010, in press; Heritage 1984, 1998; Laakso and Sorjonen 2010; Lindström in press; Mazeland in press; Mazeland and Huiskes 2001; Sorjonen 2001), we see that very close attention is paid both to the position of the discourse marker in the turn and to the sequence of actions underway.

Studies of bilingual discourse – in which speakers either borrow or code-switch across two different languages – also add to our understanding of the linguistic and contextual junctures at which markers work. These studies show that bilinguals very often switch languages when verbalizing discourse markers (e.g., Brody 1987, 1989; Cotter 1996b; De Fina 2000; De Rooij 2000; Goss and Salmons 2000; Gupta 1992; Heisler 1996; Maschler 1988, 1994, 1997b, 1998a, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Matras 2000; Ospa1 2009; Said-Mohand 2008; Sankoff et al. 1997). Investigating this strategy allows us to observe both their very early emergence from interaction and what these switched elements share from a functional perspective (Maschler 1998a, 2000b). Some of these studies show that the motivation to alternate languages at discourse markers has to do with highlighting contrast and thus maximizing the saliency of markers as contextualization cues (De Rooij 2000; Maschler 1997b). Matras (2000), on the other hand, argues for a cognitive motivation of reducing the heavier cognitive load involved in the processes of “monitoring and directing” performed by markers, by eliminating the choice between the two languages in performing this operation. Finally, in bilingual conversation, a discourse marker is very often immediately followed by its “equivalent” in the other language, illuminating such functional “equivalences” across languages from the bilingual’s perspective.

Studies of bilingual discourse also focus on the linguistic consequences of markers being borrowed across – and then coexisting within – different languages. Brody (1989) suggests that the general lexical meanings and structuring effects of Spanish conjunctions (including bueno; see below) reappear in Mayan use but are sometimes used together with native particles that have comparable uses. Zavala’s (2001) analysis of the restructuring of the standard Spanish (causal or consecutive) conjunction pues by Quechua-Andean Spanish bilinguals shows that pues has lost its meaning at the sentence level and acquired meaning at the discourse level: pues is used to mark changes in information status as well as commitment to the truth of information, in ways that reflect some of the functions of Quechua evidentials. Goss and Salmons (2000) traces
Discourse Markers

back the stages of the borrowing by one language of the discourse-marker system of another, to an initial stage in which code-switching plays a significant role. This shows how pivotal the study of discourse markers is to the field of language contact. Finally, a recent study of pragmatics in language contact (Auer and Maschler in press) attempts to follow the path of a particular discourse marker (Russian and Yiddish *nu* going back to the proto-Indo-European adverb *nû* ["now"] as it was borrowed into 15 different languages in Europe and beyond, by examining its various functions in these languages.

Comparative studies of markers in monolingual speech situations also add to our understanding of the different junctures at which markers work. For example, studies of Spanish markers that are in some, but not all, contexts roughly comparable to English *well* suggest the importance of both context and lexical/semantic source. De Fina’s (1997) analysis of *bien* (an adverb, glossed semantically as "well") in classroom talk shows that teachers use *bien* for both organizational functions (to redefine a situation, to move to another activity) and evaluative functions (as the feedback "move" in the three-part classroom exchange of question–answer–feedback). The organizational function of *bien* is most comparable to English *okay* (Beach 1993; Condon 2001; Merritt 1984). Like *okay*, the positive connotation (i.e., “I accept this”) of *bien* has been semantically bleached (Bolinger 1977) in transitional (but not evaluative) environments.16 Travis’s (1998) analysis of *bueno* (an adjective, glossed semantically as “good”) in conversation in Colombian Spanish differentiates two functions. Although the first (mark acceptance) is comparable to the evaluative function of *bien* and English *okay*, the second (mark a partial response) is more comparable to uses of English *well*. Chodorowska-Pilch’s (1999) research on Peninsular Spanish suggests still another lexical source (*vamos*, literally “we go”) for yet another function (mitigation) partially comparable to that of *well*. An analysis of *vamos* during service encounters in a travel agency suggests that *vamos* mitigates face-threatening speech acts by metaphorically moving the speaker away from the content of an utterance and thus metonymically creating interpersonal distance.

