



Construction Grammar, Frame Semantics, and Spoken Interaction

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Spoken Interaction: Challenges

- situatedness
- high context dependency
- underlying unit is not the sentence, but the TCU
- turn-taking is a crucial organizing principle
- units are often co-constructed
- speech production is on-line
- timing is crucial
- meaning is interactively construed
- meanings and functions may concern a much larger range (topic, understanding, interpersonal relationship...)
- ...



Pragmatic Markers

- special phenomenon of spoken interaction
- about 10 x more frequent in spoken interaction than in written discourse (e.g. Louwarse & Mitchell 2003)
- fulfill a broad functional spectrum
- highly polyfunctional
 - individual markers in different positions
 - each pragmatic marker occurrence





The Problem Addressed

in spite of the contingencies of talk-in-interaction

- conversation is still learnable
- individual utterances are interpretable

proposal

- structural positions carry meanings (*constructions*, cf. Fillmore 1988, Fillmore et al. 1988)
- meanings stem from a restricted set of communicative tasks (*frame*, cf. Fillmore 1975, 1982, Fillmore & Atkins 1992)



Polyfunctionality of individual examples

<PS1SD>: put the K down right away so we'll keep that there.

Now we're only bothered about the X. I differentiated something and I finished up with X what did I start from?

What would you differentiate that would give you X? ...

<PS1SE>: Erm ... X squared.

<PS1SD>: **Okay** but that will give us too much





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- topic continuity
- contact, perception, understanding
- acceptance of contribution
- interpersonal function



Items in Similar Structural Positions

<PS0K9>: I said Look, this bloody thing is five years old now,

<PS0JX>: Mhm.

<PS0K9>: so anything little something like changing the pump, you know I pay about two hundred pound plus his fucking labour. ... Is not worth it. I can buy a brand new one. [...] er I want to [...] want to buy er er [cough] another German one, and then the poxy er spare part [...]

<PS0JX>: **Yeah** but they're er so well made you sh shouldn't really need to have to change it very often.



Items in Similar Structural Positions

<PS0JJ>: Yeah but what could he do? I mean what's he gonna be like in a ... couple of years time? ... He might say oh he

<PS0JL>: Don't know. But he's not bad at spraying. He's a good sprayer.

<PS0JJ>: **Oh** but that's the whole reason he stopped, because he couldn't





Items in Similar Structural Positions

<PS1EM>: Well no, not necessary. You're classed as a foreigner. As an Englishman.

<PS1EP>: So all these Pakistanis and [...] they can't vote?

<PS1EM>: They're re once ... no. If they [...] but they come to live here don't they?

<PS1EP>: Well that's what I mean, if I went to live in Gambia. And I bought a house [...]

<PS1EM>: **Ah** but you've got a British passport.



Items in Similar Structural Positions

< PS5MU>: You know at the top it was like sloping down here and the car's like this and I'm having to try and get the car back down without it toppling over and it was an abs

<PS5N0>: Where were you?

<PS5MU>: I was on the erm [...] bypass at this point [clears throat] about erm ... less than an hour from home

<PS5N0>: **Yes** but that's when your concentration flags.



Similar Structural Positions

- items are similar because of their similar structural positions
- interpretation depends on structural position
- construction: form – meaning pair





Uptaking Construction

form:

A: turn (TRP)

B: PM but-clause

meaning:

- topic continuity
- successful contact, perception, understanding
- acceptance of contribution
- solidary interpersonal function
- account of self-selection (turn-taking)



but-Clauses without Uptaking PM

<PS000>: I didn't ever relish the thought of becoming a sort of geriatric performer, going around clubs and summer seasons. Er I'd always wanted to act even as a kid of fifteen sixteen er and I got into singing before I went into acting and so acting s see that seemed to be a good period to break my life and start again. [...]

<PS38F>: **But** you must you must have been asked dozens of times to go back into the pop concert field?





but-Clauses without Uptaking PM

<PS5M2>: What time of year do you cut the peats?

<K6NPS001>: **Well** er the best time is the month of May.

<PS5M2>: Aha.

