

PART TWO

PRAGMATIC MARKERS AND DISCOURSE SEGMENTS



KARIN AIJMER

PLEASE: A POLITENESS FORMULA VIEWED IN A TRANSLATION PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

Many languages have a marker of politeness such as *please* associated with the making of a request (e.g. German *bitte*, French *s'il vous plaît*). Swedish on the other hand does not have a routinised politeness marker corresponding to *please*. The present paper studies the correspondences of *please* in Swedish in order to get a closer picture of its different functions in English and its translation correspondences. It is shown on the basis of translations that *please* is used both as a standardised strategy in social situations and as a way of avoiding conflict by being tactful. When *please* is associated with social politeness it is translated by *var så god*. The tactful or strategic *please* signals intensity, emphasis and power and has emotional side-effects. It is never translated as *var så god*. It is shown that the functions of *please* depend both on the social situation and on the patterns where it occurs (e.g. position in the utterance and the grammatical context).

Key words

Social politeness; illocutionary force; pragmatic marker; contrastive; parallel corpus; tact

1. Introduction

The little word *please* has recently attracted considerable interest (House 1989, Fraser 1996, Wichmann 2004, Sato 2008).¹ According to Fraser (1996), *please* is a pragmatic idiom signalling illocutionary force: “[w]hen *please* occurs before an imperative structure, it signals that the speaker intends the utterance to be taken as a request, and only as a request” (Fraser 1996: 174). In addition to (illocutionary) force it has been suggested that *please* marks politeness. According to Wich-

mann (2004: 1524) “the word *please* in contemporary usage is [...] undeniably associated very closely with being ‘polite’”. We can conclude that *please* occurs ‘with a varying degree of politeness and directive force’ (Sato 2008: 1250).

A cross-linguistic analysis based on the comparison between English and Swedish will be the starting-point for discussing the politeness and illocutionary force expressed by *please*. Translations can focus on the illocutionary force associated with *please* or on its use as a politeness marker depending on different linguistic and non-linguistic features present in the speech situation.

Many languages have a marker such as *please* associated with requests (especially the imperative) and with politeness (e.g. German *bitte*, French *s’il vous plaît*). Swedish differs from German or French in that it does not have a routinised politeness or force marker corresponding to *please*. Ohlander (1985) refers to ‘the chronic shortage’ of a universal politeness marker in Swedish of the same type which is found in English and in many other languages. The rules of usage may also be different. For example, German speakers use *bitte* more frequently than English speakers use *please* in everyday request situations (House 1989: 97).

There is no direct correspondence of *please* in Swedish. However we can look at its translations into Swedish (as well as looking back at the Swedish sources when *please* is used in English translations). Translators have to make decisions about what *please* means on the basis of analysing its functions in the source language. Their decisions are based on the relationship between the speaker and hearer, degree of formality and the extent to which the situation has become routinised.

The outline of the paper is as follows. The distribution of the correspondences in the material will be discussed in Section 2. Section 3 deals with the functions of *please* on the basis of the translations. The conclusion in Section 4 discusses the two types of politeness signalled by *please*.

2. Material

We can study the ways in which *please* is translated on the basis of the English-Swedish Parallel corpus (ESPC) (Altenberg and Aijmer 2000). The corpus consists of roughly 3 million words of English texts translated into Swedish and a similar amount of Swedish texts with English correspondences. Both fiction and non-fiction texts have been collected in roughly the same proportions (40 texts each of 10,000–15,000 words).

Translations will be the raw material for the discussion of *please* and politeness. The direct confrontation involved in translating from one language to another makes it possible to establish (translation) paradigms displaying the ways in which a particular element has been translated. Table 1 shows the paradigm resulting from extracting the translations of *please* in the ESPC.

The examples of *please* in the English originals can be assumed to be representative of how the word is used in English although the examples are few.

There were 65 examples of *please* in English original texts, eight of which were examples of the verb *please* (including one example of *if you please*) and therefore not counted. In order to study the polite *please* I have used only fiction texts. The examples can be taken to represent natural speech since all (except three) examples occur in direct quotations. The fictional characters have different speaker and hearer roles (involving more or less power) and several types of social situations and scenarios are represented.

Table 1. Swedish translations of *please* in fiction texts in the ESPC (English originals → Swedish translations)

(<i>Åh</i>) <i>snälla</i> (X) with the variants <i>var snäll och</i> , <i>snälla du/ni</i> , <i>är ni snäll</i> ; <i>kära</i> (oh dear (X), be so kind and, dear you, are you kind, dear)	29
<i>Ja tack</i> (<i>gärna</i>) with the variant <i>gärna</i> (yes thank you willingly)	4
<i>Var vänlig och</i> with the variants <i>var bussig och</i> , <i>är ni hyggliga</i> (be kind (and), are you kind)	5
<i>Kan kanske</i> (perhaps)	1
<i>Så ska ni få höra</i> , <i>säger jag</i> (I say, listen to this)	1
<i>Var så god</i> with the variant <i>var god</i> ‘be so good and’, ‘be good’	2
Ø	10
Other	5

A comment on the translations:

Swedish has no politeness marker corresponding to (all the functions of) English *please*. As a result there is not a single translation correspondence.

The translations can be distinguished by their different meanings although this is not clear from the meaning of the adjectives used (*snäll*, *vänlig*, *god*). The following invented examples (translations of *please sit down*) have different meanings depending on several different factors such as the authority of the speaker and whether the situation is regarded as routinised or negotiated by the speaker and hearer.

- a. *Var snäll och sätt dig* (I urge you to sit down)
- b. *Var så god och sitt ner* (do sit down)

We can also change the translation direction and study *please* in translations from Swedish. Table 2 shows the words and constructions in the Swedish source texts. If *please* is translated by a construction with *snäll(a)* (*var snäll och*), *vänlig* (*var vänlig och*), or *var så god* we would expect these constructions to be the source of *please* in the Swedish original texts. This is indeed the case. The translator has

also used *please* when the Swedish original explicitly marks illocutionary force (*jag ber dig* ‘I ask you’).

Table 2. *Please* in English translations of Swedish originals in fiction texts in ESPC (Swedish originals → English translations)

<i>Please</i> added with no correspondence in the source text	16
<i>Snälla</i> (including <i>snälla snälla</i> counted as one example)	3
<i>Var så god(a)</i> with the variant <i>var god(a)</i> ‘be (so) good’	3
<i>Vill du</i> (will you)	2
<i>Gärna</i> with variant <i>för all del</i> ‘willingly’, ‘by all means’ – only as a response	2
<i>Vill ni vara så vänliga och</i> with the variant <i>vill du vara vänlig och</i> ‘will you be (so) kind and’	2
<i>Det går bra att</i> (‘it goes well to’)	1
<i>Så ber jag dig</i> (‘so ask I you’)	1
<i>Jag vill att</i> (‘I will that’)	1
<i>Säger jag</i> (‘I say’)	1

The frequencies of the correspondences should also be noted. Johansson (2007: 32) mentions *please* as an example of a word which does not have a straightforward counterpart in Norwegian and is therefore underused in translations from Norwegian. We find a similar imbalance when we compare the distribution of *please* in English originals and English translations in the ESPC. A comparison between Table 1 and Table 2 shows that *snälla* is used less frequently in Swedish originals than in the translation. (29 examples in translations, 3 examples in Swedish originals).

Moreover *please* has been added in a large number of examples (i.e. the opposite of omission in translations from original texts). Addition (like omission) is interesting from a typological or cross-linguistic perspective.

Addition can be interpreted as the translator’s response to the whole context, reflecting cross-linguistic differences in the sort of meanings that are conventionally expressed in natural discourse. (Johansson 2007: 26)

The reason for the addition of *please* in ‘back-translations’ may be that formulaic politeness markers are needed in some situations in English when they are not needed in Swedish.

The translations are interesting because they give an indication of when politeness is purely formal and when it is used strategically to avoid conflict. They also indicate that *please* is not only a politeness marker but a marker of illocutionary force linked to the speaker’s authority. The patterns with *please* will be further analysed in Section 3.

3. Analysing patterns with *please*

Please occurs with imperatives and with indirect requests. There were 12 different patterns shown in the table below:

Table 3. *Please* in different patterns in English original texts

<i>Please</i> + Imperative	26
Imperative + <i>please</i>	3
<i>Could you please</i>	1
<i>Could I ... please</i>	1
<i>Please would NP VP</i>	1
<i>Please will you</i>	1
<i>Would NP VP please</i>	1
<i>Please</i> + wh question	1
Wh-question + <i>please</i>	1
NAME + <i>please</i>	2
<i>Yes please</i>	2
<i>Please</i>	1

Please can be placed initially, finally and medially (or alone) which explains the large number of patterns. We can see that although many patterns are represented, the pattern ‘please + imperative’ is dominant. 26 out of 57 examples occurred with an imperative (29 out of 57 examples if the pattern ‘imperative + *please*’ is included). This is similar to the high figures found by Sato² (2008) for American and New Zealand English (cf. also Aijmer 1996 who found that *please* was more frequent with imperatives than with indirect requests in the London-Lund Corpus). Indirect requests in the form of a question included *could you*, *could I* (ability), *would NP*, *will you* (willingness), (so-called query-preparatory requests). The pattern *yes please* is restricted to formulaic responses to offers.

Please was rarely used with indirect requests. However many examples from non-fiction (not part of the study) have an indirect form *will you please*, *would you please*, *could you please* which suggests that stylistic differences such as degree of formality are involved. In the rest of the paper I will use translations to unpack the functions of *please*.