The studies on *bien*, *bueno*, and *vamos* suggest that discourse functions can be divided very differently across languages. English *well*, for example, is used very generally with responses that are not fully consonant with prior expectations (Greaseley 1994; Lakoff 1973; Schiffrin 1987a: ch. 5; Svartvik 1980): hence its use in indirect and/or lengthy answers and self-repairs. But, in Spanish, it is only *bueno* that is used this way (Travis 1998): *bien* has the transitional function associated with *well* as a frame shift (Jucker 1993) and *vamos* the mitigating function associated with *well* in dispreferred responses (e.g., turning down a request). Thus, the functions of a marker in one language can be distributed between a variety of lexically based discourse markers in other languages.17

The importance of comparative studies for our understanding of grammaticization is highlighted by Fleischman and Yaguello’s (2004) analysis of markers comparable to English *like*. They find that a variety of discourse/pragmatic functions associated with English *like* (e.g., focus, hedge) is replicated in languages as varied as Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Lahu, Portuguese, Russian, and Swedish. Although the words share neither etymologies nor a single lexical/semantic source, the processes that they undergo as they move toward their similar functions are strikingly similar.18

Studies of grammaticization within a single language also provide valuable insights into both the sources and developmental paths of markers. The majority of these studies are diachronic, tracing a particular discourse marker throughout its history in
written documents from various periods; for example, Aijmer (2002), Brinton (1996), Ferrara (1997), Finell (1989), Jucker (1997), Schwenter and Traugott (2000), Tabor and Traugott (1998), Traugott (1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2010, 2012), and Wårvik (1995) (all investigating English discourse markers); Traugott and Dasher (2002: ch. 4) (English and Japanese); Önöder (2004), Önöder and Suzuki (2007), Shinzato (2014), and Suzuki (1999) (Japanese); Abraham (1991) (German); Vincent (2005) (French); Lindström and Wide (2005) (Swedish); Visconti (2005, 2009) (Italian); and Pons Bordería and Schwenter (2005) (Spanish). Jucker (1997), for example, suggests that *well* underwent a process of continuous diversification whereby new functions were added to old ones (cf. Finell 1989). Wårvik’s (1995) analysis of two Middle English adverbials/conjunctions (glossed as “when” and “then”) shows that, when these words were supplanted by Middle English *then*, what was altered was not only a formal distinction (two forms shifted to one) but also a genre-based (narrative vs. non-narrative) distribution. Many of these diachronic studies are based on a series of much-quoted work by Traugott (1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2010, 2012) showing that, as utterances become grammaticized, they become increasingly subjective, intersubjective, and metatextual. They move from focusing on the “world out there” to the world of the interaction, with its metatextual structure, procedures for organizing that structure, and interactional aspects such as subjectivity and intersubjectivity. In correlation with these changes, Traugott finds an increase in the scope of the grammatical element from an element whose scope is within the clause, to one whose scope is over the entire clause, and finally to one whose scope is over a discourse segment. Beeching *et al.* (2009) investigate the position of markers in relation to the clause/intonation unit cross-linguistically, proposing that left periphery markers are subjective while right periphery ones are intersubjective (but see Maschler and Miller Shapiro forthcoming; Traugott 2012). Fewer studies combine grammaticization studies with interactional linguistics and approach grammaticization of discourse markers synchronically; see, for example, Auer (1996, 2005) and Günthner (2000) (German); Kärkkäinen (2003), Thompson (2002), and Thompson and Mulac (1991) (English); Maschler (2002b, 2003, 2009, 2012), Maschler and Dor-Hacohen (2012), Maschler and Estleim (2008), and Maschler and Nir (2014) (Hebrew); Keevallik (2003, 2006) (Estonian); and McGloin and Konishi (2010) (Japanese). Such synchronic study is possible because a discourse-marker token may function in a particular context in more than one way *simultaneously*. Close examination of the specific interactional contingencies leading up to this particular situation sheds light on the functional itinerary followed by the particular marker. Grammaticized discourse markers are shown to exhibit many of the properties characterizing grammaticized elements: semantic loss, phonological reduction, de-categorialization, bonding within the phrase, generalization of meaning, pragmatic strengthening, (inter)subjectification, and retention/persistence (Hopper 1991; Hopper and Traugott 2003). However, linguists regarding grammaticization as a formal, rather than functional, change have argued that the functional itineraries followed by discourse markers constitute cases of pragmaticalization rather than grammaticization (e.g., Aijmer 1996; Erman and Kostinas 1993).

