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DISCOURSE-PRAGMATIC VARIATION AND CHANGE

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ABSTRACT BOOKLET

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DAY 1

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KEYNOTE

Gunther Kaltenböck

Discourse Markers in a Dualistic View of Grammar

This talk discusses discourse markers from the perspective of Discourse Grammar (e.g. Kaltenböck et al. 2011, Heine et al. 2021), a grammatical framework that assumes a dualistic organization in terms of sentence grammar and thetical grammar, with discourse markers belonging to the latter. After a brief outline of the framework and its neurological correlates, the focus will be on the diachronic development of discourse markers, which is particularly interesting as they exhibit a number of characteristics that are hard to reconcile with a process of grammaticalization. It is argued that a grammaticalization account can, however, be salvaged if combined with the concept of ‘cooptation’. The diachronic mechanisms at work are then illustrated with the help of recently emerging discourse markers in English, viz. *just so you know* and *(it) just so happens*, which show different degrees of conventionalization (Kaltenböck & ten Wolde 2025).

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Session 1 – Diachrony & Grammaticalisation of Pragmatic Markers

Laurel J. Brinton

A discourse-Pragmatic Expression of Indifference: The History of ‘for all I care’

For all I care (FAIC) is a pragmatic marker, typically occurring in sentence-final position to express the speaker’s indifference toward a potential action or course of events.

1. a. Then it can pour **for all I care**. (2008 COCA: FIC)
- b. Burn it, **for all I care**. (2008 COCA: TV)

In Present-day English, FAIC is (over-)represented in fictional discourse and occurs more often with *can/could* declaratives (1a) than with imperatives (1b). The latter are “weak imperatives” expressing acquiescence or indifference (von Fintel and Iatridou 2017) rather than a directive.

Based on Late Modern English corpora (i.e., CEAL, CEN, CLMET3.1, COHA), FAIC dates from the mid-nineteenth century, first with modalized clauses and then with syntactic imperatives. It

does not develop in a vacuum, but arises in an environment where a number of different “care” constructions expressing ‘indifference’ or ‘lack of care’ exist (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.vv. *all*, *care*, *ought*, *what*). *For what I care* and *for ought I care* are slightly earlier developments and syntactically and semantically similar, but they are infrequent. Syntactically independent *I care not/do no care/don’t care* is an early and well-established form, as is the “snowclone” (Zwicky 2006) *I care not/do not care/don’t care a(n) X* (e.g., *pin/ straw /rush/ farthing*, etc.). *Who cares (a(n) X)?* is also an earlier form.

In the case of “for all I care”, it is not possible to see a simple linear development from A > B > C. Rather, FAIC develops at the “intersection of a number of other pre-existing constructions” (Trousdale 2013: 511), all involving “care”, some explicitly negative, but all expressing speaker indifference. Thus, we must postulate multiple sources for FAIC (see De Smet, Ghesquière, and Van de Velde (eds.) 2015). Future studies will undoubtedly show that pragmatic markers, like other constructions, frequently involve such multiple sources.

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Catherine Léger & Pierre-Don Giancarli

The Emergence of Discourse Markers Arising From the Perception Verb ‘to see’ in Acadian French: The cases of *tu vois*, *vois-tu*, *tu*

This research examines the discourse marker *Tu* in Acadian French, a form that appears to be unique to this variety and that offers an illuminating case of advanced pragmaticalization. Drawing on spontaneous speech from two Acadian corpora, Roy (1976) and Wiesmath (1996–1997) from the same region (southeastern New Brunswick) and of similar sizes (respectively 114,000 and 118,700 words), we combine qualitative analysis with quantitative evidence to investigate the syntactic, semantic, prosodic, and diachronic properties of *Tu*, and address the questions of its origin and functions (Lehman, 2024).

While *Tu* is homophonous with the 2nd person singular pronoun, prosodic, syntactic and historical cues strongly support its derivation from the interrogative sequence *Vois-tu* ‘do you see’, rather than *Tu vois* ‘you see’ or *Sais-tu* ‘do you know’ or *Tu sais* ‘you know’ (Bolly, 2010; Détrie, 2010). Frequency patterns support that hypothesis: *Vois-tu* is substantially more

frequent than *Tu vois* and overwhelmingly specialized in absolute use, a context that matches the discourse marker *Tu*. By contrast, *Sais-tu* is rare, despite the high frequency of *Tu sais*—a structure that, due to its S–V order, cannot serve as the source for the marker (Bergeron-Maguire et al., 2024; Coveney, 2020). Moreover, the corpora exhibit inverse complementary distributions of *Vois-tu* and *Tu*, suggesting an ongoing diachronic shift, whereby *Vois-tu* is gradually replaced by its pragmaticalized descendant *Tu*. We show that *Tu* has undergone extensive semantic bleaching and morphosyntactic decategorialization, losing person reference and developing discourse-pragmatic functions. The study shows a highly eroded verbal structure can yield multiple, functionally divergent discourse markers. It also offers a case in which phonological erosion eliminates the verbal component entirely, and underscores the importance of prosodic and diachronic evidence in tracing the pathways of emergent discourse markers.

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Session 2 – Diachrony & Grammaticalisation of Pragmatic Markers (cont.)

Mathilde Pinson

Cyclicity in Discourse Marker Evolution: the Constructionalization Spiral of *f(or) y(our) i(n)formation*

The emergence of discourse markers has become a major focus of the research on the evolution of English (e.g. Brinton, 1996, 2017; Traugott, 2022). In this quantitative study, I document the evolution of *for your information*, based on COHA (364 occurrences), COCA (1,786 occurrences) and Youglish (sample of 50 occurrences). *F(or) y(our) i(n)formation* has undergone several phases of constructionalization. Originally an intrapredicative purposive prepositional phrase:

[1] Wee beseech your Lordships giue vs leaue to referre you **for your information** in that point to the Iournall which herewithall we send. (1601, quoted in the OED)

it has turned into a discourse marker used for projection and/or mitigation. Then, like other markers like *please* (Barron 2008), *no offense* (Culpeper 2011: 175), *with respect* (Culpeper 2011: 176), *I'm afraid* (Mazzon 2017), *I'm sorry* (Murphy 2014: 185-194), *just so you know* (Kaltenböck and Ten Wolde 2022) or *just saying* (Brinton 2017: 206-228), it underwent a pragmatic reversal and became confrontational.

Later, it morphed into *(just) FYI*, which can express digression and even help syntactic processing through clause delimitation:

[2] We are definitely going to share as much as we can along the way, from [how to run a successful Kickstarter campaign] to [how to manage a product business like this, {cause the margins are much smaller than digital products **just FYI**}] to [dealing with customer support. (Youglish)]

The evolution of *(just) f(or) y(our) i(n)formation* displays a spiral-like cyclicity (cf. Scivoletto, 2025): from the sentence level (as in [1]), to the text level (expressing projection) and the intersubjective level (expressing mitigation or confrontation), back to the text level (digression) and then the sentence level (clause delimitation, as in [2]).

This study sheds light on the processes at play in the evolution of discourse markers. It confirms that (inter)subjectification is not unidirectional.

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Chiara Ghezzi & Valentina Piunno

E via + GERUND: The life and Social Meaning of an Italian General Extender

General extenders (GEs) such as Italian *e/o cose del genere* ‘and/or things like that’ *e via dicendo* ‘and so on (saying)’ are widely assumed to be right-peripheral pragmatic optional elements which speakers use to mark set extension and/or *ad hoc* categorisation (Overstreet & Yule 2021, Mauri and Sansò 2018, Fiorentini *et alii* 2021). Yet Italian offers a morpho-constructional pathway—*e via* + GERUND lit. ‘and (by) way (of) + GERUND’—which proves very productive over the centuries. Given this productivity and the variation over time of the verb form (e.g. *dicendo* ‘saying’ vs *discorrendo* ‘saying’ (arc.) vs *seguitando* ‘following’), the construction invites a long-term perspective on the indexicality of forms and on how discourse-pragmatic resources can become socially meaningful. Drawing on available historical and contemporary corpora (TLIO/OVI for early stages, MIDIA and LISCORT, and modern web corpora for 21st century), we map the distribution, functions, and indexical fields developed by *e via* + GERUND against functionally related GEs (*e così via* ‘and so on’, *eccetera* ‘etcetera’, *e quant’altro* ‘and anything else’, etc.). Quantitatively, we model form competition (*dicendo* vs *discorrendo*), register and genre constraints (administrative, epistolary, literary-dialogic, press, online), and apparent-time trajectories in the 20th-21st centuries. Qualitatively, we identify discourse-pragmatic and interactional functions (floor management, stance, mitigation) and trace their indexical clustering across time. We aim at testing two hypotheses: the first relates to whether *e via* + GERUND underwent partial enregisterment around literate/administrative styles, later yielding to shorter or lexically reduced GEs (*e (così) via*); the second pertains to whether its social meanings shifted from high-register textual progression to stance management and interpersonal politeness. The proposal aims at contributing to a diachronic account of Italian GEs within discourse-pragmatic variation, showing how a single construction links grammaticalisation, register change, and social indexicality over time.

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Lukasz Jedrzejowski

On the Development of *dennoch* (‘nevertheless’) as a Discourse Marker in German

In this talk, I examine the development of *dennoch* (‘nevertheless’) as a discourse marker in German, combining a synchronic analysis of its syntactic distribution with a diachronic, corpus-based investigation of its grammaticalization. The discourse-marker use of *dennoch* is illustrated in [1].

- [1] Seine Phobie, nach draußen zu gehen, war im Vergleich zu heute Vormittag schlimmer geworden. Wann war er dem abstrusen Gedanken erlegen, dass er sich auf dem Weg der Besserung befand? **Dennoch**, er musste raus auf die Straße. Sara suchen, die immer noch nicht zu sehen war.
'His phobia of going outside had worsened compared to earlier that morning. When had he given in to the absurd idea that he was on the road to recovery? **Nevertheless**, he had to go out into the street. To look for Sara, who was still nowhere to be seen.'
(Luis Sellano (2016): *Portugiesisches Erbe*. München: Wilhelm Heyne, p. 112)

The first main claim is that when *dennoch* functions as a discourse marker, it is syntactically detached from the clause. In such uses, *dennoch* attaches outside the clause structure, irrespective of whether it precedes or follows the clause. This is reflected in its occurrence in the so-called *Nullstelle*, a prosodically and graphically separated position associated with discourse-organizational functions rather than sentence-internal modification. By contrast, clause-internal occurrences of *dennoch* pattern with its use as a concessive adverbial connector (Imo 2017). The second main claim concerns the diachronic development of *dennoch*. The data suggest that *dennoch* grammaticalized into a discourse marker during the New High German period (1650–1800). This development involved two key steps: i) the loss of obligatory movement to the left periphery of the clause and ii) a change in the type of argument linked by the connective, from propositional relations to relations between speech acts. The latter shift is evident in contexts where *dennoch* introduces questions or evaluative comments that resist a propositional concessive interpretation.