3.1. Please and imperatives

Please tends to be neglected as a linguistic item because it is above all associated with social behaviour. It is formulaic and is used in social situations “characterized by routine and recurrence” (Aijmer 1996). A clear example of a social situation where the polite ‘please’ is expected is in the response to an offer. People are

expected to say *yes please* (or *yes thank you*) when they are offered something because it is socially appropriate.

Social politeness is rooted in people's needs for smoothly organized interaction with other members of the group. As member of groups, people must behave in more or less predictable ways in order to achieve social coordination and sustain communication. One way of doing this is to follow conventional or social politeness. (Janney and Arndt 2005: 22–23)

Other recurrent social situations are for instance asking someone to sit down, to come in, to have something more to eat, to wait on the telephone, etc. In recurrent social situations *please* has little meaning although its absence might be noticed and associated with sanctions.

The translations of *please* preceded or followed by an imperative show that there are several different uses of *please*. To express social conventionalized politeness the translator has used *var så god*.

- (1) “You’re letting the cold in.”
Listen to how his wife spoke to him.
No respect.
Diana smiled and said, “Please come in.”
Normally, nothing would have induced Wilf to leave the doorstep and enter a house full of Hell Close women, but he had to see Diana, listen to her lovely voice.
(ST1)³

“Du släpper in kylan.”
Hör bara hur hans fru talade till honom.
Ingen respekt.
Diana log och sa: “Var så god och stig in.”
I vanliga fall skulle ingenting ha kunnat få Wilf att lämna trappan och gå in i ett hus fullt av kvinnor från Lusgränd, men han måste se Diana, lyssna till hennes underbart vackra röst.

Other situations where *please* corresponds to ‘var så god(a) och’ are (2) ‘asking someone to sit down’ and (3) asking someone to (sit down and) have a bun.

- (2) Wallander was surprised by the man’s forthright statement.
“Let’s start from the beginning,” he said.
“Please sit down.”
I’m afraid the chair’s a bit old.
(HM2T)

Wallander blev överraskad av mannens direkthet.

- Vi får ta det hela från början, sa han.

Var så god och sitt.

Tyvänn år stolen dålig.

- (3) “They’ve no sense of humour,” said Igor.
 “May I have a bun?”
 “Yes, of course, please do, and please do take a seat,” said Elsa.
 “I’ll just go and fetch the coffee.”
 (ARP1T)

— Dom har ingen humor, sa Igor.

Får man ta en bulle?

— Ja varsågod och slå er ner, sa Elsa.

Jag ska hämta kaffepannan.

Var så god is the only conventionalized politeness marker in Swedish.⁴ The translation shows if the translator has regarded politeness as purely conventional or as more strategic. In (4) the choice of an indirect request in the translation suggests that the speaker considers the hearer’s face needs:

- (4) But at that moment the mirrored door at the rear of the shop opened and Louis Zablonky came out. He was a short, wizened man of fifty-six, but looked older.
 “Mr James,” he beamed, “how nice to see you.”
Please come into my office.
 “How have you been keeping?”
 (FF1)

Men i det ögonblicket öppnades den spegelklädda dörren längst in i affären, och Louis Zablonky kom ut. Han var en kortväxt och skruppen femtiosexåring, men han såg äldre ut.

“Mr James,” sa han och log brett, “så trevligt att se er igen.

Vill ni inte stiga in på mitt kontor?

Hur har ni haft det?”

(literally: will you not step into my office)

In the following example the translator has added *please* going from the Swedish source text to the English target. *Please* is enforced by the social situation and social rules for what is appropriate. The absence of a correspondence in Swedish reflects the fact that Swedish does not need to use a politeness marker:

- (5) “Can’t you say who it is you want to talk to?”
 “No, no, that’s not necessary... please excuse me.”

It sounded as if the receiver had been put down.
(MG1T)

— Kan du inte säga vem du vill tala med?
— Nej nej, det behövs inte... ursäkta mej.
Här lät det som om luren lades på.

As has been observed by Ohlander (1985) *var så god och* and *var vänlig och* (*var snäll och*) are quite different as translations. Using Sato's (2008) terms we can refer to *var så god* as 'submissive' and *var snäll och* (and variants) as volitional or intentional. The politely submissive variant has become associated with social appropriateness (in Swedish) rather than *var snäll och* which is used for strategic politeness or 'being tactful'. *Var snäll och* expresses the speaker's involvement and assertiveness:

- (6) Miss Honey looked carefully at the tiny girl with dark hair and a round serious face sitting in the second row.
"Wonderful," she said.
"Please stand up and recite as much of it as you can."
Matilda stood up and began to say the two-times table.
(RD1)

Fröken Honung betraktade ingående den lilla flickan med det mörka håret och det runda allvarliga ansiktet som satt i andra raden.
"Vad bra!" sa hon.
"Var snäll och res dig upp och läs upp tvåans tabell så långt du kan."
Matilda reste sig upp och började rabbla tvåans tabell.
(RD1T)

Please in the volitional meaning can be impolite and brusque even when politeness is signalled: "The speaker manipulates the recipient's knowledge of *please* as a courtesy token, thereby using politeness as a warrant for delivering the assertive act" (Sato 2008: 1273–1274). When *please* is used strategically it can be associated with power and authority. In (6) 'Miss Honey' is in a position of authority or power in relation to the 'tiny girl with dark hair' because of the teaching situation. Authority and power with implications such as urgency or insistence, impoliteness, annoyance are suggested by the translations.

Urgency can be suggested by the translator's *glöm inte* ('don't forget'):

- (7) "Please let old Victor know our troubles.
He can't fix what he doesn't know.
And — please — wish Victor Happy Birthday from us all."
(JC1)

“Ni kan väl tala med Victor om saken är ni snäll.
Han kan ju inte göra något åt det om han inte får reda på det.
Och glöm inte att gratulera honom från oss alla!”

Irritation and impatience are expressed by the translation in (8):

(8) “If there’s any way I can help with that, just let me — ”

“Andrew!

Please be serious.”

“Can’t.”

(AH1)

“Om jag kan hjälpa dig med det på något sätt, är det bara att säga till...”

“Andrew!

Försök vara allvarlig.”

“Det går inte.”

Lit. ‘Try to be serious’

Please is assertive, involved and emotional. The translator has used *försök(a)* ‘try’ which suggests that the hearer does not want to make an effort. *Please* in the example above is associated with ‘being tactful’ (Janney and Arndt 2005), i.e. with a more strategic use of politeness in communication. “The speaker does not only behave in a socially appropriate way but uses *please* strategically to avoid conflicts and to establish positive social relations”. Translating *please* involves more than simply looking for a correspondence in the other language. The translator has to consider who the speaker is, the social goal as well as intended or non-intended effects in order to choose the appropriate translation. As shown by the example above ‘the tactful’ *please* can also be impolite when it displays emotion.

The translation can also render the illocutionary force associated with *please*. *Please* is used to make a strong demand as suggested by the translation *jag måste be er* ‘I must ask you’ (not to do something).

(9) “How can you call it customer service when you don’t do shit?”

Her mouth turned prim.

“Please don’t use language like that around me.

It’s very offensive.”

(SG1)

“Hur kan ni kalla det kundtjänst när ni inte hjälper till med ett skit?”

Hennes mun drogs till en pryd grimas.

“Jag måste be er att inte använda sådant språk.

Det är mycket obehagligt.”

Lit. ‘I have to ask you’

Please expresses both illocutionary force and (im)politeness as shown by the translations. In (10) the translator has chosen *säger jag* (I say this) to emphasise that the speaker will not tolerate a refusal:

- (10) Please order a taxi.
(MS1T)
Vill du beställa en taxi, säger jag

A ‘strong’, authoritative request needs to be distinguished from an appeal (a persuasive demand or a plea). In (11) the speaker uses the appealing *please* because the hearer is unwilling to comply with the speaker’s wishes. The translator has chosen the vocative *snälla du* (‘kind you’, ‘dear’) to render appeal.

- (11) “I don’t think I want to say it, Miss Honey.”
“Please tell it,” Miss Honey said.
“I promise I won’t mind.”
(RD1)
- “Jag tror inte att jag vill läsa upp den, fröken Honung.”
“Snälla du, gör det,” sa fröken Honung.
“Jag lovar att inte bli förnärad.”

3.2. Translations of indirect requests

An indirect request pays attention to the social relationship with the hearer (strategically tactful behaviour). *Please* was never translated as *snälla* suggesting that *please* is not used for appeal in this context. *Could you please* and *Could I ... please* are used for requests and not for questioning. *Please* is therefore primarily a request marker.

- (12) Celia started to say, “Do we have time?” but was unable to finish because Andrew was kissing her.
Moments later, he murmured, “Could you please clear that bed?”
Reaching behind, without looking and with one arm around Andrew, Celia began to throw clothes on the floor.
(AH1)

Celia började säga: “Hinner vi?” men hon kunde inte avsluta meningen eftersom Andrew kysste henne.

Några ögonblick senare mumlade han: “Kan du ta bort de där sakerna från sängen?”

Hon sträckte handen bakåt utan att se sig om och med andra armen runt Andrew, och började slänga ner kläderna på golvet.

Kan kanske ('can perhaps') suggests that *please* can in addition be used as a mitigating politeness marker:

- (13) "Wonderful," Macon said.
He cleared his throat.
"So could I have him back, please?"
(AT1)
- "Underbart," sade Macon.
Han harklade sig.
"Då kan jag kanske få honom tillbaka."

3.3. Translation of elliptical forms

Please with elliptical forms is only found in recurrent social situations, for example to ask a person to wait on the telephone or to ask for a drink at a restaurant. *Please* is used as a force idiom which need not be translated since the (institutionalised) context makes it clear that a request is made.