Research on a variety of words and expressions in contemporary English that have gained – or are gaining – pragmatic roles as discourse markers suggests a range of formal and functional relationships not just with those words and expressions’ historical sources but also with their contemporary lexical sources. Whereas syntactic position,
Discourse Markers

pronunciation, and meaning all differentiate the adverbial and discourse-marker uses of anyway (Ferrera 1997), for example, it is pronunciation and meaning that differentiate the marker cos from its source because (Stenstrom 1998), and meaning and sequential distribution that differentiate the use of yeh as a “reaction” marker from its use as either agreement or turn-continuer (Jucker and Smith 1998; see also DuBois 1989 on hey, Sebba and Tate 1986 on y’know what I mean, and Scheibmann 2000 and Tsui 1991 on I don’t know). Finally, Swerts’s (1998) analysis of filled pauses in Dutch monologues suggests that even vocalizations that are themselves semantically empty can provide an option within a set of paradigmatic choices that includes semantically meaningful markers (i.e., Dutch nou [cf. “now,” “well”] [cf. Mazeland in press] or effe kijken [cf. “let’s see”]). Thus, vocalizations that have no inherent meaning at all, and that occur elsewhere for very different reasons (see, e.g., Fromkin 1973 on the role of filled pauses, and other “speech errors” in language production), can also provide markers through which to structure discourse (for a parallel argument about gestures, see Kendon 1995).

In sum, research on discourse markers has spread into many areas of linguistic inquiry, drawing scholars from many different theoretical and empirical orientations. Although this welcome diversity has led to an abundance of information about discourse markers, it has also led to knowledge that is not always either linear or cumulative. The result is that it is difficult to synthesize the conclusions of past research into a set of coherent and consistent findings and, thus, to integrate scholarly findings into an empirically grounded theory. Our conclusion in the next section thus returns to a very basic issue still confronting discourse-marker analysis: What are discourse markers?

3 Conclusion: Markers, Discourse Analysis, and Grammar

Discourse markers are elements of language that scholars wish to study, even if they do not always agree on what particular elements they are studying or what to call the object of their interest. Not only have discourse markers been called by various names but also, like the definition of discourse itself (see Introduction, this volume), what often opens books and articles about markers is a discussion of definitional issues. Rather than try to resolve these issues, we here take a more modest approach that addresses the definitional problem from the outside in: we suggest that the way one identifies markers is a direct consequence of one’s general approach to language. We do so by considering the status of four words that are often, but not always, viewed as markers: and, y’know, and their Hebrew “equivalents”: ve- and taydea, respectively. Although the four markers present different definitional questions, resolving their status touches on broader discourse analytic issues of data, method, and theory.

Questions about the status of and/ve- revolve around the difference between sentences and texts, between grammar and meaning, and around different approaches to the structural features of discourse markers. And/ve- have a grammatical role as a coordinating conjunction that seems to be (at least partially) paralleled in their discourse role. But can all tokens of and and ve-—even those that are intersentential and thus might seem to have a purely grammatical role—work as discourse markers?
Because of their comparable function, Schiffrin (2001, 2006) has argued (contra Fraser, e.g.) that all the tokens of and in a list are discourse markers. Her decision about the marker status of and was based not on an a priori theory but on an analysis of the function of and in the data. Maschler, on the other hand, noticed that, in her data, metalingual ve- tokens (discourse markers) tend to fulfill the structural requirement for prototypical discourse markerhood whereas non-metalingual ve- tokens (conjunctions) do not (see Section 1.3 and note 13). Paying attention not only to function but also to structural features (prosody and sequential positioning) has led her therefore not to consider all instances of ve- in her data discourse markers. Considering both function and structure is likely to bring about new results. In any event, basing decisions about marker status on data analysis has an important consequence: there may very well be different decisions about the marker status of an expression depending upon the data. This should be neither surprising nor problematic. If discourse markers are, indeed, indices of the underlying cognitive, expressive, textual, and social organization of a discourse, it is ultimately properties of the discourse itself (which stem, of course, from factors as various as the speaker’s goals, the social situation, and so on) that provide the need for (and hence the slots in which) markers appear.

Of course data never exists in a vacuum. We all come to our data, and begin its analysis, with assumptions about what is important and principles that help us organize our thinking (theory), as well as sets of tools through which to first discover and then explain what we have perceived as a “problem” in the data (methodology). Although data and methodology both bear on the status of y’know and its Hebrew “equivalent” taydea (and its feminine form tyodat) as markers, it is the role of underlying assumptions and principles about discourse and grammar that we want to stress in relation to decisions about y’know/taydea.