The talk concludes by situating *dennoch* within a broader class of German discourse markers through a brief comparison with *klar / natürlich* ('of course') (Ørsnes 2023) and *allerdings* ('however') (Ferraresi 2008), highlighting both shared diachronic tendencies and differences in syntactic integration and discourse-pragmatic function.

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Session 3 – Pragmatic Borrowing across Languages

Kazuko Matsumoto & Haruka Takayama

Variation and Change in *né/ne* in Contact: Brazilian Portuguese-Japanese Bilinguals in Greater Tokyo

The 1990 revision of Japan's immigration law led to Brazilian-dominant South American migrant communities emerging across Japan. Discourse-pragmatic aspects of these communities' speech practices remain understudied. This paper focuses on variation and change in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) *né* (a contraction of *não é* "isn't it") and Japanese *ne* (sentence-final/interjectional particles) as used by BP-Japanese bilinguals residing in the Greater Tokyo area.

Data were collected from 10 first- and second-generation Brazilian migrants. The study analyses 10 hours of spontaneous speech in BP and Japanese containing 487 tokens of *né* and 624 tokens of *ne*. We consider conduciveness (eliciting a response or not), function, position, information status of the proposition (shared/new), and phonetic variation ([ɛ], [e]) as linguistic constraints, and we take usage across speaker generations to indicate ongoing change via the apparent-time hypothesis.

The data confirm the frequent occurrence of *né/ne* and known diachronic trajectories: non-conductive narrative functions become more common than original confirmatory functions, and medial positions increase intergenerationally although final positions remain dominant. By contrast, linguistic transfer operates bidirectionally. On the one hand, 30% of BP *né* tokens across both generations reflect phonetic transfer of Japanese [e], and the expanded usage of stand-alone and utterance-initial *né* mirrors Japanese *ne* usage for affective address or interjection. In BP conversation, code-switching into Japanese for formulaic expressions containing *ne* demonstrates how Japanese usage has diffused into BP. On the other hand, phonetic transfer of BP [ɛ] in Japanese *ne* decreases intergenerationally (30% to 2%), as does the pragmatically transferred usage of BP *né* to mark new information (40% to 20%). Overall, second-generation speakers show divergence from typical BP patterns, but convergence towards those of Japanese.

This study reveals that discourse-pragmatic particles/tags undergo multidirectional change in contact situations through bidirectional transfer and code-switching, shaped by language-specific effects rather than universal grammaticalization pathways alone.

Gisle Andersen, Helga Hilmisdóttir, Martina Huhtamäki, Susanna Karlsson, Elizabeth Peterson & Marianne Rathje

Yes in the Nordics: A Cross-Linguistic Study of Pragmatic Borrowing

The English language has become part of everyday life in the Nordic Countries (Peterson and Beers Fägersten 2023). The Nordic countries, comprising Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, were among many locations in the world that opened up to English as a language of influence in the post-WWII era. The cultural similarities between the Nordic countries, yet their underlying linguistic differences, makes them a compelling testbed for observing language contact phenomena, notably when the same language, English, simultaneously interacts across the region's populations and languages.

In this study, we compare the integration of pragmatic borrowings (Andersen 2014; Huhtamäki et al. 2025) from English into languages of the Nordic countries. We compiled a multilingual corpus of podcast interactions for Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Sweden Swedish, Finland Swedish and Finnish. For this presentation, we zoom in on the discourse-pragmatic feature *yes*, a borrowing into all of the six languages, which demonstrates a range of nativized functions, including response marker (Huhtamäki et al. 2025), exclamation, and pre-closing device. From a variationist perspective, we correlate the borrowing *yes* with demographic factors and metadata in the corpus (gender, age, number of speakers present, podcast variety). From an interactional perspective, we investigate variability in the *yes* marker's functional range, position and acoustic properties (intonation, emphatic stress, lengthening) in the six receiving languages. This approach allows for a comprehensive account of *yes* in the Nordics that contrasts its usage across the languages of the region, while at the same time distinguishing its use from English.

Interactional analyses indicate that functions of *yes* across the six languages are strikingly similar, especially considering that some of the functions of *yes* are innovative in the receiving languages. With our ongoing variationist analysis, we aim to be able to account for any social distinctions in the use of *yes*.

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Patricia Camus & Lisa Brunetti

Beyond Code-Switching: The Integration of the Discourse Marker 'So' in Tagalog-English Bilingual Speech

This study examines the discourse marker (DM) *so* in Tagalog-English bilingual speech, focusing on its clausal position, discourse function, and language context. Drawing on a spoken corpus of interviews with 15 Filipino bilinguals, a subset of 70 tokens of *so* was annotated and analyzed.

Preliminary results reveal a clear position-function mapping. Clause-initial *so* is associated with a wide range of discourse-organizational functions that extend beyond its basic resultative reading. It most frequently introduces elaborations (such as examples, specifications, or explanations of a prior segment), but also functions as a main idea unit marker (signaling topic resumption after a digression), a sequential marker, a comment/opinion marker, and a device for opening new topics. By contrast, clause-final *so* is functionally more restricted, occurring primarily as a marker of implied result and as a turn-yielding device. These distributions closely align with previous findings on *so* in monolingual English discourse (Müller, 2005; Buysse 2009, 2014; Schoofs 2014), suggesting functional continuity across monolingual and bilingual contexts.

Furthermore, language context analysis shows that *so* occurs overwhelmingly in fully Tagalog utterances (56 out of 70 tokens), indicating that its use cannot be attributed solely to code-switching but instead points to pragmatic borrowing and integration into Tagalog discourse. Corpus frequency data support this interpretation: *so* occurs more often than its Tagalog counterpart *kaya* (606 vs. 150 tokens). This asymmetry suggests that bilingual speakers

preferentially use *so* as a discourse-organizing resource, while *kaya* remains more narrowly associated with resultative readings.

While the analysis is still ongoing, the observed distributions provide evidence for the integration of *so* into Tagalog as a highly productive discourse marker. Future work will explore whether other Tagalog items may overlap with the functions of *so*, such as *(h)ayun* ('there'), an attention-directing deictic (Schachter and Otones, 1972) that may contribute to topic management and discourse progression.

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Session 4 – Discourse Markers in Multilingual Communities

Hannah Davidson

Bridging the Discourse-Contact Interface: A Quantitative Analysis of Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in Kreol Morisien-French Contact

Discourse markers (DMs) play a pivotal role in contact situations (Andersen, 2014), making them ideal candidates for examining variation within multilingual speech communities, such as Mauritius. Previous work in the Mauritian context found that the meaning of DMs is crucial for understanding their variability and identified hybrid DMs which are neither fully French nor Kreol (Chady, 2021). This paper provides a quantitative investigation of DM usage in Kreol-French bilingual conversations and explores two theoretical frameworks: Myers-Scotton's (1993) Matrix Language Frame (MLF) and Matras' (2009) Pragmatic-Functional (PF) perspective.

While the MLF views languages as distinct structural entities, the PF perspective focuses on the context-appropriate selection of components from a singular complex repertoire. Matras' pragmatic-dominance hypothesis also predicts that DMs from languages with a tradition of literacy (French/English in Mauritius) will be borrowed into the native language (Kreol) (Matras, 1998). By applying these models to a 70,000-word corpus of naturalistic speech, this research explores whether they offer competing or complementary explanations for patterns of discourse-pragmatic variation. The analysis focusses on the frequency and correlation of French-origin vs. Kreol-origin markers (e.g., *donc/k* 'so', *salerla* 'then') with language usage, exploring the impact of treating homophonous markers like *donc/k* as either a single, language-neutral variable, or as separate French *donc* and Kreol *donk* variables. Spearman's coefficient correlation was used to test Matras' pragmatic-dominance hypothesis and showed that although French-origin DMs occur more frequently in Kreol contexts than vice-versa, the effect of pragmatic dominance on DMs is neither unidirectional nor as prevalent as anticipated. Preliminary results regarding the models indicate that despite their conceptual differences, the models can provide complementary insights into DMs in contact situations due to their peripheral treatment in MLF, and that combining such approaches can pave the way for bridging the interface between discourse markers and language contact.

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Yoshiyuki Asahi, Ichiro Ota & Shoji Takano

Linguistic Variation of Discourse Markers in Lingua Franca Japanese in Greater Tokyo

Japan is home to about 3.8 million foreign residents, creating an increasingly multilingual environment in which Japanese serves as a lingua franca. Understanding the “Lingua Franca Japanese” (LFJ) is crucial to explore new directions in language variation and change in Japanese.

This study analyzes discourse markers (DMs) in two datasets: (1) 7.5 hours of LFJ interactions among five migrants in Tokyo (L1s: Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Nepali, Brazilian Portuguese) and (2) 48 hours of baseline Japanese (BLJ) interviews with 32 native speakers from Aikawa Town (Kanagawa). We examine four functional DM subtypes: linking (e.g., *sorede*, *kedo*), fillers (*ētto*, *anō*), response tokens (*hai*, *naruhodo*), and development items (*dakara*, *tsumari*). DM density is quantified per speaker, and per-utterance rates are calculated for each subtype. LFJ and BLJ are compared by using speaker-level per-utterance rates and tested group differences with Mann–Whitney U tests (with FDR correction), complemented by effect sizes (Cliff’s δ) and speaker-level Spearman correlations with sentence-structure rates.

Results show that LFJ speakers use significantly fewer DMs than BLJ speakers. Subtype comparisons indicate the largest reduction in fillers, followed by linking items, development items, and response tokens. Within LFJ, fillers are extremely rare, whereas linking items constitute the dominant share of overt DM marking (with development items and response tokens at intermediate levels). This pattern is consistent with greater reliance on fillers in BLJ, while LFJ signals turn-taking less overtly.