<K6NPS001>: **But** this year you couldn't, the weather was so





Functional Spectrum

- several options
 - single underlying function
 - connecting (e.g. Fraser 1999, 2006; Roulet 2006)
 - bracketing (Schiffrin 1987)
 - coherence establishing (Redeker 1990, 1991; Mosegaard Hansen 1998, 2006)
 - relationship by means of general polysemy links
 - metaphor, metonymy, implicature, etc. (Sweetser 1990; Mosegaard Hansen 1998, 2006; Waltereit 2006)
 - model of discourse
 - planes (Schiffrin 1987, 2001, 2006)
 - communicative tasks (Fischer 2006)



Uptaking Construction

meaning of the turn-initial uptaking construction:

- topic continuity
- successful contact, perception, understanding
- acceptance of contribution
- solidary interpersonal function
- account of self-selection (turn-taking)

➤ **communicative tasks attended to**



Communicative Tasks Frame

- communicative tasks attended to can be identified on independent grounds, based on
 - conversation analytic work
 - participant categories
 - social psychological research
 - controlled experimentation, larger speaker groups
 - socio-linguistic research
 - socio-cultural factors, participation structures etc.
- provide a flexible tool to account for situation dependency
 - e.g. sometime the personal situation model does not include some of the tasks generally attended to
 - e.g. human-computer interaction



Communicative Tasks Frame

successful communication requires that speakers inform each other

- about their collaboration on the current topic (joint project)
- about whether they attend to, perceive and understand each other
- in how far they can take issues as mutually accepted common ground
- in how far they respect each others' face needs and in how far they understand the encounter as a social endeavor
- who is speaking when and why



Summary

although the contingencies of talk-in-interaction seem to resist a grammatical description

- the notion of construction provides a flexible tool to account for generalizations that explain how conversation can be learned and understood
- the notion of frame constitutes a flexible means to account for
 - attended to tasks
 - personal situation models
 - the polyfunctionality of pragmatic markers



Thank you!





Polfyfunctionality

<D95PS001>: So it's just the, give you the background to show how were linked, so that's who we are and how we organize, is that clear, has anybody got any questions.

<PS000>: Yeah, what's happen to the Steering Committee?





<D91PS000>: I think in the past there there actually been music in in foyer bar erm **yeah I mean I'd certainly look at that I mean [...] .**

<D91PS000>: Right your absolutely right about the programme. **Yeah and I'll certainly [...] and I we think are actually in process in looking at that lot as a rule that's a very valid point**





<D95PS000>: Mm, well look, what I'm going to say to you know is, time marches on, that, do you agree that we go ahead with what Lillian's suggesting?

<D95PS001>: That we try out a petition throughout all the centre's in the town.

<PS000>: Yeah.

<PS000>: Yes.

<D95PS000>: All those in agreement raise. Right, carried, so that's what we'll do, okay.



<PS57A>: They're better than Doc Marten's [...]

<PS57B>: Like Mark's aren't they?

<PS57A>: Yeah like Mark's [...] .

<PS57C>: Er they're s

<PS57A>: I'm getting some of them.

<PS57C>: I think they're horrible. Er.

<PS57A>: They go good with baggy jeans.

<PS57B>: Yeah but you can't lift your foot up



<D95PS000>: Dave driving is he?

<D95PS003>: Well the problem is he has to say he has a licence for you, he hasn't so, it's possible that Terry will be.

<D95PS000>: Ah , oh Terry, I see.

<D95PS003>: **Yeah**, we'll still getting, trying to get in touch with him, but we'll find a driver one way or another.

<D95PS001>: Can erm, do you think Mary we can get together on reply on this?

<D95PS007>: I do hope so, idea's terrific on it.

<D95PS001>: **Yeah**, I think so.



<D91PS008>: A happy theatre a happy ship if you like a corny phrase to use is very very apparent and I'm sure my colleagues and friends around here would appreciate because they do believe they can't get at the management committee and they would like to so please Tom will that be possible at some time in the near future?

<D91PS000>: I assume so yes but erm also well yeah well yeah fine