- (14) "Yes, that's me."
"One moment, please.
I have a call for you from the village of Frankenstein."
(ARP1T)
- Ja, det är jag!
— Ett ögonblick.
Det kommer samtal från byn Frankenstein.

In (15) the translator's choice of the imperative conveys the requestive function:

- (15) Oh dear, I think I caught a chill sitting there watching out for hares.
Innkeeper, a glass of mulled wine, please.
(ARP1T)
Oj, jag tror jag blev kall när jag satt och lurade på haren — Krögare, ge mej ett glas varm glögg!

3.4. Translations of the pattern (yes) please

Yes please occurs in the response to an offer with a softening function. The translation (*ja tack* 'yes thank you') indicates the close similarity between *please* and thanking. *Gärna* expresses the hearer's willingness to accept the offer (*gärna* 'willingly').

- (16) “That never occurred to me.
More champagne?”
“Yes, please.”
(AH1)

“Det har jag aldrig tänkt på.
Mer champagne?”
“Ja tack.”

3.5. Translations of freestanding *please*

When *please* occurs alone it can be preceded by *oh*, it can be repeated, and accompanied by a name referring to the person addressed. *Please* in this function has been described as an attention-getter (Sato 2008). Its main function is to influence another individual’s behaviour. In the example below it expresses the speaker’s desperation:

- (17) Not from excitement, but from anxiety that she wouldn’t be able to find the right words of praise when she finally got the wrappings off and opened the box.
She didn’t pray to God, because she hadn’t heard about him yet, but she repeated over and over again to herself:
“Please, please, I must be pleased, I must be pleased... pleased.”
(MR1T)

Inte av spänning utan av ängslan för att hon inte skulle kunna finna de rätta glad-orden, när hon äntligen hade lyckats få av höljet och öppnat asken.

Hon bad inte till Gud, för hon hade inte hört talas om honom utan upprepade tyst för sig själv.

— Snälla, snälla, jag måste bli glad... jag måste bli glad... glad.

Please does not have a mitigating or illocutionary force function but is strongly emotional (as indicated by *snälla*).

4. Conclusion

Please is both a structurally and functionally flexible element as shown by the many patterns in which it occurs. Sato (2008) has for instance shown that *please* has different functions depending on its position in the utterance. Another important factor is the type of sentence pattern (e.g. whether *please* occurs with an imperative or an indirect requestive form). The close analysis of the correspon-

dences of *please* suggests that politeness can be realized in different ways. The use of *please* is regulated by ‘politeness conventions’ providing a ‘framework of standardised strategies for getting gracefully into, and back out of, a recurring social situation’ (Janney and Arndt 2005: 23). This is social politeness illustrated in the Swedish translation ‘var så god’. *Please* can be idiomatic but it can also be used strategically in a number of ways including being impolite in a polite way. This type of politeness has been described by Brown and Levinson (1987) and also by Janney and Arndt (2005) who speak about ‘tact’ rather than face-saving. Tact is not governed by social conventions but involves the strategic calculation of how conflict can be avoided. “Being tactful is not simply a matter of behaving in a socially ‘correct’ way – i.e., following rules of social usage; rather it is a matter of behaving in an interpersonally supportive way” (Janney and Arndt 2005: 23). Examples of conflict-avoiding strategies are for instance indirect forms rather than direct ones, clustering of polite ‘mitigating’ features, a special prosody, repetition, use of names, etc.

The distinction between *please* as a conventionalised politeness marker in recurrent situations and *please* imposing on the hearer to do something is supported by translations. Swedish *var så god* signals empty or social politeness in recurrent social situations. It cannot be replaced by *var snäll och* (or a variant) which is assertive or brusque rather than polite. On the other hand, *var snäll och* can signal intensity, emphasis and power and has side-effects such as impatience and urgency (strategic or volitional tactful behaviour). The use of *please* to make persuasive appeals is at the most volitional end of tactful uses (indicated by translations such as *snälla du/ni*, *snälla + name*).

Notes

- 1 For an overview of the extensive literature on *please* see Sato (2008).
- 2 40 out of 100 examples (AmE) and 34 out of 100 examples (NZE).
- 3 ST refers to the name of the author (Sue Townsend).
- 4 However Ohlander (1985) shows that there are examples in presentday colloquial Swedish where *snälla* has become a routinised politeness marker (without any meaning of ‘appeal’).

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KARIN AIJMER is professor emerita of English linguistics at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Her research interests focus on spoken English, corpus linguistics, contrastive analysis, modality, discourse markers and phraseology. She is engaged in various research projects on learner corpora and on parallel corpora. She is the author of *Conversational Routines in English: Convention and Creativity*, Longman (1996), *English Discourse Particles. Evidence from a Corpus*, Benjamins

(2002), co-author of *The Semantic Field of Modal Certainty: A Study of Adverbs in English* (2007), editor of *Dialogue Analysis VIII: Understanding and Miunderstanding in Dialogue. Selected Papers from the 8th IADA Conference, Göteborg 2001*, Niemeyer (2004), and co-editor of *Discourse Patterns in Spoken and Written Corpora*, Benjamins (2004), *Advances in Corpus Linguistics. Papers from the 23rd International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 23), Göteborg 22-26 May 2002*, Rodopi (2004) and *Pragmatic Markers in Contrast*, Elsevier (2006). She has had a large number of articles published in the areas of spoken English, pragmatics and discourse.

Address: Professor Karin Aijmer, Department of Languages and Literatures, University of Gothenburg Box 200, 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden. [email: karin.ajmer@eng.gu.se]



ANGELA DOWNING

***SURELY* AS A MARKER OF DOMINANCE AND ENTITLEMENT IN THE CRIME FICTION OF P.D. JAMES**

Abstract

In this study I make the claim that the pragmatic marker *surely* is used in British English to externalise a speaker's bid for dominance at a particular point in interactive discourse. In so doing the speaker positions himself/ herself towards other speakers within the contextual setting. The position of *surely* in the sentence as well as the position in which it occurs in the sequence of talk contribute to the different strengths and types of stance in context. The data used are drawn from three of the crime fiction novels of P.D. James. This material allows the reader access to the illusion, first of interaction similar in some ways to naturally occurring talk and second, to that of entering characters' minds. Self-questioning is one of the functions served by *surely* in the novelist's representation of thought.

Key words

Pragmatic marker; surely; dominance; entitlement; stance; discourse; fiction; P.D. James

1. Introduction

At a recent conference in Spain during which I read a paper on the historical evolution of *surely*, question time produced an immediate comment from a young British delegate sitting in the front row. It was as follows:

- (1) "I don't like people who use *surely*; they make themselves superior to you. When I was at school, the headmaster used to stand by my desk looking down at me and would say '*Surely* you can do better than that!'"

This anecdote is neither fictional nor attested in writing. It is an account by a reliable source of an event that occurred more than once. Both the young man's spontaneous comment and the unequal power relations evident in the scenario point to the subjectivity of *surely* and the sense of entitlement on which uses such as this are based.

In this respect the anecdote illustrates Brazil's (1985) postulate of a general condition of shared understanding of which participant is in control of the discourse at any one time. Teachers, doctors, interviewers are the ones who ask questions; traditionally they are the ones in control, although students, patients and interviewees may compete for control. Where there is no prior distribution of roles, there may be an ongoing, albeit incipient, competition for dominance (1985: 131). The dominant speaker, Brazil claims, has the choice of superimposing or not superimposing on an utterance an increment of communicative value that he terms 'dominance'. This is achieved in Brazil's account by prosodic means. The non-dominant speaker does not have this choice, unless s/he is making a bid for dominance.

In effect, evidence is provided by the London-Lund corpus of a rise-fall tone and heavy stress accompanying initial *surely* in an almost identical sequence: *but, "s^urely# you can*, in which the quote-like sign stands for heavy stress and the hatch # marks the end of a tone unit (5-2k). For much of the time, Brazil notes, role distribution is probably not an issue. But when it is, conspicuous adoption of the tone, whose use is reserved for 'superior' participants, externalises the speaker's claim to that role (Brazil 1985: 131).

In this ongoing research, I put forward the claim that in present-day British English the pragmatic marker *surely* can be used to externalise and index dominance in varying degrees in interactive discourse. In Brazil's terms, it may be considered, in purpose-driven, language as an 'incremental' step in an utterance. I would go further and claim that part of the purpose in using *surely* is to index the current speaker's authority and entitlement.

2. Materials and scope of the study

In this study I am interested in ascertaining whether the role of *surely* as stated above is reflected in the discourse of P.D. James' crime fiction and to what effect. To this end my data have been gathered from three of P.D. James's crime fiction novels, randomly selected, namely *Shroud for a Nightingale* (SN), *The Murder Room* (MR) and *Innocent Blood* (IB).

For my current purpose fictional dialogue has both advantages and disadvantages. One disadvantage is what Norman Page calls "the inevitable gap – wider or narrower at different times, but never disappearing entirely – between speech, especially in informal situations, and even the most 'realistic' dialogue in a work of literature" (Page 1988: 7).

On the other hand fictional dialogue is, again according to Page, "often characterised by a greater density of features which may well be found to appear, only

much more thinly distributed, in real speech...” (1988: 11). I consider it a further advantage in James’s fiction that both dialogue and narrative provide abundant clues in their choice of lexis as to how certain utterances might be interpreted and responded to. By contrast, much recorded natural dialogue in corpora, unless video-recorded or annotated for prosodic features, provides an insufficiently clear reflection of the interactive situation, including those personal and social factors that influence the relationships between the participants and that will be reflected in their talk.

