DISCOURSE MARKERS PRAGMATICS

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The discourse markers (particles) are always in the focus of linguistic studies due to their vague status in the language structure, wherein they do not constitute a definite category. Evidently, discourse format reveals their functional semantics and pragmatics that alienates them into a specific domain. The cognitive approach stresses their non-sporadic use in the discourse.

Key words: *discourse markers/particle, cognitive approach, discourse-analysis, author's intention.*

The study of discourse markers constitutes an extensive area of research in itself [Fraser 2005, 932]. At least eight books and edited volumes have been devoted to the issue in English alone [Abraham 1991; Andersen 2001; Blakemore 2002; Brinton 1996; Fischer 2000, Jucker and Ziv 1998; Schiffrin 1987]; as well as a large number of articles, references to which can be found in the books mentioned and in Cortés Rodríguez (1995; 1995), Fraser (1999), Grote et al. (1997), and Louwerse and Mitchell (2003). Most relevant to discussion are studies that combine the study of discourse markers with that of coherence relations [Knott 1996; Knott and Dale 1994; Pit 2003; Sanders et al. 1992, 1993].

Discourse markers (particles) have been analysed in many different frameworks and from different perspectives with often highly differing results. So far there is no method of validating the one or the other analysis other than plausibility. In linguistics, a discourse marker is a lexeme or <u>particle</u> which has no direct semantic meaning in the context of a <u>sentence</u>, having rather a <u>pragmatic</u> function: it serves to indicate the speaker's attitude, or to structure their relationship to other participants in a conversation. Discourse particles are primarily a feature of spoken language; in written language they indicate an informal or jocular tone.

Despite the quantity of research in this area, however, no consensus has emerged regarding fundamental issues of terminology. The term DM has different meanings for different groups of researchers, among them are semantic conjuncts, sentence connectives, semantic connectives, clue words, cue words, discourse operators, discourse particles, discourse signaling devices, indicating devices, hyper propositional expressions, prefaces, pragmatic connectives, pragmatic devices, pragmatic expressions, pragmatic formatives, pragmatic markers, etc.[Fraser 2005].

The objective of the present paper is to give an overview of various approaches to the discourse markers – their status, functions, and pragmatics. Our hypothesis is that their use is preconditioned by the author's intention, the interactional model, and the discourse register.

There is a group of phenomena in language that function at the discourse level, more than at the morphological or syntactic level. One of the characteristics that set these apart from apparently similar phenomena, is the difficulty of analyzing them and describing them based on morphological or syntactic criteria, or even lexemic criteria. The question arises whether this is a single category of phenomena, or several categories with similar functions. There are many references in the literature to discourse particles, discourse markers/cues, cue phrases [Louwerse and Mitchell, 2003], pragmatic markers [Fleischman and Yaguello 2004], and interjections. Another term is sequence marking

particles or phrases [Frank, 1999]. The term 'coherence relations' [Louwerse and Mitchell 2003] seems to be used at times as a synonym for Discourse Marker, and at times as a generic term to include all these phenomena. A similar phenomenon is described as the global scope (versus local scope) of some adverbs or adverbial clauses [Givon 1993]. Discourse markers are said to instruct discourse participants how to consider an upcoming utterance, providing a path toward the integration of different components of language use into one coherent discourse [Louwerse and Mitchell 2003].Discourse particles are little words or phrases which generally add nothing truth conditional to the sentence they are part of, although it's not clear that they have constituent structure relations within that sentence.