The pattern also aligns with sentence structure. LFJ favors simple sentences, and speaker-level analyses show that DM density, especially linking items, becomes lower among speakers with higher simple-sentence rates, consistent with reduced need for overt discourse linking when fewer multi-clause constructions are produced. Taken together, reduced overt DM marking is one example of structural simplification characteristic of LFJ as a contact variety.

KEYNOTE

Miriam Meyerhoff & Madeleine Riskin-Kutz

Analysing Discourse Variation in an Under-Documented Language

One of the challenges of analysing variation in an under-documented language is filtering the signal from the noise. A certain depth of documentation is needed to identify what variable features in the language are subject to the orderly heterogeneity of sociolinguistic variation and change, and what variable features are (perhaps, as yet) unstructured noise. This challenge is extreme when we consider discourse pragmatic variables – discourse variables are generally subject to varying degrees of semantic bleaching (this increases the complexity of description and analysis) and they are seldom necessary (meaning in documentation, they may be treated as peripheral to the main task).

In this paper, we first document the range of discourse markers used in Nkep (an Oceanic language of Northeast Santo, Vanuatu, ISO-sku) used to express continuity in narratives or explanations (roughly equivalent to English “so/(and) then”). We identify three dominant source domains for the discourse markers: movement (away from a deictic centre) (2), (3), event completion (1), (3), and temporal deixis (4).

1. *vei c-hër* ‘so then’
say IRR¹-finish

¹ IRR = irrealis; COMPL = completive, perfective.

2. `vei c-ian` 'so then'
 say IRR-go.from.deictic.centre
3. `vei c-iria-p` 'so then'
 say IRR-get.up-COMPL
4. `naar` 'now'

Our data comes from 38 recordings made with 23 speakers (c. 17,000 transcribed words). We find few indicators that the use of different discourse markers is socially stratified. We focus therefore on the principal variants in (1)-(4) and attempt to determine whether there are independent linguistic factors that co-occur with them.

Although the forms in (1)-(3) have undergone semantic bleaching in order to function as discourse markers at all, we know that semantic bleaching is not an all-or-nothing process. Vestiges of the original semantics persist in grammaticalisation. We consider whether there is evidence that the original semantics of completion or movement continue to play a role in speakers' choice of these variants. To do this, we consider patterns of same- vs switch-reference in the subjects cross the clauses immediately preceding and following the use of these markers. We hypothesise that subject continuity might favour a form like (2), expressing movement from a steady deictic centre, while subject switching might predispose speakers to choose forms such as (1), (3) and (4).

DAY 2

Thursday, 24 September 2026

KEYNOTE

John A. Bateman

Multimodal Discourse-Pragmatic Variation: Methods, Interfaces, Limits

One of the changes in thinking that our work on multimodality over the past 20 years has led to has been not to consider multimodality as a field, or even a phenomenon, but instead to see it as a stage of development that many disciplines (construed broadly) move through. As theories and methods establish themselves, it is natural to explore whether they might be beneficially applied to broader targets. As a consequence we see efforts in almost all areas of linguistics -- functional, formal, cognitive, social -- to engage with 'multimodal' phenomena, even though what is meant by this precisely varies. This has also certainly happened in several areas of discourse and pragmatics, most commonly in treatments of face-to-face interaction where formerly purely verbal notions such as discourse markers are increasingly seen as multimodal constructions, co-deploying gesture, gaze, facial expressions, and more. When reaching towards multimodality, two considerations of particular note are: (i) to what extent can previously developed theories and methods extend to the new multimodal targets of analysis, and (ii) once extended, might results also feedback and motivate redrawing boundaries originally assumed for research? Drawing both on our own work and the broader state of the art in multimodality research generally, I sketch some of the methodological lessons learned for engaging with multimodality, showing how well-known techniques such as corpus analysis, content analysis, and the like can now be applied equally to complex multimodal communicative situations and artefacts. This shows that many of the pragmatic phenomena known from language, such as functionally and situationally motivated variation, appear to apply to all semiotic forms of expression. As a consequence, several current models are actively seeking to redraw just what is to count as 'language' at all, a question which I then draw on to open broader discussion of potential interfaces and limits of specifically multimodal discourse-pragmatic variation.

Session 5 – Multimodal Discourse

Paloma Batista Cardoso

How Negation Is Gestured: A Multimodal Description of Brazilian Portuguese

Negation is a property common to all natural languages, and may assume assertive, modal, and propositional functions. Through negation, speakers perform speech acts that are not solely structured by grammatical items: they also involve manual gestures, highlighting the multimodal nature of language. Multimodal studies (Harrison, 2010; Bressem; Müller, 2017) argue that rejection, opposition, and negative evaluation are functions indicated by grammatical markers and manual gestures. In Brazilian Portuguese, verbal negation can be expressed by the adverb *não* in pre-verbal (NEG1), in double (NEG2), or in post-verbal position (NEG3). Variationist approaches (Rocha, 2013) treat these constructions as equivalent. Yet, according to

informational approaches (Schwenter, 2004; Goldnadel, 2016) the use of NEG1, NEG2, and NEG3 is constrained by the informational *status* of the negated content. Grammatical and informational factors are highly relevant to negation. However, by themselves, they might be insufficient to explain the functions of negation. This study investigates whether manual gestures within the scope of the particle *não* constitute multimodal structures with distinct pragmatic functions. We analyzed negation data from 23 interviews recorded on video, selecting instances of NEG1, NEG2, and NEG3 performed simultaneously with manual gestures. The data were annotated for grammatical, informational, and gestural features following the Linguistic Annotation System (Bressem; Ladewig, 2011), and we tested the association between these variables and negation functions. The results suggest that negation is operated in three dimensions: its function is associated with grammatical factors, such as the semantic-pragmatic feature of the verb within the scope of *não*. Informational status restricts the occurrence of NEG3, which suggests that there is no free alternation between NEG1, NEG2, and NEG3. Gesturally, assertive negation is associated with open-hand gestures expressing speaker commitment, while modal structures involve gestures signaling distancing from undesirable entities or propositions. Such gestures occur less frequently in propositional negation. These findings reinforce assumptions about the multimodal nature of language and the complexity of negation, which extends beyond grammatical structure.

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Tong Zhao

The Variation of Emoji in Chinese Online Text-Based Counselling

A growing body of literature on multimodal communication suggests that emoji, unlike spoken utterances, are susceptible to variation and change (Dainas and Herring, 2021), particularly in their function as pragmatic or discursive markers (Beißwenger and Pappert, 2019). Emoji provide expanded affordances to online text-based communication, often limited due to a lack of nonverbal cues, delayed responses, and differences in digital literacy among interlocutors (Mallen et al., 2005).

This study is situated within the unique socio-political landscape of contemporary China, characterised by conflicts arising from the government's suppression and the increasing needs of the population. It aims to investigate the use of emoji within an online text-based counselling context using Corpus-assisted Discourse Analysis. The dataset comprises 82 clients and 9 counsellors, in 10 50-minute-sessions in Mandarin Chinese. I explore how emoji contribute to the therapeutic discourse meaning-making processes, with specific attention to the abundant use of emoji as discourse markers. Daneisn (2017) suggests that emoji usage has the potential to facilitate emotional expression during multimodal communication. I argue that the ambiguity of emotional expressions through emoji might hinder the development of therapeutic relationships. I show that clients take a submissive stance using address terms such as 老师 *laoshi* 'teacher' and 您 *nin* 'you' when addressing counsellors, indexing the power

imbalance. Positioning themselves as obedient students, clients wish to present positive face to counsellors rather than revealing their feelings (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

I explore how variation in emoji usage creates meaning in client-counsellor interactions. Together with discursive markers such as sentence-final particles, I show how interlocutors either converge or diverge in their stancetaking. Through this negotiation, they achieve continuity of sequences while showing affect (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen, 2012). These findings complicate our understanding of the discourse-pragmatic roles of emoji in the multimodal context by revealing their delicate and interactive layers of pragmatic functions.

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Session 6 – Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in Human-LLM Interaction

Raquel Freitag

The Role of Discourse Markers and Interjections in Dialectal Profiling by LLMs

Discourse markers and interjections are often the dialectal clues most frequently evoked by naïve judges to characterize accents, at least in Brazilian Portuguese. Interjections such as *bah*, *uai*, *oxente*, *égua*, as well as discourse markers such as *visse*, *é nóix*, are commonly associated with specific dialectal origins. In Brazil, although these forms are neither exclusive to nor strictly restricted to a single geographical region, since their boundaries are broader and follow internal migratory flows: for example, *bah* is typically associated with the state of Rio Grande do Sul, *uai* with Minas Gerais, and *visse* with Pernambuco. In a previous study based on prompt engineering aimed at uncovering how large language models (LLMs) discriminate among varieties of Brazilian Portuguese, results showed that interjections (*uai*, *oxente*, *ôxe*) and discourse markers (*visse?*, *tá ligado?*, *é nóix*) were the most frequent linguistic features used by ChatGPT and Gemini to identify the dialectal origin of speakers across all dialectal varieties.

The objective of this study is to describe the usage patterns emulated by LLMs and the combination of discourse markers and interjections in the identification of dialectal origin. The parameters analyzed include position within the utterance and co-occurrence (covariation). Prompts from a previous task (2024) were replicated, requesting the production of one text for each of the 27 Brazilian states. The set of generated responses was analyzed by expert judges, who evaluated the degree of dialectal identity on a five-point Likert scale, relating it to the frequency of occurrence and to the patterns of combination of dialectal discourse markers and interjections.

The results reinforce the stereotypical association of interjections and discourse markers with states and dialectal regions, as shown previously: interjections are more strongly associated with dialectal differentiation than discourse markers, and indicate that non-prototypical combinations of discourse markers and interjections from dialectal regions different from the one being evaluated, although infrequent, negatively affect the strength of the association. These findings offer sociolinguistic contributions to the development of dialect-equitable NLP technologies by scientifically examining features often activated by naïve judges but not always described in textbooks and grammars.