Disagreement about the status of y’know/taydea centers on the relationship between meaning and discourse. Y’know and taydea present a set of distributional and functional puzzles: they are not always utterance-initial, they do not always satisfy Maschler’s structural requirement for discourse markerhood, and they carry the original semantic meaning to varying extents. Despite general agreement that y’know and taydea are markers of some kind, they are not always considered discourse markers per se. Fraser (1990: 390), for example, excludes y’know from his discourse-marker group because he claims that, rather than signal a discourse relationship, it signals a speaker’s attitude of solidarity (cf. Holmes 1986).

To try to resolve the disagreement about y’know and taydea, let us take a closer look, first, at where they occur and, next, at the different views of discourse that underlie different analyses of markers. Y’know is often found in specific discourse environments: concluding an argument, introducing a story preface, evoking a new referent (Schiffrin 1987a: 267–95). Likewise, Hebrew taydea is often found in these environments as well as opening disagreement, introducing evaluative episodes in narrative, and at frame shifts involving self-repair (Maschler 2012: 809–17). These environments all mark transitions from one phase of discourse to another, and, thus, they all relate (possibly large) discourse segments. In fact, one might argue that it is precisely in transitional locations such as these – where interlocutors are jointly engaged in productive and interpretive tasks centered on establishing the relationship between somewhat abstract and complex discourse segments – that speakers may want to create, or reinforce, solidarity with their hearers.
What underlies decisions about expressions such as *y’know* and *taydea* are different conceptions of discourse itself. Sociolinguistic, interactional, and conversation-analytic studies of markers begin with a view that language reflects (and realizes) rich and multifaceted contexts. This view leads such analysts to search for the varied functions of markers – and thus to incorporate into their analyses and theories the multifunctionality that is one of the central defining features of discourse markers. But many current analysts who begin from semantic and pragmatic perspectives privilege the “message” level of discourse, thus restricting analysis of markers to the signaling of message-based relationships across sentences. Also differently conceived is the notion of communicative meaning. Sociolinguistic approaches to discourse (Schiffrin 1994b: ch. 11) assume that communicative meaning is co-constructed by speaker-hearer interaction and emergent from jointly recognized sequential expectations and contingencies of talk in interaction. But many semantic and pragmatic analyses of markers are wed to a Gricean view of communicative meaning as speaker intention (and subsequent hearer recognition of intention). If the assignment of meaning is completely divorced from the study of the sequential and interactional contingencies of actual language use, however, then so are decisions about the functions of markers, and, even more basically, decisions about the status of expressions as markers.

Different approaches reflect profoundly different views of what “grammar” is. In some approaches, “grammar” is reserved for the core fields of linguistics, but, in others, “grammar” includes communicative and cognitive aspects. The study of discourse markers is of particular significance in this respect, because it has allowed us to rethink the question of what constitutes “grammatical structure.” In Traugott’s words, “discourse markers have helped us rethink the nature of the relationship of use to structure, and of communicative to cognitive aspects of language” (2007: 151).

To conclude: we noted initially that the production of coherent discourse is an interactive process that requires speakers to draw upon several different types of communicative knowledge – cognitive, expressive, social, textual – that complement more code-based grammatical knowledge of sound, form, and meaning. Discourse markers tell us not only about the linguistic properties (e.g., semantic and pragmatic meanings, source, functions) of a set of frequently used expressions, and the organization of social interactions and situations in which they are used, but also about the cognitive, expressive, social, and textual competence of those who use them. Because the functions of markers are so broad, any and all analyses of markers – even those focusing on only a relatively narrow aspect of their meaning or a small portion of their uses – can teach us something about their role in discourse.

NOTES

1 The names given to words such as *oh*, *well*, *y’know*, and *but* have varied greatly over the years: e.g., parenthetic phrase (Corum 1975), mystery particle (Longacre 1976), pragmatic particle (Östman 1981), pragmatic connective (Even-Zohar 1982; van Dijk 1979), discourse-signaling device (Polanyi and Scha 1983), semantic conjunct (Quirk et al. 1985), discourse particle (Aijmer 2002; Fischer 2006; Schourup 1985), pragmatic expression (Erman 1987), discourse marker (Jucker and Ziv 1998; Schiffrin 1987a, 1987b),
discourse connective (Blakemore 1987), marker of discourse structure (Redeker 1990), pragmatic operator (Ariel 1993), pragmatic marker (Brinton 1996), cue phrase (Moser and Moore 1995), procedural parenthetical (Grenoble 2004). More crucial than this development of labels, however, is the variety of definitions, for this has an impact on the items included within theories and analyses of discourse markers. We discuss this issue below.