3. Positions and functions of *surely*

As in a previous study in which tokens were taken from the BNC (Downing 2001), the current tokens of *surely* were sorted according to the different positions that *surely* is able to occupy in present-day English. Present-day *surely* is flexible with regard to position in the clause in that it can occur initially, internally and finally within a sentence or utterance. These are illustrated in examples 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

When initial, as in (2), *surely* has the status of a disjunct and has within its scope the whole of the following clause or sentence. “Initial position can readily be associated with this principle of ‘inclusiveness’. The adverb establishes the modal theme of the utterance and gives it prominence through an extensive association with the modal auxiliary” (Bolinger 1972: 34), quoted in Hoye (1997: 201). In speech, initial *surely* is tonic and may take up a whole tone unit, depending on the force the speaker wishes to give it. Position, stress and the fact that *surely* has become largely desemanticised enable the *surely*-user to take up a position of greater or lesser strength vis-à-vis the addressee, in order to challenge or contradict a prior utterance and to make a counter-claim. Paraphrases such as ‘as may be confidently supposed’, ‘as must be the case’, ‘may not one be sure that...’ are suggested by the Shorter OED 1973 edition, but one should be aware that these are purely orientative and are not idiomatic substitutes for the word itself.

- (2) “Annie and I thought we might open a restaurant close to the campus of one of the modern universities. Annie’s quite keen except that she feels we should do something socially useful.”
 “*Surely* few things are more socially useful than providing the young with decent food at reasonable prices.”
 “When it comes to spending a million, Annie thinks internationally. She has something of a Mother Teresa complex.” (MR 42)

Clause-internal *surely* as in (3) follows the subject and precedes the main verb. The modal auxiliaries *must*, *can*, *will*, *ought*, *should* frequently combine and interact dynamically with *surely*. The position adopted by *surely* tends to be post-modal and is attested as such in my data. Pre-modal position is not common, but is

attested in the BNC in elliptic utterances as in "...as they *surely* must". I suggest that this order is conditioned by information structure; the modal has necessarily to receive end-weight otherwise *surely* is left in final position as a parenthetical: "...as they must, *surely*", thus producing a different kind of meta-message.

Clause internal *surely* tends to be less forceful than initial *surely*. It reaches out to the address, seeking agreement or collaboration. With the subject pronoun *we*, the dialogic dimension of *surely* is preponderant, while *there* as subject is more impersonal or tentative. Semantically, *surely* can index various degrees of confidence in medial position, 'almost certainly' being an acceptable paraphrase:

- (3) "Mr Dalglish, there's one thing I want to say. I feel ... I am *in loco parentis* to my students. If ever any question...if you should begin to suspect that any one of them is involved, I can rely on you to let me know? ... There would *surely* be the question of a solicitor. (SN 92)

Final *surely* is parenthetical, and functions as a question tag, as in (4). Like grammatical question tags, it seeks confirmation or agreement. In addition, parenthetical *surely* can be interpolated in other positions within the clause, as in (5).

- (4) "Who was her friend here? She *must* have had someone she confided in, *surely*? (SN)
- (5) Kate didn't reply. He couldn't mean, *surely*, that Mrs. Faraday was a woman incapable of such a murder. (MR)

The present more limited and genre-specific source material yielded the same overall distribution of *surely* according to its initial, medial and final positions as did the wider coverage of genres of the BNC in the 2001 study. Initial *surely* predominates, followed by clause-internal *surely* and lastly, final, parenthetical *surely*.¹ Instances of *surely* in elliptic sentences, which were not previously considered, are also found to be worthy of note within their interactional settings in the present study, as in (6):

- (6) And the records are destroyed so quickly? *Surely* not. (MR 287)

4. Background

Until recently, *surely* has received little attention in comparison with other adverbs of modality and stance. This scarcity of comment may be due in part to its relatively infrequent use in comparison with *certainly*, which is now used as a handy emphasiser in all types of context. The fact that *surely* has not become entrenched as a pragmatic marker in everyday American usage as deeply as it has in England may also be significant.² But the major reason why *surely* is sparsely

used lies, I suggest, in the specific stances that users of *surely* take up, ranging from antagonistic and challenging to persuasive and agreement-seeking. Such stances are not likely to be repeated throughout a conversation with the frequency that emphasisers are. Furthermore, one possible variant to initial *surely* is the negative *yes-no* interrogative sentence, which, as we shall see later in example (7), is used to challenge an interlocutor and can co-occur in the same stretch of discourse with *surely*.

An early mention of the adverb *surely* in the literature was that of Biber and Finegan (1988). Yet, among the adverbs grouped by these scholars under the heading ‘The surely adverbs’, *surely* is in fact the odd man out. It is not interchangeable with other adverbs of the group in the way that *clearly* and *obviously* are. Nor can it be paraphrased as ‘*It is sure that...’ in line with ‘It is obvious/evident/ clear that...’ Furthermore, nor can it be paraphrased by ‘I am sure that’ without an important loss of implied meaning and attitude. Thus, if the headmaster had said “I am sure you can do better than that” he would be putting across a gentler message, almost of reassurance, whereas *surely* in such cases as (1) projects the meta-message of surprise and disappointment, annoyance or indignation even, depending on the accompanying tone and on the context in which it occurs. It is noteworthy that in the subsequent *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, edited by Biber et al. (1999), *surely* is not discussed nor does it appear in the lexical index.

Hoye’s *Adverbs and Modality in English* (1997) devotes space to *surely* among other adverbs. The concept of ‘speaker orientation’ is relevant in that “overt marking of the speaker’s intrusion and his authority to comment on the relevance of what he is saying are given a prominence which tends to override purely syntactic considerations of scope” (Hoye 1997: 202). Nevertheless, in this work the pragmatic functions of *surely* are restricted to that of seeking agreement.

Later work on *surely* has centred mainly on its meaning as a modal adverb and the degree of certainty it is thought to express within the field of modal certainty (Aijmer 2002; Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer 2007). In the latter volume, the notion of doubt figures largely as the meaning of *surely*, a meaning that I would not prioritise, as will be explained shortly. Attention has been paid to the comparison of *surely* with *certainly* and other modal adverbs. Parallel corpora have been used to ascertain the translation ‘equivalents’ of *surely* and *certainly* among others. While it is true that “languages which express certainty in the same way develop a similar range of new functions by means of grammaticalisation”, among them the function ‘uncertainty’ (Aijmer 2002), it would seem that in the case of the Spanish cognates of *surely* the nuances are different (Downing 2006). While the semantic values of the cognates and *surely* are sometimes close, neither *seguro* nor *seguramente* fulfils the functions of pragmatic markers as *surely* does. In fact, despite the use of national corpora of English and Spanish naturally-occurring spoken data rather than translations, no lexical counterpart to English *surely* was revealed among the Spanish cognates or elsewhere to carry out the pragmatic functions of *surely* in initial and parenthetical positions. Consequently,

I resorted to negative-interrogative counterparts, which worked well for the data used. In clause-internal position a degree of similarity is present, but without the dialogic overtones of *surely*.

5. Characterising *surely*

Present-day *surely* is attitudinal. It is also covert. As a result of semantic bleaching through grammaticalisation it is not what it seems. For this reason it has to be recovered procedurally by inferencing on the part of the recipient. Its syntactic behaviour has also amplified, spectacularly in the 18th and 19th centuries. Consequently, *surely* is now opaque in comparison with other so-called adverbs of certainty. It indexes, rather than encodes, a strong belief in the self-evident plausibility of the statement qualified, a belief based on the speaker's experience, and right, especially in the face of imaginary or possible dissent (adapted from the Shorter OED, 2002). Knowledge, status and entitlement, common sense, even, are I claim, additional attributes that condition the use of *surely* at a particular point in the discourse. Furthermore, the use of *surely* can foreground the speaker's expectation that his or her status as the controller of the discourse at that point will be recognised by the co-participants in interactive discourse. This point is well captured in example (7).

5.1. *Surely as a covert question*

Surely occurs in declarative clauses which function like negative-interrogatives, particularly when *surely* is initial. Thus, (1) '*Surely* you can do better than that' could be paraphrased as 'Can't you do better than that?' Another alternative is a positive declarative followed by a negative question tag: 'You can do better than that, can't you?' For this reason initial *surely* utterances are often found in print followed by a question or an exclamation mark. The variants differ in abruptness and so in degrees of politeness, as they are softened or heightened by prosodic features in speech within specific contexts. Readers of written or printed text are able to assign the relevant intonation pattern to achieve information focus.

It has been suggested that negative-interrogatives are based on contradictory assumptions. Quirk et al (1985: 808) distinguish these as the 'old expectation' and the 'new expectation', respectively. In (1) '*Surely* you can do better than that' the old expectation is positive, that you can do better than that; but evidence, visual in this case, suggests the contrary, that you cannot do better. The old expectation tends to be associated with the speaker's hopes and wishes, while the new assumption appears to contradict this. For this reason, negative-oriented questions tend to express disappointment or annoyance. Consequently, one would expect the same to occur with *surely*-prefaced declaratives. They often do, as in (1) and (7), but not always, as we saw in (2), where the reply prefaced by *surely* aligns with the previous utterance while querying Annie's judgement.

It is for this reason of similarity of function with negative questions that *surely* lends itself to expressing surprise and opposition towards the speaker of a prior utterance, in the form of a contradiction, a challenge or a counter-claim.

6. Contextual patterns of *surely*

In this section I wish to test my claim that *surely* is essentially the confidence marker of a speaker who challenges, contradicts or tries to persuade a prior speaker in interactive discourse. At the same time s/he makes a bid for the recognition of entitlement at a particular point in the discourse by virtue of his/her status, authority, experience or superior knowledge of the current subject. Such attributes confer entitlement; they also create expectations as regards knowledge, performance and the like on the part of others.