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This research investigates a central question in French causal discourse: how do speakers—and large language models (LLMs), with and without fine-tuning—choose between the connectives *parce que* and *car* (‘because’)? While these connectives have traditionally been described as semantically and pragmatically distinct, increasing evidence suggests that their use may be changing (Nazarenko 2000, Zufferey et al. 2018, Blochowiak et al. 2020). In particular, younger speakers tend to treat *parce que* and *car* as interchangeable, whereas older speakers preserve traditional distinctions related to subjectivity (Blochowiak & Grisot, 2022).

The study is organized into two phases. Phase 1 examines the role of age in connective choice by comparing younger (20–30) and older (39–59) speakers across two text genres: journalistic texts and SMS messages. In Experiment 1, participants complete a connective selection task based on a 420 corpus examples (Le Monde and an SMS corpus). In each excerpt, the original connective (*parce que* or *car*) is replaced with a mask token, and participants are asked to select the most appropriate connective (following the protocol of Escoufflaire et al., 2024). This phase assesses human performance as a function of age and genre.

Phase 2 applies the same task to LLMs. Experiment 2 evaluates the performance of a state-of-the-art generative model (GPT-OSS) in a text generation setting, while Experiment 3 tests a fine-tuned CamemBERT model in a classification task. Comparing these models allows us to assess whether fine-tuning improves sensitivity to pragmatic variation.

Overall, results confirm our previous studies (Escoufflaire et al., 2024): Fine-tuned CamemBERT outperforms LLMs and humans, also in enriched context environments. Yet, the mechanisms underlying connective selection are different across the three annotation “systems” and will be discussed during the presentation.

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Session 7 – Discourse-Pragmatic Variation across Genres and Text Types

Carolina P. Amador-Moreno & Ana M. Terrazas-Calero

‘I am Sir Arthur Guinness, and this is my *fucking* city’: Investigating Intensifying *Fucking* in a Corpus of 19th-Century Irish English Fictional Discourse

The study of past linguistic forms facilitates our understanding of present day pragmatic features and it provides a window into processes of language development and change that become significant in our interpretation of discourse-pragmatic markers (DPMs) in present-day Englishes. Given the primarily oral nature of DPMs, the historical analysis of these forms has typically focused on written texts that contain a high degree of ‘orality’, such as e.g. literary texts (Brinton 2017: 12). In such contexts DPMs are sometimes used to build long-lasting stereotypes of non-standard speakers and to create stigmatizations that become perpetuated by fictional representations. However, an equally interesting source for this type of analysis is the historical recreation of orality in modern telecinematic discourse.

Our study investigates the historical background and present-day representation of the DPM **fuck(ing)* in Irish English. We explore its occurrence in the series *House of Guinness*, which is set in 19th century Ireland. Using quantitative and qualitative Corpus Stylistics techniques, we explore the patterns, use, and pragmatic functionality of this intensifier in the *House of Guinness Corpus*, which comprises ca. 30,000 words and includes transcripts of the eight episodes from season 1. The paper also analyzes the level the indexical value of **fuck(ing)* in the fictional world of the series and its development and current degree of acceptance by present-day Irish and non-Irish audiences.

The study puts forward for consideration the pragmatic strengthening of intensifying **fuck(ing)* in IrE as evidenced through its representation in the series, comparing it with its current presence in other media (cf. Beers Fägersten 2017, Laitinen et al. 2025). We argue that while the use of taboo words in fiction can serve as a stylistic tool that allows the author to enhance the characterization of a specific fictional world (Terrazas-Calero, 2020), recent research on swearing and vulgar language shows that offensive language may be becoming more normalized across varieties (Love and Stenström 2023, Schweinberger and BurrIDGE 2025).

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Particles *dakle*, *međutim*, and *takođe* as Discourse Markers in Serbian Parliamentary Discourse: Opposition and Inference Strategies

This paper examines the use of the Serbian particles *dakle* (therefore/so), *međutim* (however), and *takođe* (also) as discourse markers in political discourse. The research material consists of stenographic records from Serbian parliamentary sessions held during a period of intense social crisis in the first half of 2025, marked by mass protests, the fall of the Government, and the formation of a new administration. The primary objective is to determine the role of these discourse markers in the speech strategies of social actors with differing positions of power, namely government and opposition representatives. The analysis draws on insights from political discourse analysis and studies of the relationship between discourse and power (Fairclough 2003; van Dijk 2006, 2008).

A secondary objective is to examine the distribution of these markers across different segments of parliamentary speech, distinguishing between initial, prepared remarks and later, more improvised and interactionally dynamic parts of the debate. Discourse markers are defined as lexical units that do not contribute to the propositional content of an utterance but serve to establish relations on a metatextual level (Fraser 1999; Čudomirović 2017).

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach. First, the frequency of *dakle*, *međutim*, and *takođe* in their discourse-marker function is established along the government–opposition axis. This is followed by a qualitative analysis of their functional-semantic and pragmatic properties in specific discursive contexts.

The particle *dakle* functions primarily as a marker of inference or logical conclusion, but may also serve as a topic-change maker, signaling a return to the main line of argumentation. The particle *takođe* marks addition and expansion of previously introduced content. It is hypothesized that these two markers are more closely associated with strategies of alignment and justification, particularly in the discourse of government representatives. By contrast, *međutim* signals contrast and opposition between discourse segments. Accordingly, the second hypothesis predicts a higher frequency of *međutim* in opposition discourse, reflecting the greater prominence of contestation strategies in parliamentary debate.

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To be fair and TBF/tbf: Discourse Markers across Modalities

The phrase *to be fair*, in addition to its literal usage exemplified in (1), has come to be a discourse-pragmatic feature of English, as shown in (2).

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| (1) | <i>To be fair to the Times, they made no such claims</i> | (Walsh 2013) |
| (2) | a. <i>to be fair, I wrote a large portion of it a few months ago.</i> | (Apollo 2012) |
| | b. <i>It couldn't have gone any better for us, to be fair</i> | (Walsh 2021) |

The initialism *TBF/tbf* is found in computer-mediated communication (CMC) with similar distribution possibilities.

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|----------------------------|
| (1) | a. | <i>Tbf Terry Crews is a giant in large part because he was a legit NFL player.</i> | (WearTheFourFeathers 2023) |
| | b. | <i>I've seen first hand what happens in parliament and how people conduct themselves and it's pretty depressing and actually surprising anything gets done tbf!</i> | (Klass 2023) |

Rather than simply expressing the speaker's intent to present a situation without bias, *to be fair* as a discourse-pragmatic feature is used to give credit, concede a point, hedge, express counter-expectation, and/or provide an evaluation or relevant context. However, the full range of *to be fair*'s properties and functions, and whether they differ from those of *TBF/tbf*, remain to be explored (Alecú 2024 provides some initial observations).

Drawing on data from corpora including enTenTen, English Trends, and the BNC2014, and utilising Crible & Degand's (2019) annotation model, this study combines quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to examine for the first time the extent to which *to be fair* and *TBF/tbf* share proper-ies and functions and fit into existing models of grammaticalisation and discourse-pragmatic variation. Close comparison of *to be fair* and *TBF/tbf* contributes to our understanding of the relationship between discourse markers and the initialisms that are their apparent counterparts in CMC, as well as discourse-pragmatic variation and multimodality (speech, writing, CMC) more generally.

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Mijana Čopa & Milica Rabrenović

Interactional discourse markers across generations in a vernacular variety of Serbian

Variationist research on discourse-pragmatic features has repeatedly highlighted the analytical potential and the methodological challenges posed by discourse markers, particularly with respect to their multifunctionality, context sensitivity and uneven distribution across speakers and varieties (Pichler 2010; Cheshire 2016). Recent work therefore emphasizes the need for carefully delimited variable contexts, functional comparability, and the combination of qualitative and quantitative perspectives in the study of discourse-pragmatic variation (Waters 2016; Tagliamonte 2016).

This paper examines interactional discourse markers in a corpus of sociolinguistic interviews from a vernacular variety of spoken Serbian in the northern part of the Kosovo–Resava dialect. The corpus comprises speakers from three age groups (younger, middle-aged and older generation), enabling the exploration of age-related patterns within a single speech community. Discourse markers are identified using a bottom-up procedure, following a corpus-based approach (Andersen 2016). Quantitative analysis employs normalized frequency measures across speakers and generations, while qualitative analysis focuses on interactional and stance-related functions.

The analysis reveals a stable core inventory of interactional discourse markers shared across all three generations, including *znači* ‘so’, *znaš* ‘you know’, *mislim* ‘I mean’, *ne znam* ‘I don’t know’, *pa* ‘well/so’ and *tako da* ‘so that’. The focus is on their role in interactional management and stance-taking. These forms constitute a common interactional repertoire and provide a basis for reliable comparison. At the same time, generational differences emerge in their relative frequencies and functional deployment. In addition, the study offers a qualitative exploration of marginal interactional items to assess whether they form part of the shared interactional repertoire or remain restricted to specific age groups and interactional contexts.

The study shows that generational differences are primarily reflected in the interactional use of shared discourse markers, illustrating how locally grounded spoken corpora can contribute to broader discussions of discourse-pragmatic variation without aiming at generalization.

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This paper discusses the discourse-pragmatic aspects of Polish, Russian, and English surprise expressions with a specific focus on conversational tactics in dialogue. Surprise as an emotive and impulsive reaction is commonly verbalized in patterned linguistic constructions with both expressive and interactional uses. Based on a corpus of approximately 6,000 utterances (2,000 in each language) of fictional dialogue imitating spontaneous verbal communication – supplemented with actual overheard interaction – the article analyzes how speakers in the three languages intensify, soften, or reframe the emotional intensity of surprise in dialogue interaction.

Conversational tactics are local rhetorical practices aimed at fulfilling broader strategic goals, realized by means of pragmatic organization of the utterance (Czapiga 2017; Горянова 2009.). In surprise expressions, they include emotivising and ritualising devices such as prosodic marking (e.g., rising/falling intonation), lexical intensifiers, discourse particles (e.g., *really*, *że co, ну же*), and fixed pragmatic expressions (e.g., *What on earth?*, *Бо как?*, *Coś takiego!*). Repetition, address forms, deictic expressions (e.g., *look*, *popatrz*), evaluative language, and idioms are some other devices that strengthen stance and encourage recipient agreement.