2 For Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) semantic perspective on cohesion, see Schiffrin (2001). Halliday and Hasan do not deal directly with discourse markers, but their analysis of cohesion (based primarily on written texts) included words that have since been called markers.

3 Compare Stenstrom (1998), who argues that cos (the phonologically reduced because, transcribed in [1b] as cause) is not used ideationally. For a range of research on because, see E. Abraham (1991), Degand (1999), Ford (1994), Sanders and Stukker (2012), and Schlepegrell (1991).

4 Importantly, the final stage of grammaticization of discourse markers arrived at through diachronic study (see Section 2) – the “metatextual,” which relates to the speaker’s organization of the world being talked about in the act of speaking (Traugott and Dasher 2002) – correlates precisely with this most essential property of discourse markers: their metalingual nature, arrived at synchronically in Maschler’s approach.

5 For a specific example of this process within the framework of dialogic syntax (Du Bois 2007), see Maschler and Nir (2014).

6 Transcription conventions generally follow Du Bois (manuscript).

7 Of these textual discourse markers, only and, so, and but are considered discourse markers in Fraser’s approach. His “discourse structure markers,” a subcategory of his fourth type of pragmatic marker (“discourse management marker”) (2009b: 893), are reminiscent of Maschler’s structural discourse markers.

8 The cognitive realm is different from Schiffrin’s “information state,” which refers not to the cognitive processes throughout verbalization but rather to “the organization and management of knowledge and meta-knowledge” of speaker and hearer (Schiffrin 2006: 317). Many previous approaches to discourse markers explore their textual and interpersonal functions as well as the ways textual and interactive functions relate to each other (e.g., Aijmer 2002; Östman 1982; Schiffrin 1987a; Traugott 1995a). Far fewer approaches relate to their cognitive functions (but see Zwicky 1985 and, more recently, Bazzanella 2006; Yang 2006).

9 For the most prominent frame shifts, however, often a longer metalingual utterance is employed: e.g., röte lishmoa keta? (“wanna hear something weird/funny [lit. ‘a segment’]?” or “ani ‘asaper lex a mashehu ‘al … [‘let me tell you something about …’]”. It is argued that such longer metalingual utterances are not sufficiently crystallized (for instance, in terms of their still inflecting for person, number, and gender or their ability to take a variety of verbal complements and nominal modifiers) in order to be considered discourse markers (Maschler 1998b, 2009).

10 This definition is based on studies of Hebrew and English discourse – both SVO languages. More research is needed on the structural properties of discourse markers in other languages, particularly verb-final languages.

11 The only two discourse markers that follow continuing intonation in same-speaker talk (marked by a comma at the end of the previous intonation unit) in this excerpt occur in a discourse-marker cluster (ken, ‘e-h
Discourse Markers

[lines 9–10] and ‘a–h, ‘okay [lines 21–22], therefore constituting prototypical discourse markers.

For stance discourse markers, later studies found that the percentage of non-prototypical markers is often greater than 6 percent (Maschler 2012; Maschler and Estlein 2008; Miller Shapiro 2012). For instance, the epistemic element harry (“as you know”) (Ariel 1998), which occurs intonation-unit medially at line 18, has not yet gravitated toward prototypical discourse markerhood since it does not satisfy the structural requirement. There is often, then, also a structural difference between discourse markers pertaining to relations of speaker to text and other discourse markers.

See, e.g., the two tokens of ve- (“and”) (excerpt [4], lines 19–20) coordinating phrases rather than larger discourse segments, each following continuing intonation.

See also Matsumoto (1999), whose linguistic analysis of questions in institutional discourse suggests that and-prefaced questions are also used to seek confirmation of previously known information for an overhearing audience; Schiffrin’s discussion (1998) of well- and okay-prefaced questions during interviews; and various analyses of and in a variety of texts and contexts (Cotter 1996a; Skories 1998; Wilson 1993).

This function seems to capture particularly well the ve- (“and”) of excerpt (4), line 23.