Surely is triggered by the sudden awareness that opposition from a co-participant to the speaker is imminent or is already occurring (Downing 2001), or conversely, the current speaker reacts to an immediately prior utterance or visual evidence which s/he considers in some way inadequate or goes against her own beliefs and expectations as in (1) and (2).

The fictional exchange comprising examples (7) and (8) respectively illustrates two patterns of use: First, in reply to an initial request by a police Sergeant, *surely* introduces a forceful challenge on the part of a senior surgeon, who adopts the role of dominant speaker. Second, this is followed by a counter-claim made, more judiciously, by the first speaker, who effectively takes over the dominant role.

Pattern 1a: Confident, authoritative speaker, initial *surely* expresses surprise, disbelief at prior speaker's request. Challenge; seeks acquiescence. (7)

Pattern 1b: Denial of acquiescence by confident speaker with his own authority in a different but relevant sphere. Counter-claim, medial *surely* expressing confidence, though not absolute certainty. Seeks acceptance. (8)

- (7) Sergeant Masterson said: 'I wonder, Sister, if I could see the ward report book covering the period when Nurse Pearce was on the ward? 'I'm particularly interested in her last week here.
Mr Courtney-Briggs broke in roughly:
'Aren't they confidential records, Sister? ***Surely the police will have to apply for a subpoena before they can make you produce them?***
- (8) 'Oh, I don't think so sir'. Sergeant Masterson's voice, quiet, almost too respectful, yet held a tinge of amusement which wasn't lost on his hearer. '***Ward nursing records surely aren't medical in the proper sense.*** I merely want to see who was being nursed here during the period and if anything happened which might be of interest to the Superintendent.

Sister Brumfet, mottled and shaking with anger, which left small room for fear, found her voice.

‘Nothing happened on my ward. Nothing! (SN 165)

In examples (7) and (8) each speaker has authority and status in his own domain. The reader will expect Masterson, as a detective sergeant on a case, to have the right to request documents. Mr Courtney-Briggs, as an eminent surgeon, and by virtue of superior knowledge in the hospital domain, though not a member of the hospital staff, assumes a dominant role through belief in his right to question the handing over of ward records to a police sergeant. Yet, despite the latter’s politeness, he addresses the Sister “roughly”. He calls into question the legality of the request, first by a negative yes/no question, then by an initial *surely*, likewise functioning as a question, both of which centre on the putative non-entitlement of the police to make such a request. Both structures convey surprise, disbelief and authority; they are to be heard as challenging, more so in view of their sequential position in the dialogue. Readers will be alerted by such a display of dominance to the fact that something other than protocol may be behind the surgeon’s outburst.

By contrast, Sergeant Masterson makes a counter-claim by using medial *surely* in a voice that is “quiet, almost too respectful”, but “with a tinge of amusement” to convey what is an apparently authoritative statement, although without expressing complete certainty. This account may in fact be less true than he confidently puts across, but it is not disputed. In an environment of tension and embattlement *surely* is used by each participant in turn as a weapon that masks their possibly less than perfect knowledge of police rights. Both men display authority via *surely*, but while Courtney-Briggs externalises his claim to the role in a way that is offensive to the hearers, Masterson succeeds in conveying his authority and entitlement by almost exquisite politeness in a way that is unobjectionable. Eventually, Mr Courtney-Briggs opts for retreat and reacts by blandly backing down from his prior claim, to the fury of Sister Brumfet.

Pattern 2: Junior professional, initial *surely*, shocked disbelief, contradicting prior speaker of higher status.

(9) ‘They ought to have seen us first. After all, we’re Sisters. [...] And why isn’t Brumfet here? I don’t see why she should be treated any differently from us’.

Sister Rolfe: ‘Too busy [...]’.

‘Sister Gearing’s voice became petulant.

‘That’s all very well, but she ought to be here. God knows, we’re busy too. Brumfet lives in Nightingale House. She had as much opportunity to kill Fallon as anyone.

Sister Rolfe said quietly ‘She had more chance,’

Sister Gearing's sharp voice cut into the silence and one of the Burt twins lifted her head:

'She's had Fallon in her power in the sick bay for the last ten days.'

'But surely you don't mean...? Brumfet wouldn't!'

'Precisely', said Sister coldly, 'So why make stupid and irresponsible remarks?' (SN 204)

In example (9) the speaker of the *surely* utterance is one of the identical Burt twins, both student nurses under the supervision of Sister Brumfet, who is not present in this scene. Normally equanimous, Burt on this occasion makes a bid for attention in defence of Sister Brumfet. Her two elliptic exclamations are in direct contradiction to Sister Gearing's previous somewhat incriminating remark regarding Sister Brumfet. The discussion is cut short by the more authoritative of the Sisters.

Pattern 3: Self-confident junior participant, medial *surely*, persuasiveness and reasoning in assessment of probabilities.

(10) 'One never does really know another human being. Anything is possible for anyone. I've always believed that. **And it's surely more likely that she killed herself than that someone murdered her.** That seems absolutely incredible. Why should they?'

'I was hoping you might be able to tell me.'

'Well, I can't. She hadn't any enemies at the John Carpendar as far as I know. 'She wasn't popular. She was too reserved, too solitary. But people didn't dislike her. **And even if they did, murder surely suggests something more than ordinary dislike.**' (SN 98)

The student nurse Madeleine Goodale is interviewed by Chief Superintendent Adam Dalglish. The difference of status, authority and knowledge is great. Nonetheless, Nurse Goodale acquits herself well in her analysis of the dead girl's character and the reasons for Fallon's unpopularity. Unprepossessing features are dismissed as irrelevant in an assessment of modal probability in which objectivity covertly masks her own subjectivity. At the same time dialogic intersubjectivity is shown in her two uses of *surely* which, without claiming certainty, make a persuasive suggestion that invites the Superintendent's agreement.

Pattern 4: Dominant speaker interrogating a suspect; parenthetical *surely*, in modal harmony with *must* expressing epistemic necessity, countering the prior statement.

(11) "How long have you been an intimate friend of Caroline Dupayne?"

Lord Martlesham said unhappily. "I wouldn't say that we were intimate."

“But you must be, surely. She’s a very private woman, yet she lends you her flat and hands out keys to you and to Celia Mellock. (MR 345)

In this context, the Superintendent’s use of *surely* reinforces modal *must* in what is conviction based on logical reasoning and common sense.

7. *Surely* as a resource in free indirect speech and thought

In addition to the use of direct (i.e. quoted) speech as a vehicle for the display of attitudes of dominance by one or other of the characters, James makes considerable use of other techniques for the presentation of speech and thought: indirect reported speech, free indirect speech and free indirect thought are commonly used in these novels to give the illusion of entering the minds of their characters. The following three examples illustrate these techniques.

Example (12) illustrates indirect self-reported speech as the vehicle for heavy irony ascribed by James to the somewhat unsympathetic character, Sister Rolfe, here interviewed by Dalgliesh. Medial, post-verbal *surely* is noticeably intersubjective, covertly and ironically inviting the Superintendent to accept the plausibility of her argument.

- (12) She regretted she could offer no witnesses to her own movements before or after the meal, **but that was surely understandable**: for some years now she had preferred to wash and go to the lavatory in private. Apart from that, she valued the free time before the days’ work and preferred to spend it alone. (SN 111)

Example (13) might appear to be straight narration, but is in fact the expression of indirect thought from the words “he was surprised” onwards. In this context, initial *surely* (much more effective than ‘Isn’t it the case’) indexes not so much a challenge as a bout of self-questioning. The ‘old expectation’ that he should feel some emotion is counteracted by the ‘new’ self-evident fact that he feels nothing. This clearly gives rise to perplexity, not doubt, at not entertaining appropriate emotions on the last day of his working life.

- (13) Closing the office door for the last time and entering the empty corridor, he (Marcus Dupayne) was surprised and a little concerned at his lack of emotion. **Surely he should be feeling something** – regret, mild satisfaction, a small surge of nostalgia, the mental acknowledgement of a rite of passage? He felt nothing. (MR 29)

Finally, example (14) illustrates how “the boundaries between the categories are not rigorously discrete, so it might be more appropriate to consider the presentation of both thought and speech as a continuum of varying degrees of freedom and

directness” (Simpson 1993: 24). They also merge into the narrative and it is not always easy to distinguish one from the others. In ‘A chill of horror swept over her’ it is neither thought nor speech but the illusion of sensation that leads the reader to the self-questioning and the final counter-claim in the form of a prayer. The instances of *surely* in this extract index disbelief but with a suspicion of doubt which is implicit, and no doubt inferred by the reader, but is not exteriorized.

- (14) After a few minutes the dreadful shaking ceased and Nurse Dakers grew calmer.
 She began to mutter, her voice hiccuping with sobs.
 ‘I’m so miserable, so ashamed.’
 The Matron bent her head to catch the words. A chill of horror swept over her. **Surely she couldn’t be listening to a confession of murder?** She found herself praying under her breath.
 ‘Dear God, please not. Not this child! **Surely not this child?**’ (SN 75)

8. Concluding remarks

The use of fictional material of the kind provided by James’s novels is, I have found, instructive and useful. For one thing, the availability of extensive context leads one to a more refined analysis of *surely*-prefaced fictional utterances. This is because the use of *surely* is highly sensitive to the linguistic and social environment in which it occurs, a fact that is immediately obvious in real life encounters, but is not easy to capture from a transcription. Hence, an occurrence of *surely* in a relaxed environment of conversation between women friends can be seen to produce an instance of initial *surely* which might be better categorised as something less than ‘challenge’ as its pragmatic function. Such is the case with (2), which if it is a challenge, it is a very friendly one. As seen from Clara’s reply the friends are expressing independent points of view rather than dominance: “When it comes to spending a million, Annie thinks internationally. She has something of a Mother Teresa complex.” And if there was still any doubt of the possible interpretation of the *surely*-preceded utterance, the subsequent closing of the topic by the author’s comment ‘They walked on in companionable silence’ makes it clear that in the fictional world of the novel, the two friends have mutually dropped the topic without animosity. This reaction, ‘agreeing to disagree’ represents a fourth option to the three-way choice of responses to challenges, namely those of accepting the challenge, backing down from the prior claim and eventually aligning with the challenger. ‘Agreeing to disagree’ represents a specific epistemic stance towards the speaker of the prior utterance and falls within the domain of alignment rather than that of disalignment.