There seem to be two basic kinds of discourse particles; both are conversational. There are attitudinal discourse markers, such as *well, uh, like, gosh, oh, OK, I mean,* and *y'know*, which indicate something about how the speaker feels about what is being said, or how s/he feels about how the addressee feels about what is being said. Some studies report a higher frequency of discourse markers in speech than in written discourse. Louwerse and Mitchell (2003) found ten times as many discourse markers in spoken as in written discourse, and twice as many in informal as in formal discourse. Although their study included particles such as *well, anyway*, and backchannels [Yngve 1970] such as *yeah* and *right*, typical of speech, they report that the result is also true for connectives like *because, although*, and *if*. Other research has also found a higher incidence of discourse markers in speech [Dahlgren 1998; Soria and Ferrari 1998]. This is interesting, since in face-to-face communication other signaling devices (intonation, gesture) are also available. Louwerse and Mitchell (2003) postulate that the markers are necessary because dialogue is a dynamic and emergent type of discourse, in which participants do not have access to an organized structure or outline. Although they contribute nothing to the truth conditions of the sentence, they do reflect an attitude of the speaker toward what is being said in the present utterance

On the other hand, there are structural discourse markers like the sentence-initial particles *Now, OK, And, But*, which speakers use to indicate a structural boundary, and a hint of how what follows relates to what went before.

Unfortunately for the hearer, structural markers do not indicate what unit they mark; the hearer has to figure that out from the hint and his understanding of whatever went before).

Discourse markers are a kind of common linguistic phenomenon which is pervasively used in daily communication. It was during recent years that DMs were investigated within a large number of frameworks reflecting divergent research interests, methods, and goal. Discourse Markers (or Pragmatic Markers in some traditions) are elements, such as *"you know, I mean, well"*, that have a distinct prosodic entity, tend not to have a specific semantic meaning, and contribute to scaffold the pragmatic coherence of interaction. Generally speaking, discourse markers have often been described by their absence of traditional linguistic properties, since neither their use nor their meaning seem to resemble any of the traditional linguistic categories.

R. Trillo attempts to clarify the status of discourse markers. These lexical expressions have been studied under various labels, including discourse markers, discourse connectives,

discourse operators, pragmatic connectives, sentence connectives, and cue phrases. Although most researchers agree that they are expressions which relate discourse segments, there is no agreement on how they are to be defined or how they function [Blakemore1 1999, Border 2008].He defines discourse markers as a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, prepositional phrases, and pseudo-predicative phrases.. With certain exceptions, they signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1. They have a core meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context, both linguistic and conceptual.

The term DM is generally used to refer to a syntactically heterogeneous class of expressions which are distinguished by their function in discourse and the kind of meaning they encode. We try to provide an overview of the issues that have arisen in the attempt to say what the function of these expressions is and how they should be accommodated in a theory of meaning. It does not, however, aim to provide a definitive list of DMs, for as Jucker (1993) points out, research has not yielded a definitive list of DMs in English or any other language. Indeed, as Schourup (1999) observes, the use of this term by some writers [Blakemore 1999] is not intended to reflect a commitment to the existence of a class of DMs at all.

Discourse markers fulfill many different functions; they contribute to text structuring, dialogue management, turn-taking, politeness, and more. Their investigation is, thus, relevant from many different perspectives within pragmatics and linguistics as a whole.

The analysis of discourse markers is part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence how speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meaning, and actions to make overall sense out of what is said [Schiffrin 1987, 49]

Coherence in discourse can be achieved by different means. Discourse markers guide the text receiver in the recognition of those relations, they signal the linking of the piece of text being processed to some other piece of the text in a particular way. Some discourse markers are straightforward conjunctions [Schiffrin 2001].

To describe the phenomenon of discourse markers accurately we must employ a discourse-cognitive approach: discourse markers are elements that fill the discoursal and cognitive slots that spoken language needs in order to weave the net of interaction. This dynamic approach is geared to the description of the discourse and the cognitive status of the markers [Trilo 2006, 639–642] but does not make them into a closed-class repertoire.