Cf. Maschler’s study of Hebrew tav (lit. “good”), which, very much like English okay, has both interpersonal (e.g., acceptance) and a textual (transition into an expected course of action) functions. Maschler (2009: ch. 5) traces this grammaticization from the interpersonal to the textual to the need to reach agreement between participants concerning the state of things thus far in the discourse before moving on to the next activity. Cf. also Miracle (1989) for the “equivalent” discourse marker in Chinese, Auer (1996) for Bavarian German fei (lit. “fine”), and Sherzer (1991) for the Brazilian thumbs-up gesture, which carries the acceptance meaning and also serves as an interactional link between moves, units, and moments in interaction.

These analyses also show that the use of markers is sensitive to social situation (e.g., classroom, service encounters) and to cultural norms of politeness. Compare, for example, the absence of a well-like marker in Hebrew among Israelis (Maschler 1994), speakers whose culture is said to value direct requests, direct statements of opinion, and open disagreement (Katriel 1986). See also studies on contrastive markers (noted in Fraser 1998; also Fooken 1991) as well as Takahara (1998) on Japanese markers comparable to anyway.

For comparisons of both forms and discourse functions across languages, see Altenberg (2010), Evers-Vermeul et al. 2011, Park (1998), and Takahara (1998).

Markers have been studied by scholars interested in relevance theory (see Ariel 1998; Blakemore 1987, 2001, 2002; Choi 2010; Ljungqvist 2010; Rouchota 1998; Schurup 2011; Ziv 1998), computational linguistics (Elhadad and McKeown 1990; Hirschberg and Litman 1993; Louwerse and Mitchell 2003; Moser and Moore 1995; Popescu-Belis and Zufferey 2011), variation analysis (Vincent and Sankoff 1993; Sankoff et al. 1997), formal linguistics (Unger 1996), and language attitudes (Dailey-O’Cain 2000; Watts 1989).

Although discourse is often defined by linguists as “language beyond the sentence,” the analysis of discourse as a set of connected sentences per se has evolved to become only a relatively small part of discourse analysis. Some scholars have argued that the sentence
is not necessarily the unit to which speakers orient in constructing talk in interaction, suggesting, instead, a variety of alternatives (e.g., intonation/idea units; see Chafe 1994, this volume) and pointing out ways in which sentences are contingent outcomes of speaker–hearer interaction (Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson 1996; Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen 2005). This is not to suggest, however, that analyses of different coherence relations, even within one particular semantic/pragmatic domain (e.g., Fraser’s 1998 analysis of contrastive markers, and references within to comparative studies of contrast), cannot teach us a great deal about the complex network of meanings indexed (and perhaps realized) through markers.

REFERENCES

Auer, Peter. 1996. The pre-front field in spoken German and its relevance as a grammaticalization position. Pragmatics, 6, 295–322.


De Fina, Anna. 2000. Ma, pero, pero: discourse markers in bilingual discourse. Manuscript, Department of Italian, Georgetown University.


Dehé, Nicole and Anne Wichmann. 2010b. Sentence-initial I think (that) and I believe (that): prosodic evidence for uses as main clause, comment clause and discourse marker. Studies in Language, 34, 36–74.
Discourse Markers


Discourse Markers


Discourse Markers


Maschler, Yael and Gonen Dori-Hacohen. 2012. From sequential to affective
discourse marker: Hebrew mu on Israeli political phone-in radio programs. 

Maschler, Yael and Roi Estlein. 2008. 
Stance-taking in Israeli Hebrew casual conversation via be’em et (“really, actually, indeed”, lit. “in truth”). 
*Discourse Studies*, 10(3), 283–316.

Maschler, Yael and Carmit Miller Shapiro. 
Forthcoming. Hebrew naxon (“right”): from verb to (epistemic) discourse marker.

Maschler, Yael and Bracha Nir. 2014. 
Complementation in linear and dialogic syntax: the case of Hebrew divergently aligned discourse. 


*Linguistics*, 37(2), 251–74.


Norrick, Neal R. 2001b. Discourse and semantics. In Deborah Schiffrin,


Shinzato, Rumiko. 2014. From degree/manner adverbs to pragmatic particles in Japanese: a corpus-based


Yael Maschler and Deborah Schiffrin


Vasko, I. 2000. The interplay of Hungarian de (but) and is (too, either). In Gisle Andersen and Thorstein Fretheim, eds., Pragmatic Markers and Propositional Attitude. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 255–64.