By contrast, more violent challenges and responses occur in already established environments of disagreement, insinuation or complaint. Such is the case in example (9): the tense atmosphere that surrounds the nurses gathered in a room

waiting, as suspects, to be interviewed by the Scotland Yard Superintendent helps make for the stronger positionings of covert accusation and counter-claim.

Another feature of the novels with regard to the use of *surely* is the fact that James uses point of view with a certain discrimination. All James's main characters are professionals of varying rank. Many of them, although not all, are privileged in that the reader on occasion is enabled to gain access to the events described through the eyes of a certain participant. Interestingly, it appears that *surely*-speakers are the most privileged in this respect. The most significant among this group is Dalglish. As his is a figure whose *persona* is forged over a series of novels we learn aspects of his inner self, not only in the scenes directly involved in the hunt for a murderer, but in what would appear to be more trivial details. Some of these are revealed by the short, throwaway signals that we pick up in the middle of a mental depiction, through his eyes, of the district where he lives overlooking the Thames "and he could have imagined this was spring except for the autumnal sea-tang of the river – **surely half imagined** – and the keenness of the buffeting wind as he came out of the station" (MR 4). Other figures such as the "poor little murderer manqué" whom the reader follows throughout almost three hundred dense pages of *Innocent Blood* (310) in expectation for him to strike, builds up detail by detail as a more complex character than would have seemed possible at the start.

Yet other insertions of 'thoughts' prefaced by *surely* seem to have as their function that of signalling idle speculation masking an advance warning to the reader of something quite different to be coped with: "She felt it was her responsibility to keep their minds off the accident, and **surely** it could only have been an accident" (SN 24). It is in the artifice of fictional thought that a sub-text of doubt can be sometimes detected, as in example (14). In other cases, *surely* is used disingenuously, as it is in real life. Speakers may be concealing their real opinion while putting across another.

To conclude, a complex pattern emerges when we come to take stock of the stances of *surely* displayed under the titles of P.D. James's novels. Evidence suggests that dominance and entitlement can be seen from different angles and as carrying different strengths. Perhaps the main conclusion to be suggested by the data presented is that the speakers using *surely*, based on their own self confidence and self-belief, are shown, via direct speech, to exteriorise their claim by making a bid for recognition of their authority and entitlement. As Du Bois (2000) puts it, we enact our stance in the public space of dialogic interaction. By contrast, indirect speech and thought lead the reader from the stronger stance of challenge to weaker stances of persuasion, tentativeness and self-questioning.

In the novels examined here James's characters who use *surely* are almost all professional people. They are portrayed as confident, knowledgeable, independent, self-assured, aware and articulate. When they make claims and counter the claims of others they often do so by means of *surely*. This is not a necessary or only choice. There are other means, namely negative yes-no questions. Indeed, negative questions are used side by side with the more covert *surely* questions.

Again, without the preface of *surely*, sentences would still make sense but would be plain declaratives, monologic, not inviting comment from other voices. And without *surely*, there would be less subtlety, less speculation, less inferencing, fewer leading questions. There would be less suspense. In the words of Leech and Short, “We cannot see inside the minds of other people, but if the motivation for the actions and attitudes of characters is to be made clear to the reader, the representation of their thoughts, like the use of soliloquy on stage, is a necessary licence (1981: 337).

Notes

- 1 The same order of frequency, namely, the predominance of *surely* in initial position, followed by internal and then final was also attested in Simon-Vandenberg and Aijmer’s (2007) corpus.
- 2 For an explanation of *surely* as characterising British cultural values, see Downing (2009). The AmE use of *surely* denoting agreement or permission was not attested in my data.

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ANGELA DOWNING holds B.A.Honours and M.A. degrees in French and Spanish from the University of Oxford and is also a graduate of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, where she obtained her PhD. She held the Chair in English Language and Linguistics at the Universidad Complutense from 1986 until 2003 and is now Professor Emérita. With Philip Locke she co-authored *A University Course in English Grammar* (Prentice-Hall 1992), which in 1993 won First Prize in the Grammar and Dictionaries category of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and also the Premio de Investigación Enrique García Díez granted by AEDEAN. A new edition was published by Routledge in 2002, followed by a second revised edition in 2006 under the title *English Grammar: A University Course*. Her research interests centre on functional grammar, discourse and pragmatics. She has authored research articles in these fields in national and international journals. She was Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense* from its foundation in 1992 until 2006, and is currently General Editor of *Atlantis*.

Address: Professor Angela Downing, Departamento de Filología Inglesa 1, Facultad de Filología, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 28040 Madrid (Spain). [email: adowning@filol.ucm.es]



RENATA POVOLNÁ

ON CONTRASTIVE RELATIONS IN ACADEMIC SPOKEN DISCOURSE

Abstract

Contrastive relations between successive or more distant segments of discourse rank among the most informative semantic relations in both spoken and written English (cf. Kortmann 1991) since they create important cohesive links and thus contribute to the establishing of discourse coherence. The author investigates authentic texts from four different types of speech situations representing academic spoken discourse (MICASE) while searching for discourse markers (DMs) expressing contrastive relations with the aim to describe the ways in which selected markers are used by native speakers of American English to form coherent discourse.¹

Key words

Academic spoken discourse; coherence; coherent interpretation; cohesion; cohesive device; concession; contrast; contrastive relations; discourse markers

1. Introduction

Cohesion and coherence conceived as two of seven standards of textuality (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981) are two closely related linguistic notions. Halliday and Hasan (1989: 94) express their relationship by stating that “variation in coherence is the function of variation in the cohesive harmony of a text”. In conformity with linguists who draw a stricter line between these two notions (e.g. Stubbs 1983, Widdowson 1979, Mey 2001) it is assumed that cohesion establishes overt relations between syntactic units, while coherence concerns relations obtaining between the meanings expressed by these syntactic units, in other words “cohesion establishes local relations between syntactic items (reference, concord

and the like), whereas coherence has to do with the global meaning involved in what we want to express through our speech activity” (Mey 2001: 154).

Both cohesion and coherence are regarded as important constitutive qualities of text, although it can be claimed that a text can be understood as coherent without any cohesive means and, conversely, can comprise cohesive means without being perceived as coherent (Povolná 2007). I fully agree with Seidlhofer and Widdowson (1997: 207), who state that “one might derive a coherent discourse from a text with no cohesion in it at all. Equally, of course, textual cohesion provides no guarantee of discourse coherence”.

According to the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*, “coherence is the quality that something has when it makes sense or is pleasing because all the parts or steps fit together well and logically” and something is understood to be coherent if “its parts fit together well so that it is clear and easy to understand” (1987: 264). It necessarily follows that coherence and the quality of being coherent are important in particular when expressing relations within discourse, including spoken discourse used in academic settings, which is at the core of the present paper. Since “the process of creating coherent text involves an indication of relationships between the things one is ‘on about’” (Halliday and Hasan 1989: 94), it becomes clear that cohesive means including selected DMs expressing contrastive relations can enhance the perception of a text, either spoken or written, as being coherent.

2. Contrastive discourse markers

Discourse markers², viewed here in conformity with Fraser (1990) as a class of commentary pragmatic markers signalling sequential relationships within discourse, necessarily contribute to discourse cohesion. Since they signal how the speaker intends the current basic message that follows to relate to the previous discourse, these language means can foster the establishment of discourse coherence, which is understood here as a context-dependent, hearer-oriented and comprehension-based, interpretative notion (cf. Bublitz 1997).

Successive or more distant discourse segments³ which are marked with a DM are usually processed faster (cf. Haberlandt 1982). If a DM is absent, the current hearer is left without any overt guiding signal concerning the intended relationship between discourse segments, i.e. without any lexical clue for an interpretation of the speaker’s communicative intentions in a given situation; this can even cause a breakdown in communication. However, since the current speaker is aware of the hearer and his/her efforts to arrive at an intended coherent interpretation, he/she uses guiding signals, for example, “cohesive devices (e.g. conjuncts, cross-reference expressions), which organize the discourse and clarify the progress of the [speaker’s] argumentation” (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2009: 34).

According to Fraser (1990, 1998, 1999), DMs can be defined as lexical expressions the core meaning of which is procedural rather than conceptual and which

function to “signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1” (Fraser 1999: 931); DMs do not ‘display’ the relationship between discourse segments, but rather impose “on S2 a certain range of interpretations, given the interpretation(s) of S1 and the meaning of the DM” (Fraser 1999: 942). Thus, the analysis of DMs and in particular the way they express coherence relations (cf. rhetorical relations in Taboada 2006) can be understood as “part of the more general analysis of discourse coherence – how speakers and hearers jointly integrate forms, meaning, and actions to make overall sense out of what is said” (Schiffrin 1987: 49).

Contrastive relations can be counted among “the most complex of all semantic relations that may hold between parts of a discourse” (Kortmann 1991: 161); for this reason they tend to be marked overtly and typically expressed through subordination (cf. Taboada 2006: 576), particularly in academic discourse, in which presenting and supporting arguments is of great importance (cf. Biber et al. 1999: 880). However, the more specific type of contrast that a given DM signals is negotiated by the context, both linguistic and non-linguistic, since “a text is not coherent in itself but is understood as coherent in an actual context” (Bublitz 1988: 32). The context plays a crucial role in the interpretation of meaning in spoken language in particular, which, as stated in Urbanová (2008: 43), is strongly “contextually bound” and where an adequate knowledge of a given communicative situation and relationships between discourse participants enhances the addressee’s understanding.