Whereas many utterances intensify the emotive component of surprise, others utilize deintensification or functional modification strategies. These include rationalising reactions (using meta-commentary), changing emotional state (e.g., to anger or disapproval), or masking negative emotions under epistemic interpretation (e.g., *I'm surprised that...*; cf. Celle et al. 2017). This reflects speakers' adaptability to evolving emotional and interactional contexts.

Cross-linguistic comparison reveals generally comparable typologies with language-specific characteristics: Polish and Russian use a wider range of discourse particles, whereas English tends toward syntactic constructions and prosodic intensification. Tactic selection is ultimately influenced less by systemic differences and more by situational factors, speaker styles, and interactional goals.

The paper contributes to the understanding of emotional and sociocultural processes of everyday interaction and demonstrates the usefulness of literary dialogue for pragmatics research.

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Chrisa Kazitori & George J. Xydopoulos

Slang, Offensiveness, and Social Meaning in Modern Greek: A Discourse-Pragmatic Perspective

This study investigates the affective and pragmatic dimensions of slang, derogatory, pejorative, ironic, and emotionally charged words in Modern Greek, aiming to develop an online lexical database grounded in the *Affective Norms for English Words* (ANEW; Bradley & Lang, 1999) and extended with the dimension of offensiveness/tabooeness (Beers-Fägersten, 2007; Eilola & Havelka, 2010; Janschewitz, 2008; Jay, 1992).

Approximately 13,300 lexical items were collected from dictionaries and online sources. A questionnaire using the *Self-Assessment Manikin* (SAM; Bradley & Lang, 1994) allowed participants to rate each word across four affective dimensions: valence, arousal, dominance, and offensiveness. Participants (n = 170) represented diverse social and age groups, including students, retired teachers, artists, and professionals. Preliminary analyses show that age and education significantly shape perceptions of offensiveness.

From a discourse-pragmatic perspective, these findings shed light on how socially and emotionally charged language varies across speakers and contexts. Slang and taboo expressions function not only as markers of social identity but also as pragmatic tools that can reinforce or challenge social norms. By providing a systematic resource of Modern Greek slang vocabulary, this study enables further research into the interaction between affect, pragmatics, and social meaning, and contributes to understanding language variation and change within and across speech communities.

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Davor Krsnik, Martina Sekulić Sović, Aleksandar Savić & Ante Periša

Pragmalinguistic Atypicalities of Lexical Fillers in the Discourse of Croatian Speakers with Schizophrenia

Discourse planning entails conceptualising and morphosyntactic structuring of utterances that must be connected in accordance with relevance. Since such an activity is based on a certain amount of effort on the part of the speaker, spontaneous speech is characterized by various disfluencies like pauses, word or phrase revisions as well as usage of lexical fillers. It is commonly estimated that the rate of disfluencies in speech is 6 per 100 words (see Bortfeld *et al.* 2001 among others). Since this pattern has also been confirmed for Croatian (Krhen *et al.* 2023), our objective was to examine it in relation to the speech of patients with schizophrenia. Descriptive discourse was elicited through verbal (interview) and visual (picture-description) stimuli. Audio recordings of the test sessions were subsequently de-identified, transcribed and the data were examined through quantitative discourse cohesion analysis. The first finding indicates a significantly higher rate of disfluencies compared to healthy speakers and is reported for the first time for Croatian. The second finding concerns deviations from the typical reliance on disfluencies, especially in the use of lexical fillers. Typically, lexical fillers are used at the start of the utterance as short pauses that help with discourse planning (e.g. *well*) or at the end as phatic elements (e.g. *you know*). In utterance-medial position these forms frequently signal difficulties in lexical or phrasal retrieval, while also potentially functioning as metalinguistic comments or focus markers. We have found that patients with schizophrenia predominantly used lexical fillers in utterance-medial position, where they appeared to function as *hedges* (Lakoff 1973) signalling insecurity about the propositional content, a pattern further supported by their frequent co-occurrence with word or phrase revisions. Our preliminary

findings highlight the potential relevance of atypical discourse markers for further research in discourse-pragmatic as well as clinical fields.

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Franz Ritter

Between Prestige and Erasure: The (In-)Visibility of Arabic in Spanish Newspaper Discourse during the Spain-Morocco Crisis (2021-2023)

This paper investigates how Arabic is made visible, marked, and erased in Spanish newspaper discourse during the Spain-Morocco crisis (2021–2023). Moving beyond approaches that treat Arabic simply as a thematic object, the study focuses on the discourse-pragmatic and metalinguistic routines through which Arabic is introduced, framed, distanced, or omitted in journalistic texts. It argues that visibility and erasure are not binary phenomena but are produced through recurrent micro-level textual practices such as glossing, quotation, typographic distancing, explanatory parentheticals, stance marking, and strategic omission.

The analysis is based on a corpus of approximately 896 articles from national, regional, and online Spanish newspapers, compiled via Nexis. The corpus follows a context-based sampling strategy that is not driven by prior lexical searches, but by a controlled selection of time period, medium type, and thematic relevance. This allows for the systematic identification of both explicit references to Arabic (and naming-strategies) and cases in which language would be expected but remains unmentioned.

Methodologically, the study combines quantitative corpus-linguistic techniques with qualitative discourse-pragmatic analysis. Using Sketch Engine, it examines frequency patterns, collocations, POS-based distributions, and positional tendencies within articles. Selected concordance lines are then manually annotated for naming type (language, collective, cultural reference), glossing practices, quotation and reporting structures, typographic and rhetorical distancing, evaluative stance, and omission in linguistically relevant contexts/newspaper sections.

The investigation aims to highlight how Arabic is not simply present or absent in Spanish media discourse but systematically packaged through small yet recurrent discourse-pragmatic routines that shape its interpretation as prestigious heritage, foreign element, or politically marked category. By foregrounding these micro-practices, the paper contributes to research on discourse-pragmatic variation and change and demonstrates how journalistic language practices structure the visibility of linguistic otherness.

Multicultural London English (MLE) has emerged as one of the most prominent urban varieties in contemporary Britain, reflecting the multilingual and multicultural character of London's inner-city communities. Previous research has highlighted the substantial contribution of Jamaican Creole to the development of MLE, particularly at the lexical level (Cheshire et al., 2011; Kerswill, 2013; Palacios Martínez, 2021). However, less attention has been paid to how Jamaican-derived lexical items and more general MLE slang are distributed across different interactional contexts and how they contribute to the construction of social identities in media representations of urban speech.

This corpus-based study investigates the use of Jamaican-derived and general MLE slang in the television series *Top Boy*. Drawing on variationist sociolinguistics, theories of indexicality and enregisterment, and research on language contact, the study analyses the frequency, distribution, and discourse functions of slang items across characters, contexts, and different stages of the narrative. A methodological distinction is established between Jamaican-derived lexical items and general MLE slang in order to examine the extent to which Jamaican linguistic influence remains visible within contemporary representations of MLE. The analysis is based on a manually annotated corpus compiled from selected episodes of both the original series (*Top Boy: Summerhouse*) and its Netflix revival.

Preliminary findings indicate that MLE functions as a salient marker of urban youth identity, group affiliation, and social positioning. Jamaican-derived forms appear to be particularly associated with the performance of authenticity, local belonging, and the enactment of the enregistered “roadman” persona, while general MLE slang is more broadly distributed across interactional settings. The results also suggest that the use of specific lexical features varies according to discourse context, with different patterns emerging in contexts of affiliation, intimidation, family relations, and references to local origin.

The study contributes to ongoing research on language contact, discourse-pragmatic variation, and the relationship between linguistic variation and identity construction in contemporary urban Englishes.

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Session 9 – Variationist Approaches to Speech Acts and Politeness

Tanne Stephens

Exploring Regional Politeness in U.S. English: Strategies and Perceptions

Since the mid-1980s, cross-cultural pragmatics researchers have helped uncover differences in the expectations and realizations of polite speech in various languages and within the same language (e.g. for different Englishes see Flöck, 2016; Schneider, 2012; Schneider & Barron, 2008). While work in dialectology clearly evinces subnational variation, such regional variation in pragmatics remains underexplored (for exceptions see Barron, 2009 and van Dorst, et al., 2024). Even less explored are emic, perception-based perspectives of pragmatic variation. The current paper addresses this gap by investigating regional pragmatic variation in requests from English speakers in two U.S. regions. The paper intersects linguistics with social perception by also reporting on participants' perceptions of politeness.

A quantitative survey study was conducted with 196 participants from the U.S. Midwest and Northeast. An elicitation task prompted respondents to produce requests for six scenarios with varying levels of social distance and power difference. Participants also completed an attitude survey in which 12 requests were rated along 10 adjectival scales. Each request represented one of Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies (cf. Scollon & Scollon, 2001).

The attitude survey showed that requests with negative face redress were perceived as the most polite type of strategy for both groups. Midwest participants rated requests with positive face redress as most honest, whereas Northeast participants rated negative face redress most honest. Preliminary results support findings in previous intercultural pragmatics studies which characterize Anglophone English speakers as belonging to a deference system favoring negative face redress (Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Tannen, 1981; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012). Ongoing analyses examine the relationship between participants' politeness perceptions, their own request realizations, and relevant macrosocial variables. With polarization rising in the U.S., this paper attempts to investigate regional differences and explore the previously undescribed U.S. subnational variation in pragmatic choices and strategies.

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The Art of Requesting: Regional Variation in Politeness across England and Germany

Classic politeness theories posit a direct relationship between politeness and indirectness. Despite sustained criticism, this assumption continues to underpin much of the politeness literature. Against this backdrop, our project, *The Art of Requesting*, replicates and extends Blum-Kulka's (1987) seminal study, critically re-examining Leech's influential hypothesis linking indirectness to perceived politeness. Focusing on requests in different regions of England and Germany, we incorporate regional variation, thereby reassessing request politeness from a variationist perspective. Data collection is ongoing as part of a collaborative graduate student project, and so far we have collected data from 200 L1 speakers of English and German. Following Blum-Kulka's experimental design, participants evaluated six request strategies embedded in short situational scenarios in a perception-based task. Unlike the original study, we focus on a smaller set of request strategies, specifically mood derivables, query preparatories, and strong and mild hints, and we include query preparatories modified by the frequent English collocations MIND ("Would you mind...", German functional equivalent: "Wäre es in Ordnung...") and WONDER ("I was wondering if...", German functional equivalent: "Würdest du/würden Sie vielleicht...") to examine their discourse-pragmatic status.

