

Pragmatic markers and clause peripheries

Call for papers

For our workshop at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (SLE) in Leipzig, Germany (see www.sle2019.eu), we are looking for papers from all linguistic frameworks that deal with pragmatic markers and the impact of left versus right periphery on their functions and forms, from a synchronic or diachronic perspective and within a language or across languages (papers on languages or varieties for which the phenomenon at issue is under-documented are especially welcome).

Please send an abstract of 300 words (without references) as a Word document to both Daniël Van Olmen (d.vanolmen@lancaster.ac.uk) and Jolanta Šinkūnienė (jolanta.sinkuniene@flf.vu.lt) by no later than November 1, 2018. The language of both the abstract and the presentation is English.

Convenors

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Keywords

pragmatic marker, left/right periphery, grammaticalization, pragmaticalization, (inter)subjectification

Topic

The last three decades have witnessed an increasing interest in linguistic units showing the link between different elements of discourse, expressing some non-propositional communicative stance by the speaker and/or managing the interaction with the addressee. In the literature, they are described as discourse connectives (e.g. Blakemore 1987), discourse particles (e.g. Aijmer 2002; Fischer 2006), pragmatic markers (e.g. Brinton 1996; Aijmer & Simon-Vandenberg 2006; Van Olmen 2013), pragmatic particles (e.g. Fried & Östman 2005), connectives (e.g. Celle & Huart 2007) or discourse markers (e.g. Schiffrin 1987; Blakemore 2002; Siepmann 2005). The extensive body of synchronic as well as diachronic and language-specific as well as comparative research into such linguistic units has revealed much about their functions, forms and development and it has also shed light on such general processes of language change as pragmaticalization, grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification (e.g. Traugott 2010; Fagard 2010; Lewis 2011; Prévost 2011; Van Olmen 2012; Bolly & Degand 2013).

We choose the neutral and inclusive term “pragmatic marker” for our workshop and regard it as encompassing, among other things, discourse-structuring devices like the new topic introducer *o* ‘but, and’ in Lithuanian, indicators of stance such as *no doubt* in English and interactional tools like the attention-getter *zeg* ‘say’ in Dutch. The actual definition of such

linguistic units and their inventory, functions, boundaries and status have been a matter of considerable debate in the literature (e.g. Degand et al. 2013; Fedriani & Sansò 2017). The rise and the development of pragmatic markers is the subject of much discussion as well. On the one hand, their formation has been argued to be linked with the process of grammaticalization. On the other hand, it has been said to be the result of a process of pragmaticalization (e.g. Heine 2013; Degand & Evers-Vermeul 2015 for an overview).

A related area of research, which has attracted growing attention in recent years, is the study not only of the role of the clause peripheries in the evolution of pragmatic markers but also of the impact of a left versus right – or, in other words, a clause-initial versus clause-final – position on the range of their semantic and pragmatic properties (e.g. Beeching & Detges 2014). As far as the development of pragmatic markers is concerned, for instance, the right periphery use of Italian *guarda* ‘look’ has essentially been claimed to be a by-product of the change from full-fledged imperative to left periphery attention-getter (see Waltereit 2002). In the same vein, the clause-final use of Dutch *zeg* has been said to postdate its clause-initial use (see Schermer 2007). The validity of such hypotheses merits further examination and so do the more general questions whether any directionality can be established for (different types of) forms with both left and right periphery uses and why it exists or not.

With respect to the functional features of pragmatic markers, it has been argued that they serve quite different purposes clause-initially than clause-finally (e.g. Degand 2011). The assumption is that markers in the latter position in particular – to which “far less attention has been paid” (Traugott 2016: 27) – correlate with intersubjective or, put differently, addressee-oriented functions. They include turn-yielding, hedging and stressing the illocution. In English, according to Traugott (2012), this assumption is indeed a tendency, though not a strict rule, and there is evidence from many other languages with different genealogical, areal and typological profiles for intersubjective right periphery pragmatic markers (e.g. Chor et al. 2016; Beeching 2016; Rhee 2016).

More research is needed, though. For Japanese, for example, the case has been made that it is clause-initial position that is best for conveying intersubjectivity (e.g. Onodera 2007). The literature has also focused mainly on European and East Asian languages (e.g. Beeching & Detges 2014 cover Chinese, English, French, Italian, Japanese and Korean). Furthermore, to our knowledge, only a small number of studies have tried to map the full range of forms and functions in one of the peripheries (e.g. Van der Wouden & Foolen 2015 on the clause-final particles in Dutch) and contrast it with the range in the other periphery. This kind of comprehensive comparison could also prove useful for uncovering the (dis)similarities between languages in the (types of) textual, subjective and intersubjective meanings that they tend to express in their peripheries (e.g. are certain East Asian languages more concerned with “attitudinal” intersubjectivity than particular European languages in the right periphery?; see Ghesquière et al. 2012).

In short, the goal of this workshop is to revisit the relationship between the clause-initial or clause-final position of pragmatic markers and their functions, forms and evolutions. We seek to shed new light on, among other things, the meanings associated with the left and right peripheries within a language and across languages and the historical developments into

either or both peripheries that pragmatic markers can undergo. As such, the workshop also aims to contribute to the ongoing debates about such phenomena as grammaticalization, pragmaticalization, (inter)subjectivity and (inter)subjectification. Specific questions that papers may address include but are not restricted to the following:

- which meanings do pragmatic markers express in the right periphery and which meanings do they convey in the left periphery?
- what, if any, are the functional differences between pragmatic markers in the left and the right periphery?
- what, if any, are the functional (dis)similarities between left/right periphery pragmatic markers in different languages or varieties?
- which source constructions end up in the left periphery, in the right periphery or in both and are there any cross-linguistic tendencies?
- does any diachronic directionality exist for pragmatic markers that can occur in both clause-initial and clause-final position?

Note, finally, that we especially welcome papers on languages or varieties for which pragmatic markers and their relationship with clause peripheries are under-documented.

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