In forming a text as in forming an utterance, speakers choose between a set of alternatives that establish relations between individual parts of the discourse. Since DMs, including those expressing contrastive relations, perform text-organizing functions above all, they are primarily viewed here as cohesive devices and their relatively high frequency of occurrence in academic discourse such as that under investigation reflects the need of the current speaker to present and support his/her arguments in a straightforward way. These cohesive devices enable the current hearer(s) to arrive at a coherent interpretation and understanding of the message which comes as close as possible to the current speaker’s communicative intentions.

The present study is concerned with the relations obtaining at clausal and higher levels of discourse, since it is assumed in harmony with Fraser (1999: 939-940) that at these levels the marker relates two separate messages, functioning as a DM, as in (1) and, below the clausal level, purely as a conjunction within a single message, as in (2).

- (1) that’s the only thing that interests me. the the thing that brought me up short a little bit and, I’m not trying to catch you on anything but i wonder if you’d just comment on it was th- th- the date of the quote was sixty-nine, which is quite a bit before, that particular concert
(MICASE, DEF420SF022.3)⁴

- (2) i was fascinated by Ravi Shankar, and bought my first sitar. uh, stay with me here, for a second this is uh going to have to do something with, sitar but also with, Keith Jarrett indirectly. in order to learn sitar i contacted a German who had been recon- recommended to me,
(MICASE, DEF420SF022.1)

As regards formal realization of the markers analysed, they are, from a morphological point of view, drawn primarily from conjunctions (e.g. *but*, *although*), adverbs (e.g. *however*, *anyway*) and prepositional phrases (e.g. *on the other hand*). Nevertheless, they “do not play the role in a sentence that their classes would suggest, but instead, they are separate from the propositional content” (Fraser 1999: 302) and, as noted above, their meaning is procedural rather than conceptual. Hence it follows that if a marker is omitted, the propositional content of the respective discourse segments does not change, as would be the case in example (3) below without the DM *but*; however, without any marker it could be more difficult for the hearer(s) to arrive at an interpretation coherent with the current speaker’s communicative intentions.

- (3) yeah, here I’ll put up this one this is actually, i thought this was harder to read so i changed it to being a, a frequency table but, basically you can see here there’s, uh, (wait cuz this is the wrong one)
(MICASE, STP355MG011.5)

From a syntactic point of view, contrastive DMs can be subdivided into DMs occurring in hypotactic relations and those expressing paratactic relations (cf. Malá 2006). (For a list of contrastive DMs analysed in the study, see Table 1 below). The reason for this subdivision is above all the expected marked difference between the two syntactic groups in frequency of occurrence, since hypotactic relations are usually expressed overtly by certain markers (e.g. *although*, *even though*), while paratactic relations, apart from being indicated by certain markers (e.g. *anyway*, *however*), can often remain overtly unexpressed; this does not mean that in the respective discourse segments there will not be semantic clues, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives (e.g. *contrast*, *contrasting*; for the latter, see example (4) below), prepositional phrases (e.g. *in spite of*, *contrary to*); or some ways of expressing polarity (e.g. adjectives of opposite meaning *old* vs. *young*). These possibilities, however, have been excluded from my analysis.

- (4) there’re things you can’t, control, there’re things that lie beyond your ability to, to change, uh and, uh then that he he he he’s a different man at the end, i think he is noble, you know and certainly James is wanting to say, if you’re contrasting these two societies these two characters, surely surely we would agree i think the American emerges as the, the better the nobler, you know the the the victory goes in that sen- in the moral sense clearly to the American.
(MICASE, LES300SUU103.11)

Since the paper deals with academic discourse, in which clear argumentation plays a crucial role, a greater number of explicitly expressed markers can be expected, in particular those occurring in hypotactic relations; on the other hand, since the analysis concerns spoken discourse, in which paratactic rather than hypotactic relations tend to be realized, DMs expressing paratactic relations are supposed to be more common. (For ‘loose’ coordination discussed as a feature typical of spoken English, see Urbanová 2008: 43.)

Concerning the relationship between contrast and concession, it should be stressed that in this study concession is subsumed under contrastive relations because it is viewed as a special case of contrast, namely that between the expected/usual causal relationship and the actual situation (cf. Dušková et al. 1988, Fraser 1999). Accordingly, contrastive DMs subsume markers expressing contrast as well as concession. Moreover, it is not always possible to distinguish exactly between contrast and concession, “since in some cases, elements of contrast and concession are combined in uses of linking adverbials” (Biber et al. 1999: 878). (For a list of different labels used for linking devices such as contrastive DMs, see Hůlková 2005.)

3. Material

My results are based on the analysis of several texts chosen from the *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE). As the title of the corpus itself suggests, this corpus represents spoken discourse used in academic settings. The texts are taken from four different types of speech situations, namely students’ presentations, defences, small lectures and large lectures, all in the area of the humanities and arts. Each speech situation is represented by 15,500 to 17,300 words, amounting altogether to approximately 65,000 words. (For details concerning the number of words analysed in individual speech situations, see Tables 1 and 2 below.)

Students’ presentations are classes in which one or more students speak in front of the class; defences are Ph.D. thesis defences in front of a board of academics; small lectures are lectures given to forty or fewer students; and large lectures are lectures for more than forty students. All the interlocutors in the data are native speakers of American English, and for the most part they are graduate or undergraduate students. However, since the main objective of my inquiry is not a comparison of the four different types of speech situations, but above all ways in which contrastive relations can be expressed by what is called here contrastive DMs, differences between the texts, such as those in the tenor of discourse and the length of the texts, are not considered relevant. Differences between individual speech situations are supposed to be due above all to particular speakers’ preferences in their speaking habits rather than to differences in the natures of given speech situations.

4. Results and their exemplification

4.1. Degree of interactivity in different speech situations

As regards the degree of interactivity in different types of speech situations, it is suggested that Ph.D. defences (one student in front of a board of academics) are slightly more interactive than students' presentations (a few students giving their presentations one after another), which in turn are more interactive than small lectures (one main lecturer and fewer than 40 students), which in turn are expected to be slightly more interactive than large lectures, in which one main lecturer and more than forty students participate.

Concerning the total number of contrastive DMs analysed, it is worth noting that the more interactive the speech situation, the higher the number of DMs used to express contrastive relations. Accordingly, it is assumed that speakers of American English use selected DMs slightly more frequently in more interactive speech situations (such as Ph.D. defences and students' presentations) than in speech situations (such as small and large lectures) that are considered in my study to be less interactive. These findings become even more evident when the total number of words under examination in each type of speech situation is taken into consideration: the length of the most interactive type is 15,516 words (Ph.D. defence) and that of the least interactive (large lecture) amounts to as many as 17,348 words. In terms of the frequency of occurrence of contrastive DMs found in the texts the positions are reversed: the shortest text (Ph.D. defence), which is viewed as most interactive in this paper, has the highest number of contrastive DMs (198 occurrences), whereas the longest text (large lecture), regarded as least interactive of all, has the lowest number of selected DMs (109 occurrences). The reason for these findings might be efforts on the part of the current speaker(s) in more interactive speech situations to help their hearer(s) arrive faster at an adequate interpretation of the intended relations between discourse segments, which implies a more frequent use of certain guiding signals such as selected DMs.

4.2. Types of contrastive DMs

As can be seen in Table 1, in accordance with my expectation contrastive relations expressed by hypotactic DMs (50 cases) are considerably less frequent in the data than those occurring in paratactic relations (657 cases), although the former are usually marked overtly in discourse.

The most interesting and striking result recorded in Table 1 is the uneven distribution of the markers analysed, both in terms of types and tokens. Of the 29 contrastive DMs listed in Table 1 only 22 actually appear in the data. Some markers are very frequent, such as *but* (475 occurrences) and *actually* (89 occurrences), or relatively frequent, such as *still* (36 occurrences) and *although* (26 occurrences). Of these, the marker *but* is twice as common as all the other markers together. (Similar results have been found in both spoken and written English by Altenberg

1986.) On the contrary, some other markers selected for the analysis are either very rare, such as *at the same time*, *by contrast*, *in contrast*, *instead*, *nevertheless*, and *nonetheless*, each having only one or two occurrences, or totally absent from my data, such as *alternatively*, *conversely* and *while*, to name just a few. Some markers which are not likely to appear in any corpus of contemporary English (e.g. *albeit*, *notwithstanding* and *oppositely*; cf. Altenberg 1986) are not even included in Table 1, although they have also been searched for during my analysis.