Preliminary results point to a consistent ranking of request strategies among English and German speakers: mood derivables are most direct, followed by query preparatories, query preparatories modified by *MIND* and *WONDER*, and finally strong and mild hints. Subtle but significant regional differences emerge: northern speakers in both countries rank hints as less polite than southern speakers, and eastern Germans rate unmodified query preparatories as almost equally (im-)polite as mood derivables. These patterns are further clarified by participants' metapragmatic comments, suggesting that perceived politeness differences reflect local norms regarding tact and the conventionalization of request forms. Overall, the findings offer new insights for discourse-pragmatic theory and emphasize the value of a variationist perspective in the study of indirectness.

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DAY 3

Friday, 25 September 2026

KEYNOTE

Emma Moore

What Is Social Meaning and What Is Its Role in Linguistic Theory?

Whilst all types of linguists attend to semantic and pragmatic meaning, historically, only those who refer to themselves as sociolinguists have been concerned with social meaning (meaning that is enacted performatively to create social reference). However, as Terkourafi (2026: 16–17) has recently observed, there has been a sharp increase in the number of linguistic disciplines talking about social meaning and incorporating social factors in their analysis. This raises three questions: (i) what is social meaning, (ii) what is the relationship between social meaning, semantics and pragmatics, and (iii) what implications does this interest in social meaning have for linguistic theory?

To explore these questions, I provide a case study of right dislocation use amongst high school students in a north-west English town (Moore 2023). Right dislocation (RD) refers to a clause followed by a noun phrase or pronoun tag which is co-referential with the preceding subject or object pronoun (for instance, *He's weird, my dad*). My study examines how 347 instances of RD are used by 27 participants across approximately 50 hours of interactions audio-recorded in the early 2000s. Importantly, my analysis is supported by an extensive ethnography of the high school community (including 196,400 words of field notes). Quantitative patterns of variation, pragmatic function and discourse context are considered. My analysis shows that it is possible to trace the meaning trajectory of right dislocation, from its semantics to its pragmatics to its social meaning, and back again. The pragmatics of right dislocation facilitates the articulation of certain stances and personas which affect how certain groups engage with right dislocation over time. In turn, these social patterns feed back into how the pragmatics of this form are construed. This reveals the porous nature of pragmatic and social meaning.

Those who study discourse have always had a particularly nuanced understanding of this relationship: we construct meaning referentially, performatively and indexically (Eckert 2026: 75), and we do so in discourse, which is, in turn, embedded in our social practice and structured by ideology. We know that social meaning cannot be an 'add-on' to propositional or pragmatic meaning (see also Hansen 2025), yet that is how it continues to be represented in much linguistic work. Consequently, I conclude by exploring what we can do as scholars of language variation and change to theorise meaning in a way that reflects twenty-first century understandings of language.

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Session 10 – Sociolinguistic Variation & Identity

Fergus O'Dwyer & Bettina Migge

The Appropriation of *Right* and *Alright* for Sociolinguistic Work in Dublin

PMs in Irish English are often used to foreground an interpersonal approach, for example *right* can lend credibility to the voice of a narrator (Clancy & Vaughan 2012). However, this research has not investigated how social meanings are harnessed in spontaneous speech data in relation to sound variation in PMs. While there has been much work in the area of social meaning on the interactional micro level, to the meso level (e.g., communities of practice) and on to macro factors like gender and class, it is not easy to coherently analyze how these three levels of social identity frames can be indexed together in interaction. This paper examines the processes of how social meanings are harnessed from personae, social identities, stances etc. through linguistic variation in the *right* and *alright* pragmatic markers (PMs) in spontaneous speech data collected in Dublin, Ireland. Our approach—informed by discourse analysis, interactional sociolinguistics and variationist studies—is implemented through a focus on interaction order (mediation between the micro to macro in interaction, e.g. Goffman 1983) and contextualization (Gumperz 1982: cuing of social meaning through employment of linguistic variants) to elucidate the meaning-making process.

One important finding is that when speakers realize the PMs while performing sociolinguistic work (e.g., assuming epistemic rights or “doing” authority) they appropriate alternative variants, rather than using the default medial vowel and word-final consonant variants. Presentation of quantitative data analysis will establish patterns, before qualitative analysis will aim to illustrate how identity work and speaker positioning varies from one linguistic performance to another. Discussion will centre on how individuals harness sociophonetic variation related to the PMs in question on a moment-to-moment basis, and how these identity moves have implications across the three levels of social identity frames.

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Karen V. Beaman

Discursive-Pragmatic Strategies in Swabian German: Real- and Apparent-Time Change in the Use of Filled Pauses and Discourse Markers

This study examines two discourse-pragmatic features. Filled pauses (FP), non-lexical, non-silent vocalizations (e.g., *äh*, *mhm*), have primarily been attributed to “doubt or uncertainty” on the part of the speaker (Crystal 1992:170). Discourse markers (DM) (e.g., *ich glaube* ‘I think,’ *du weißt* ‘you know’) are often used to mitigate or soften a response. Tottie (2011:173) found that

older, educated British men used more FPs than younger, less educated women; Laserna et al. (2014:328) found that FPs were used at comparable rates across gender and age in American English, while DMs were used more frequently by younger, more educated women. Multiple studies show that women consistently use more nasal FPs, while men use more vocalic variants (e.g., Wieling et al. 2016).

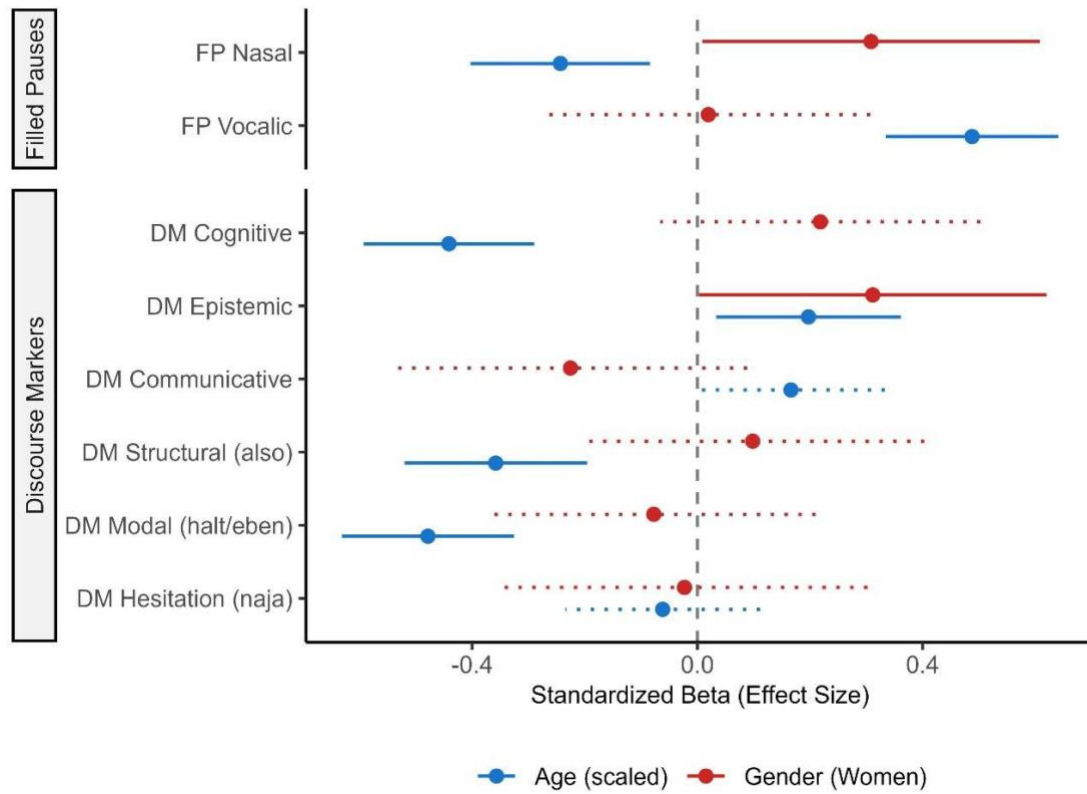
The research questions this study addresses are whether and to what extent FPs and DMs reflect socioindexicalities in Swabian German. The top 10 most frequent filled pauses (n=22,545) and ten common DMs (n=19,802) were extracted from a real-time corpus of hour-long sociolinguistic interviews with 133 native Swabian speakers. The findings show that men use more FPs than women; however, younger, more highly educated women use more nasal FPs than men, reflecting change in both real- and apparent-time. These results confirm patterns found in several cross-Germanic studies, which point to women as the innovators in the transition to more phonetically complex, “more polite” nasalized fillers, while men prefer the shorter, simpler vocalic delay (Clark and Fox Tree 2002; Liberman 2014; Wieling et al. 2016). For DMs, while younger speakers use more overall, older women favor epistemic DMs (e.g., *weißst du* ‘you know’), showing a priority for communicative clarity, politeness, and rapport building, while younger speakers favor structural (e.g., *also* ‘so’) and modal (e.g., *halt/eben*) markers. Overall, these findings suggest that a massive generational shift in the Swabian discursive-pragmatic paradigm is underway.

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Effect Sizes for Social Predictors for Discursive-Pragmatic Features

Solid lines = Significant | Dotted lines = Non-Significant



Session 11A – Stance Marking: Constructional and Indexical Perspectives

María José López Couso & Belén Méndez-Naya

Ways of Seeing: On the Stance Parentheticals *as I see it* and *(the) way I see it* in American English

Speaker's stance, that is, the way in which speakers express their attitude towards a given proposition, has been the focus of a great deal of research, both synchronically and diachronically (see, e.g., Kaltenböck et al. 2020). As opposed to other languages which mark the notions of epistemicity and evidentiality by means of inflections, English makes use of various linguistic strategies, ranging from modal verbs to parenthetical structures (e.g. *it seems*) and adverbs (*maybe, perhaps*) (see Chafe 1986: 261).

In the present paper, which is part of our research project on stance parentheticals in the history of English, we turn our attention to two relatively recent stance parenthetical types: *as I see it*, as in (1), and *(the) way I see it*, illustrated in (2). According to the OED, *as I see it* goes back to the late 19th century, while *(the) way I see it* first appeared in the early 20th century (OED s.v. *see* v. P.26). Both parentheticals can be argued to have started as evidential expressions (perception 'see' > cognition 'understand') but are currently used to denote the speaker's commitment towards the proposition encoded by their host clauses.