The approach intends to account for the two main issues at stake: the issue of a "core meaning" for each marker, and the nature of an "accepted" repertoire of discourse markers in each language. As to the first, the question of the core meaning poses many problems, since each element may appear in such a multiplicity of functional contexts, and with such a varied array of meanings, that it is very difficult to assign a core meaning, especially in the case of pause markers and interjections. Second, with regard to the elaboration of an accepted repertoire, what we find in discourse is not just a series of discourse markers: rather, we are dealing with discourse functions where any element provided – it fulfills several conditions related to context and prosody – can function as a discourse marker. In other words, the phenomenon of discourse markers shows that spoken interaction needs to have a pragmatic skeleton, consisting of such discourse, that function holds the

communicative force of the interaction together. The functions are filled by elements that may vary according to regional, ideolectal or sociolinguistic features within one and the same language. The problem is how to account for the alternative options, for example, for showing feedback in a certain situation in a particular language? In this case one can appeal to the notion of appropriateness, defined as the possibility to choose the most adequate element in the realization of a certain function in a specific context. Accordingly the use of a particular form in discourse is not dependent upon any kind of grammatical assessment (as a matter of fact, many discourse markers do not belong to any particular grammatical category), but on their frequency in a significant corpus-based language sample.

As for the contemporary approach discourse markers such as *that is, that is to say, i.e.*, etc. have been grouped under the term reformulation markers. Reformulation is to be interpreted as the process of reinterpretation, where the contents of an utterance are expressed in a different way through a re-elaboration. This is done to facilitate the understanding, and/or to narrow the specificity of an utterance. Reformulation ensures cohesion and facilitates discourse by reducing any possible communicative defects of a text [2009]. Fuchs (1982) argues that there are three types of reformulation: designation, denomination, and exemplification. On the other hand, Flottum (1993) argues in favour of either horizontal (including definition, denomination, and substitution) or vertical (including generalization, specification, and summary) reformulation. Gulich and Kotschi (1995) divides the classification of reformulation markers into paraphrastic, where the marker establishes a relationship between two connected utterances, and non-paraphrastic, where the marker dissociates two utterances by showing that the content of one is crucial in order to continue discourse. Others [Cuenca 2003; Cuenca and Bach 2007; Rubio 2006] argue for four different types of reformulation: explanation, rectification, conclusion, and summary. Finally, Relevance Theory [Bataller 2002; Murillo 2004; Blakemore 2007; Border 2008, 1411–1434] among others) argue that some reformulation encode a procedure, while other encode a concept. Pons Salvador Border [2009] intends to describe reformulation markers employing Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Pollard and Sag (1994), Ginzburg and Sag (2000) as a syntactic approach. This approach is relevant in a theory of discourse because it provides a framework in which all levels of grammar can be integrated.

The importance of discourse markers lies in the theoretical questions they raise about the nature of discourse and the relationship between linguistic meaning and context. The search of classification principles dominating discourse marker research should be replaced by the investigation of the way in which linguistic expressions contribute to the inferential processes involved in utterance of understanding.

Discourse particles are far from being the meaningless pause-fillers – they do not occur randomly in discourse. Rather, each conveys something distinct from the others, something non-truth-conditional that helps the hearer know how to take what is being said.

Attitudinal discourse markers, which indicate something about how the speaker feels about (how the addressee feels) about what is being said, are distinguished from structural discourse markers, which indicate a structural boundary, and a hint of how what follows relates to what went before. Explicit knowledge of the pragmatics of such particles enables the design of a natural-language interface with personality. Once developed, such

an interface can be employed both in basic research, to help test hypotheses about exactly what the pragmatic contribution of a particle is, and in applied systems wherever it is important to give the user a sense of interacting with a human personality.

Дискурсивні маркери завжди знаходяться у центрі лінгвістичного дослідження завдяки своєму невизначеному статусу у структурі мови, де вони не представлені окремою категорією. Вочевидь, у дискурсі стає рельєфнішою їхня функціональна семантика і прагматика, що надає підстави виокремлювати їх в окрему категорію.

Ключові слова: *дискурсивні маркери, частки, когнітивний підхід, дискурс-аналіз, авторська інтенція.*

Дискурсивные маркеры всегда находятся в центре лингвистических исследований благодаря своему неопределенному статусу в структуре языка, где они не представлены отдельной категорией. Очевидно, формат дискурса делает выразительной их функциональную семантику и прагматику, что предоставляет возможность выделения их в отдельную категорию.

Ключевые слова: *дискурсивные маркеры, частицы, когнитивный подход, дискурс-анализ, авторская интенция.*

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