

PRAGMATIC MARKERS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS IN SPOKEN DISCOURSE

Jabborova Gulrux Muxtor qizi

University of Exact and Social Sciences

1-st year Master degree student

Erdanova Zebiniso Abulkasimovna (Phd)

guliruxjabborova91@gmail.com

Abstract: This article was motivated by the need to highlight the various facets of present-day research on pragmatic markers in view of the academic recognition of their importance in conversation. The aim of the article is twofold. First, it reviews the current literature on pragmatic markers focusing on their definition, classification, functions, and main features as discussed in different theoretical frameworks. The article also addresses issues that may cause confusion in the study of pragmatic markers, such as word class membership, and domains of application. Second, the article aims to encourage research on pragmatic markers in Macedonian: in particular to enhance cross-cultural research of these markers by inclusion of other languages and to promote the study of pragmatic markers in the interlanguage of Macedonian learners of foreign languages. The article provides a useful bibliography of the studies on pragmatic markers and refers to major crosscultural and interlanguage studies including those in the field of South Slavic languages.

Key words: core meaning, procedural meaning, indexical function, rhetorical function.

Abstrakt. Ushbu maqola muloqot nutqida pragmatik markerlarning muhim unsurlar sifatida ilmiy tan olinayotganini hisobga olgan holda yozilgan. Maqolaning asosiy maqsadi ikki yo'nalishda belgilangan. Birinchidan, u pragmatik markerlarga oid mavjud adabiyotlarni tahlil qiladi — ularning ta'rif, tasnifi, funksiyalari va turli nazariy doiralarda ko'rib chiqilgan asosiy xususiyatlarini sharhlaydi. Shuningdek, maqola pragmatik markerlar tadqiqotida chalkashlikka olib kelishi mumkin bo'lgan masalalarni, masalan, so'z turkumi jihatidan tasniflash va qo'llanish doiralari kabi jihatlarni ham ko'rib chiqadi. Ikkinchidan, maqola makedon tilida pragmatik markerlar bo'yicha izlanishlarni rag'batlantirishni maqsad qiladi — xususan, boshqa tillarni ham qamrab olgan holda madaniyatlararo tadqiqotlarni kengaytirish va makedoniyalik xorijiy til o'rganuvchilarning intertilida ushbu markerlarni o'rganishni targ'ib qilishni nazarda tutadi. Maqolada pragmatik markerlar bo'yicha muhim tadqiqotlar bibliografiyasi taqdim etilgan bo'lib, u janubiy slavyan tillari doirasidagi madaniyatlararo va intertil tadqiqotlariga ham murojaat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: yadro ma'nosi, protsessual ma'no, indeksik funktsiya, ritorik funktsiya.

Introduction. 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. 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 and 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 (2011) 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 & 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

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. 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. 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.

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 and in the Bergen Corpus of London Teenager language (COLT). The MICASE corpus (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) has been used to study hedges. Van Bogaert (2009) relies on the spoken component of the International Corpus of English-Great-Britain. 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. 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 & 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. 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 & Adolphs 2007).

Conclusion. 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 (1997) 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. (2010), 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.

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