- (1) So, **as I see it**, we got a perfect opportunity...to employ your God-given talent. (COHA, 1988, TV/MOV)
- (2) Feminism, **the way I see it**, should be a way of empowering women to speak and to act. (COCA, 2012, BLOG)

Using evidence from COHA (Davies 2010), in our presentation we explore the connection between these two parenthetical patterns and chart their diachronic development in American English over the last two centuries, paying attention to those features which may be indicative of increasing grammaticalization. Among other issues, we examine the position of the parentheticals in relation to their host clauses and their distribution across registers.

(294 words)

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Hsi-Yao Su

From Institutional Standard to Stylized Stance: The Indexical Trajectory of *Erhua* in Taiwan Mandarin

This study examines the indexical trajectory of *erhua* (兒化) in Taiwan Mandarin, analyzing how its rhotacization suffixation and highly visible orthographic representation function as discourse-pragmatic resources. Phonologically, *erhua* involves adding a subsyllabic *-r* to noun-final syllables, while orthographically it is marked by the character 兒 (e.g., 'flower' [xwa] 花 vs.

[xwaɿ] 花兒). Traditionally associated with Beijing Mandarin (Zhang 2018), *erhua* was introduced to Taiwan as part of post-WWII language standardization, serving as a graphic and phonetic index of institutional authority under the KMT regime.

Drawing on two datasets, including a historical archive of newspapers (1950–1965) and a contemporary corpus of news and social media, this study combines distributional analysis with a qualitative examination of how the indexical field of *erhua* has been reconfigured. There is a systematic shift in both the frequency and sectional distribution of *erhua*. Historical newspaper data show *erhua* distributed across multiple sections, including front-page news, editorials, local news, and literary features, reflecting its status as a standardized written register. In contrast, contemporary news exhibits near absence of *erhua*, except in literary feature sections where it is mobilized to construct specific characterological figures and stances (Agha 2007). Analysis of contemporary social media discourse, including explicit metapragmatic commentary and parodic performances, indicates that *erhua* is now primarily indexed as “not currently spoken in Taiwan”, reflecting nth-order indexicality (Silverstein 2003), and is variously recognized as an imported feature from China, a written relic, or a marker of northern Chinese speech. At the n+1st order, *erhua* is further associated with evaluative qualities such as otherness, playfulness, articulateness, toughness, irritation, old-fashionedness, and sexual undesirability. This study illustrates how orthographic variation can become discourse-pragmatic resources through processes of enregisterment and re-indexicalization across media and institutional scales and, significantly, how sociopolitical tension shapes trajectories of meaning change.

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Tanisha Bechtel-Pandey

/r/ and Fine Phonetic Variation: A Discourse-Pragmatic Analysis of Discourse Marker *crazy* in monolingual IndE Speech

Much research exists on the outsider nature of English as a linguistic resource in postcolonial contexts (Cowie, 2017; Reyes 2017). However, research on social meanings of linguistic variation and their connection to personal style for non-standard varieties of English, remains relatively understudied.

Informed by developments in sociolinguistics (Drager, 2016; Mendoza-Denton, 2008) and Indian Englishes (Sharma, 2020), this paper hopes to plug that gap. I argue that different pronunciations of /r/ in discourse marker *crazy* in the speech of English-dominant speakers in India, functions as a resource for doing interactional and pragmatic work. This paper hypothesizes that trilled /r/ in utterances of *crazy* is used to interject and/or for floor-taking and floor-keeping (Brinton, 1996). Contrastingly, non-trill variants often occur in turn-single or turn-final uses of the discourse marker. The study explores the role of acoustic cues (trilling) as conversational strategies aimed at managing speaker face and inter-group interactions. To make its case, speech collected from episodes of a popular English-language YouTube podcast has been analyzed.

For the present paper, I begin by establishing a working definition of discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1987; Brinton 1996) followed by a discussion on the variable use of *crazy*. In a next step, I adapt the coding scheme from Levon (2016) to extract token frequency and position in turn. In a final step, each token has been coded for its discourse-pragmatic function and the nature of acoustic realisation (trill or not-trill).

By situating linguistic variation within its interactional context, this paper sheds light on processes of register formation and the locally salient, social meanings that emerge from it. In so doing, it demonstrates how fine phonetic variation can serve as a resource for communicating specific discursive messages which are limited in their meaningfulness to speakers of a particular community.

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Session 11B – Pragmatic Markers across Languages and Varieties

Nozomi Okada, Mitsuki Miyano & Kento Yamamoto

The ‘Untranslatable’ Pragmatic Marker: Why *You Know* is Conceptually Difficult for Japanese EFL Speakers

Pragmatic markers have gained increasing attention in English Language Teaching (ELT) research, as they are essential for natural and effective communication. Previous research consistently reports that Japanese learners of English tend to underuse pragmatic markers, such as *you know*, in their conversations. (Chino & Mineshima 2016) However, the underlying reasons why learners struggle to integrate these markers remain unclear. To address this gap, this study offers a case study by investigating the common ground sentencefinal uses of the English pragmatic markers *you know* and *right*, focusing on how they correspond to – or fail to correspond to – Japanese phrases.

We collected these markers – 26 cases for *you know* and 36 for *right* – from movies and YouTube videos with bilingual subtitles and examined how the confirmatory uses were translated and interpreted by Japanese speakers. The results show that only 19.2% (5 out of 26) of *you know* were translated into the Japanese equivalent *でしょ* (*desho*) or *よね* (*yone*), while *right* was in

72.2% of cases (26 out of 36). It will be argued that it is difficult to find a Japanese equivalent for you know when this pragmatic marker functions as a confirmation for the interlocuter's attention, contrasting with other functionally similar markers (Schiffrin 1987; Buysse 2017; Pettersson-Traba 2018).

These findings carry significant implications for ELT, because the less frequent uses of you know by Japanese L2 speakers are not merely attributed to their insufficient study of the English vocabulary, but fundamentally rooted in the lack of a suitable Japanese equivalent for the marker. This study, by empirically examining the translational gap, contributes to understanding of the cognitive challenges English learners face and offers a foundation of developing more effective pedagogical approaches on pragmatic markers.

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Katharina Froedrich, Celeste Rodríguez Louro, Glenys Dale Collard & Matt Hunt Gardner

But She's Different to the Kangaroos There Because They Got Black Tips on Their Ears and Their Paws *and That* – General Extenders in Aboriginal English

General extenders (GEs) are semi-fixed constructions consisting of a connector (e.g., *and*), a generic noun (e.g., *stuff*) or an indefinite pronoun (e.g., *something*), and an optional comparative element (e.g., *like that*) (Tagliamonte, 2016: 116). Typically occurring in clause-final position, GEs are distinguished as adjunctive or disjunctive (introduced by *and / or*). GEs fulfil various discourse-pragmatic functions: interpersonal alignment, expression of stance, turn completion, and topic management. Further, forms compete both synchronically and diachronically across varieties of English.

1) *When we do- when we do dancing **and that**, we sing in language.* (Female, b. 1973)

GEs have been studied in mainstream Englishes, but there is less research on minoritized varieties. This paper offers the first analysis of GEs in Aboriginal English (AE), an indigenized variety spoken by First Nations people in Australia. AE functions for many speakers as their only L1 and a marker of ethnocultural identity (Author). Our focus on AE GEs both broadens the empirical base of GE research and offers a window into how AE speakers use specific language features to accomplish discourse-pragmatic goals.

The data comprise original unscripted interactional speech from 66 speakers born between 1931 and 2009 from Western Australia. A pilot analysis of eight hours of speech from 10 women (88,581 words, 99 GE tokens) shows that *and that* (N = 23) and *and all that* (N = 10) are the most frequent GE forms overall, followed by indefinite pronoun constructions (*or something*). Notably, *stuff*-based GEs are attested only among speakers born after 1980, suggesting a change in progress. While these initial patterns must be interpreted cautiously, they are consistent with broader findings for GE systems across English varieties (e.g. Aijmer, 2013: 146).

Ongoing analyses drawing on the full corpora aim to test these observations against a larger and more socially diverse dataset.

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Session 12 – Variation and Change: Cognitive, Longitudinal and Real-Time Perspectives

Liesbeth Degand, Emilie Mathot, Clara Visentin

Discourse Marker Production under Cognitive Load: Exploring the Effects of Task Complexity

Discourse markers (DMs) play a central role in structuring spoken discourse, signalling inferential relations, stance, and online planning. While their discourse-functional properties are well documented, much less is known about their sensitivity to cognitive constraints during speech production, despite evidence that conceptual planning and formulation compete for limited cognitive resources (Kahneman, 1973; Levelt, 1989).

This presentation reports on empirical work carried out by master's students in linguistics, examining how task complexity affects DM production. The project addresses three questions: (i) whether increased task complexity affects overall DM frequency; (ii) whether it induces shifts in DM functions (e.g. from relational to planning-related markers); and (iii) how these effects vary across speakers. Results will be contrasted with a previous study in which cognitive load was manipulated through a dual task, which did not significantly impact DM production (Broisson & Degand 2022), thus contrasting with expected patterns in light of existing work on speech production under cognitive load (Oomen & Postma, 2001). This work aims to bridge discourse analysis and psycholinguistics by empirically documenting the sensitivity of discourse-structuring devices to heightened processing demands.

In the first study, the impact of the enforced use of “gender inclusive language” on DM production in two monologic speaking tasks is examined. The rationale behind the study is that the use of inclusive language can be interpreted as a cognitive load due to its established cognitive cost in written communication (Gardelle 2019; Dister & Moreau 2024) and its recognized difficulty in oral production (Viktorovitch 2023). In the second study, dyads performed a collaborative comic strip description task under two conditions: low cognitive load (no constraints) and high cognitive load (verbal inhibition, where participants were forbidden from using four specific words per image). Here the rationale is that tasks taxing working memory will result in a higher cognitive cost that may influence language processing.