Table 1. DMs used for hypotactic and paratactic contrastive relations in four different types of speech situations (MICASE)

No. of words	15,516	15,956	16,104	17,348	64,924
Hypotactic DMs	Defence	Students' presentation	Small lecture	Large lecture	All speech situations
<i>although</i>	3	4	5	14	26
<i>despite the fact</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>even if</i>	0	0	4	0	4
<i>even though</i>	5	2	0	3	10
<i>except</i>	1	0	2	0	3
<i>in spite of the fact</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>though</i>	0	2	1	1	4
<i>While</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>whereas</i>	0	3	0	0	3
All hypot. DMs	9	11	12	18	50
Paratactic DMs	Defence	Students' presentation	Small lecture	Large lecture	All speech situations
<i>actually</i>	22	52	4	11	89
<i>after all</i>	0	1	4	0	5
<i>all the same</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>alternatively</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>anyhow</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>anyway</i>	3	1	3	1	8
<i>at the same time</i>	0	0	1	0	1
<i>but</i>	152	118	126	79	475
<i>by contrast</i>	0	0	1	0	1
<i>conversely</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>however</i>	3	1	2	2	8
<i>in any case</i>	3	0	1	0	4
<i>in contrast</i>	0	0	0	1	1
<i>instead</i>	1	0	1	0	2
<i>nevertheless</i>	0	0	2	0	2
<i>nonetheless</i>	2	0	0	0	2
<i>on the other hand</i>	1	0	3	2	6
<i>still</i>	6	11	11	8	36
<i>though</i>	2	4	3	0	9
<i>yet</i>	3	1	1	3	8
All parat. DMs	198	189	162	108	657
All DMs	207	200	174	126	707

Unlike Table 1, Table 2 below includes only those contrastive DMs that have five or more occurrences in the data; this only concerns two hypotactic DMs, namely *although* (26 occurrences) and *even though* (10 occurrences), out of ten selected for the analysis, and ten paratactic DMs out of 21 searched for in my corpus.

Table 2. More common DMs used for hypotactic and paratactic contrastive relations in four different types of speech situations (MICASE)

No. of words in texts	15,516	15,956	16,104	17,348	64,926
Hypotactic DMs	Defence	Students' presentation	Small lecture	Large lecture	All speech situations
<i>although</i>	3	4	5	14	26
<i>even though</i>	5	2	0	3	10
All freq. hyp. DMs	8	6	5	17	36
Paratactic DMs	Defence	Students' presentation	Small lecture	Large lecture	All speech situations
<i>actually</i>	22	52	4	11	89
<i>after all</i>	0	1	4	0	5
<i>anyway</i>	3	1	3	1	8
<i>but</i>	152	118	126	79	475
<i>however</i>	3	1	2	2	8
<i>on the other hand</i>	1	0	3	2	6
<i>still</i>	6	11	11	8	36
<i>though</i>	2	4	3	0	9
<i>yet</i>	3	1	1	3	8
All freq. par. DMs	192	189	157	106	644
All frequent DMs	200	195	162	123	680

- (5) men and women were not competing, in the work force and so in the Depression although women did lose their jobs, they didn't lose their jobs, in the same ways that m- men did because they were tie- service jobs that were needed in spite of the breakdown of the economy.
(MICASE, LEL105SU113.11)
- (6) we used to, ask questions like well what did, your father do? what did your mother do? did your mother work? and you know the answer if you were middle class was no. she didn't work. even though my mother did not work for wages outside of the home i was lucky, she she worked, all the time i mean she was, never i never saw her sitting down i never saw her she was facilitating everybody in the world i mean that was, what she did she did a pretty good job of it
(MICASE, LEL105SU113.5)

Examples (5) and (6) comprise *although* and *even though* respectively, showing that subordinate clauses introduced with a hypotactic contrastive DM precede rather than follow their superordinate clauses; in other words, clauses providing background information come before clauses in which some contradiction is expressed. This tendency in positioning subordinate clauses in relation to their superordinate clauses is in conformity with the natural ordering of discourse segments according to which known information, which has a ‘grounding’ function in discourse (cf. Altenberg 1986), usually comes before new information or some new aspect within given information; this way of sequencing discourse segments concerns in particular those introduced with the hypotactic DM *although*, since “*although*-clauses tend to be most frequent in initial position” (Altenberg 1986: 22). In addition, it explains “the strong tendency in the spoken material to prefer coordination to subordination” (Altenberg 1986: 21, cf. Leech and Svartvik 1994: 14), which enables the placing of known, background information first, i.e. in the prior discourse segment, and that of new, unexpected information in the subsequent segment which comprises a DM (see *however* in example (7) below). This tendency is evidenced by my results, in which DMs expressing paratactic relations (657 occurrences) and thus occurring in the subsequent segment dominate over DMs used for hypotactic relations (50 occurrences). (For results, see Table 1, and for more exemplifications, see examples (1) and (3) above.)

- (7) uh after all, i- i- i think James later in his career would have been perfectly able and willing to have made a novel out of, nothing more than their forcing Claire to break off the engagement, see, uh, you can get great literature out of, families, getting in the way of love you know Romeo and Juliet all that sort of thing, uh and i think James would have done that. here however he complicates it by wanting to make this in a sense really a kind of melodrama, of good and evil, uh and the Bellegardes then in some way have to be, uh b- i- or transmogrified? okay. that’s a big word, for our recording today.
(MICASE, LES300SU103.3)

As regards subordination, it should be noted here that the tendency to facilitate the processing of information under conditions of real-time planning often results in ‘right-tending’ contrastive subordination in spoken discourse, which is shown in example (8) in which the hypotactic DM *whereas* is used in the subsequent discourse segment. In spoken language, the current speaker does not often have sufficient time to plan in advance what to produce next as in the case of written language; therefore it is easier for him/her “to qualify a superordinate idea retrospectively (by postposition) than to anticipate it by means of grounding (pre-position)” (Altenberg 1986: 21). This explains why clauses comprising a contrastive hypotactic DM sometimes come only after those in which new and/or unexpected information is given.

- (8) you can see again there’s, a higher distribution for the Spanish speakers than the Hindi speakers for the aggregate score, like all these together, um, (let’s)

see and the other interesting things, th- only one person i think said yes they would live in a country where Hindi was spoken basically India right, um, whereas, um several people said yes they would, (live, in) live in a Spanish speaking country, definitely and um, let's see, the other interesting thing is that hardly anybody said that, they would not raise their children bilingually, (MICASE, STP355MG011.2)

As already stated, among paratactic DMs the marker *but* unambiguously prevails (475 occurrences), although, for instance, in written academic prose, “*however* is uniformly preferred” according to the results of Biber et al. (1999: 889). In my data *however* (see example (7) above) has been found only in eight cases. Similarly to *however*, the paratactic contrastive DMs *anyway* and *though* are not frequently represented (only 8 and 9 occurrences respectively), even though they are usually labelled in grammars and dictionaries as ‘informal’ linking devices used especially in spoken English (cf. Sinclair et al. 1987, Leech 1989). On the other hand, the paratactic DMs *actually* (89 occurrences) and *still* (36 occurrences) have been found with notable frequency (see examples (9) and (10), respectively), sometimes in cases in which several tokens of the same marker occur in close, even adjacent, clauses, or in combination with another marker, in particular *but*, as in (10); nevertheless, it is assumed that speakers choose a particular marker from a set of alternatives according above all to preferences in their speaking habits; this tendency is exemplified in example (9), in which the current speaker keeps using the marker *actually*, although other paratactic markers are available, while in example (10) another speaker gives preference to the marker *still* when expressing contrast.

- (9) but in terms of the academic stuff, it would seem to me that the class actually encour- encourages the students to look at Spanish in a new domain. [S1: right] encourages very academically based [S1: right] so it would be interesting to actually, perhaps, in another time another [S1: mhm] place, [S3: a new world] <SS: LAUGH> to actually see you know these um language attitudes before the class begins. [S1: right, that would, that would be helpful yeah Jenny mentions] for classes like that and then, see what happens (with it) because um i do know some people who are just totally amazed that, that they can actually feel like they (can) (xx) (their own) Spanish. [S1: mhm] and that they feel validated [S1: okay] in that domain. (MICASE, STP355MG011.5)
- (10) but then you have the situation where people become, dominant and people actually, just, using this Indian English. so um there's been some research there's research on that but still it's ongoing [S3: mhm] because it's still you still have, so many different languages you still, the typology's still not there but uh it's it's a a field that is very very um popular right now. (MICASE, STP355MG011.20)

5. Conclusion

Drawing on results as presented and discussed within the scope of the present study, it can now be concluded that contrastive relations between discourse segments are frequently expressed overtly in academic spoken discourse, in particular by some paratactic DMs; their use enables the natural ordering of discourse segments, i.e. the placement of discourse segments with a ‘grounding function’ first and thus before segments which provide new and/or unexpected information. Hypotactic DMs are not so common; however, if hypotactic contrastive relations occur, they are, as a rule, marked by a DM. The position of the discourse segment comprising a guiding signal depends on which marker is used, since there are some differences between individual hypotactic markers. However, the type of contrast a particular DM signals is always dependent not only on the meaning of a given marker, but above all on the entire context. Finally, it must be stated that both paratactic and hypotactic DMs expressing contrastive relations clearly enhance faster and coherent interpretation and understanding of the message, thus contributing to the expression of coherence relations and establishing discourse coherence.

Notes

- 1 This article is part of the grant project 405/08/0866 *Coherence and Cohesion in English Discourse*, which is supported by the Czech Science Foundation.
- 2 For a broad discussion on the terms commonly used to refer to DMs, see Povolná 2008 and 2009.
- 3 In agreement with Fraser (1999: 938) the term ‘discourse segment’ is used here “as a cover term to refer to ‘proposition’, ‘sentence’, ‘utterance’ and ‘message’ unless more specificity is required”.
- 4 In the transcription of texts from MICASE, . marks a short pause, and – a long pause.

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RENATA POVOLNÁ is Associate Professor of English Linguistics at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. She specialises in discourse analysis, pragmatics, and conversation analysis, concentrating mainly on impromptu and academic spoken discourse. She is currently involved in the research project *Coherence and Cohesion in English Discourse*, the aim of which is to conceptualize coherence and cohesion as constitutive components of human communication and to apply theoretical in-

sights to the analysis of spoken and written discourse. She co-edits the linguistic journal *Discourse and Interaction*.

Address: Doc. PhDr. Renata Povolná, Ph.D., Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Poříčí 9, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic. [e-mail:povolna@ped.muni.cz]