In the inclusive language study, 20 French-speaking participants performed an individual speaking task, either retelling (10 speakers) or creating (10 speakers) a story, with half of the participants in each group required to use inclusive language. The collected corpus totals 1 hour, 20 minutes, and 43 seconds and comprises 12,930 tokens. The analysis focuses on the 1,012 DMs identified and annotated according to the model proposed by Crible and Degand (2019). The degrees of cognitive load (absent: 119, low: 204, medium: 224, high: 395 DMs)—determined by the speech task and the use of inclusive language—are corroborated by speakers' perceived effort (Sweller et al. 2011: 73–85). Results indicate that speakers produce more DMs under low (and medium) cognitive load, especially DMs signaling the speaker's intention to maintain discourse flow.

In the comic-strip description task, 28 French-speaking participants were paired into 14 dyads (9 familiar, 5 unfamiliar, all students) to perform the collaborative description task under low and high cognitive load condition. Audio recordings of the speakers' descriptions were transcribed verbatim resulting in a dataset of 17,474 words and 1559 DMs, again manually

annotated following the two-dimensional framework proposed by Crible and Degand (2019). Results indicate that speakers produce significantly more DMs under low cognitive load ($M = 9.75$ DMs per 100 words) than under high cognitive load ($M = 7.75$ DMs per 100 words, $p < 0.05$). In addition, dyads of unfamiliar participants produced significantly more DMs than familiar dyads ($M = 17.02$ vs. 14.27 DMs per 100 words, $p < 0.007$). However, this effect disappeared when filled pauses were excluded ($p > 0.05$), indicating that familiarity primarily influences disfluency rather than structured DM usage.

These findings will be discussed more amply in the presentation. If it is confirmed that DM frequency decreases under high cognitive load, this suggests that DMs may not always serve as cognitive compensatory tools. Instead, their usage may reflect task complexity thresholds, where speakers prioritize lexical precision over discourse structuring under high load.

This work aims to contribute to the growing body of research on DMs as dynamic, context-sensitive tools and underscores the importance of interactional and cognitive factors in shaping discourse production. The findings open avenues for further investigation into how real-time constraints and social dynamics interact to shape language use.

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Mason Wirtz, Annika Rossmannith, Lukas Zbinden & Simone E. Pfenninger

Discourse-Pragmatic Skills Across Retirement: A Two-Year Longitudinal Study of Variation and Change in Anaphoric Expressions

Anaphora resolution refers to the process of identifying the antecedent of an anaphoric item and has been described as “a powerful tool for discourse cohesion” (Gargiulo, 2020:11).

Hendriks (2016) maintains that variation in the selection of discursively appropriate anaphoric expressions is related to differences in working memory (WM). Cross-sectional studies (Sandoz et al., 2024) have thus attributed older adults' tendency to frequently produce ambiguous referential markers to the well-attested age-related cognitive decline across the lifespan (Salthouse, 2009). Interestingly, Long et al. (2024:3) question whether decline in discourse-

pragmatic abilities is gradual or whether there is “a sharp shift in skills at certain age boundaries.” Representing one such potential inflection point, retirement has been associated with negative, positive, and even null changes in cognitive functioning (Meng et al., 2017), making it an interesting site of investigation for how cognitive development relates to changes in anaphoric expressions. We address if, how, and when anaphoric reference in narrative discourse changes among 15 older-adult speakers (9F, 6M) of Swiss German aged 61–64, each of whom participated in 16 data collection waves across two years as they transitioned into retirement.

At each measurement, participants completed a WM task and narrated four storyboards. Each referring expression was classified according to its referential form (pronominal use vs. lexical NPs) and referential function: ‘maintenance’ (subsequent mentions of a topical referent) and ‘reintroduction’ (reactivation of a referent that was temporarily out of narrative focus).

Preliminary analyses revealed that WM abilities positively predicted the reintroduction of previously active referents via less ambiguous, more semantically rich lexical NPs. However, this WM advantage is evident only while individuals are still engaged in the workforce and attenuates as speakers retire. These findings will help to elucidate *how* and *when* cognitive and contextual-environmental shifts experienced across retirement affect communication skills at the discourse-pragmatic interface.

David Britain & Hannah Hedegard

They Were Like ‘Oh are you local?’, and I’m Like ‘Yeah’: Variation and Change in the Falkland Island English Quotative System.

Extensive research over the past 25 years has charted the dramatic rise of *BE like* as a quotative in English. The literature has demonstrated its emergence, grammaticalization and diffusion in a range of major Inner Circle (e.g. Buchstaller 2014) and Outer Circle Englishes (e.g. Hess 2023) as well as in L2 learner varieties (e.g. Davydova 2019). Given its apparent globalisation, along with findings that, despite global spread, its local social and linguistic embedding differs from place to place (Buchstaller and D’Arcy 2009), it is pertinent to explore the impact of quotative *BE like* in those more remote Inner Circle varieties of English formed during the colonial era but which long remained isolated from the metropolitan centre (Schreier et al 2010). Has *BE like* reached these varieties, and if so, how?

We explore here the quotative system of English in the Falkland Islands, a sparsely populated archipelago, anglophone since 1833, in the South Atlantic. Our corpus of recorded informal conversations from two fieldwork trips (1997 & 2020) comprises 900,000+ words of speech from over 150 speakers, including a panel of 24 speakers recorded at both time points.

Our results show that while the 1997 corpus and speakers over 40 in the 2020 corpus exhibit an overwhelming dominance of *say*, with *be like* almost entirely absent, younger speakers in the 2020 corpus deploy *BE like* more than any other quotative, reaching over 50% of all tokens among the under 25s. This variability is shaped by social factors, such as gender and education, and linguistic constraints such as grammatical person and quoted speech type.

We explain the sudden rise of *BE like* among speakers born after 1980 as resulting from the dramatic social, educational and economic changes that took place on the islands following the brief 1982 Conflict with Argentina.

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Session 13 – Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in Educational Settings

Julia Davydova

Mediated and naturalistic propagation of L1 structured variation: Intensifiers in German Learner English

This article examines how structured linguistic variation diffuses from L1 English speech communities to non-contiguous EFL speaker groups, focusing on adjectival intensifiers in German Learner English. Situated at the intersection of variationist sociolinguistics and second language acquisition, it investigates the relative impact of naturalistic exposure and affective engagement with digital mass media on the formation of learners' variable grammars. Drawing on sociolinguistic interviews with 52 German EFL speakers aged 18–26, divided into high- and low-exposure cohorts, the analysis combines distributional and mixed-effects modelling to explore both quantitative and qualitative aspects of intensifier use. Results show that learners with sustained contact with L1 English—through interpersonal interaction and digital media consumption—exhibit lower overall rates of intensification, a wider range of intensifiers, and greater use of innovative forms such as *really* and *so*. These patterns closely align with those attested in native English varieties. The findings suggest that active and sustained engagement with mass media can function as a complementary channel of 'linguistic diffusion' (Labov 2007), alongside traditional face-to-face interaction. Interpreted through Bandura's (1986, 2009) Social Cognitive Theory, the study argues for a dual pathway of propagation—direct (media-driven) and socially mediated—reinforced by learners' intrinsic motivation and affective investment. The results extend sociolinguistic theory by demonstrating how psychological engagement and mediated exposure jointly contribute to the global spread of English and its internal variability.

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Ben Gibb-Reid & Claire Childs

Investigating Teacher Perceptions of Discourse-Pragmatic Variation in British Schools

Ideas of what is “acceptable” spoken English are subjective and problematic in education settings, where teachers often “police” students' language (Cushing, 2020). There are biases against accents associated with urban centres or ethnic minorities (Coupland & Bishop, 2007), but there is little research into attitudes towards non-accent features, despite discourse-pragmatic items regularly appearing in lists of “banned” words in British schools (BBC News, 2013; Watson, 2012). This study investigates how British teachers perceive such features in education settings, via an acceptability judgement survey.

167 teachers rated 16 sentences on a scale of 1-5 according to how acceptable they would find the sentence if heard (i) in the classroom, (ii) in the playground, or (iii) from a colleague in the staff-room. Sentences tested different discourse-pragmatic items: intensifiers (*just/bare/well/proper*), quotatives (*be like/goes*), invariant tag *innit*, discourse markers

(*like/yeah/innit*) and a vocative (*fam*). Other features were grammatical or lexical. Some features were chosen for their association with Multicultural London English (MLE) - *bare/innit/fam/man* - to see whether negative attitudes towards MLE accents are maintained for non-accent features.

Teachers rated sentences as less acceptable in classroom/staff-room contexts, but more acceptable in playgrounds. Older teachers were more negative than younger teachers, but social class was not significant. When features were grouped according to discourse function (e.g. quotatives, intensifiers), teachers did not significantly differentiate these.

However, for linguistic forms that are multifunctional, function does affect ratings: *innit* was less acceptable as an utterance-final invariant tag (2.6) than as an utterance-initial discourse marker (2.9), and *like* was less acceptable as a discourse marker (3.4) than as a quotative (3.7). The lowest-rated features overall, however, were those associated with MLE, showing that biases against urban accents also extend to discourse-pragmatic and lexical features of those varieties.

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KEYNOTE

Scott F. Kiesling

Vocatives, Brocatives, and Indexical Cycles

In this presentation I will explore the meaning paths that words and constructions take as they are invented, adopted, adapted, circulated, emanated, or extinguished (or all of the above). I argue for a conception of these shifts as **indexical cycles**, a pattern of shift in change in meanings that tends to repeat itself in language change and especially in change in discourse and pragmatic meanings and use. I begin with a case study of *dude*, following its path of indexical shifts over its lifetime. I further explore innovations in the American English vocative inventory, particularly the rise of *bro*, *bruh*, and *girl*. And then further explore the interesting case of recent use of *bud(dy)*, which seems to be used especially with a unique speaker-addressee configuration (white middle class parents to their kids). I note a recurrent manner of invention, adoption, emanation, indexical shift, and (sometimes) replacement or specialization. I argue that these vocative shifts provide an example of the wider process of indexical cycling (incorporating Silverstein's indexical orders) that is evident in linguistic change more generally, and especially in discourse and pragmatic forms. I suggest a framework to theorize these shifts, noting that this cycle describes indexical shifts that move from identity category indexicalities to stance and affective indexicalities, always in the context of an ideological assemblage that provides the abstract and desiring impetus for the shifts. I emphasize that such shifts in vocatives are especially prone to beginning with appropriation from subaltern (especially racialized) groups and identities, and suggest some reasons why this might be the case.