Modal particles and discourse markers: two sides of the same coin?

Introduction

Liesbeth Degand, Université catholique de Louvain

Bert Cornillie, KU Leuven

Paola Pietrandrea, Université de Tours & LLL CNRS

Abstract

In this introductory chapter, we situate the investigation of the intersection between modal particles (MP) and discourse markers (DM) within the wider context of categorization work in linguistics. We examine the definitions provided in the literature for DMs and MPs, and review different reasons for the possible confusion between the two classes, among which their functional proximity and diachronic relation. The overview of the contributions to the volume shows that it is nevertheless possible to precise whether and to what extent DMs and MPs constitute one single class. According to the parameters taken into account, authors will tend to group them into a single (pragmatic) class or into two distinct classes.

1. **Aims**

The aim of the present volume is to investigate the intersection between modal particles (MP) and discourse markers (DM), and to discuss whether or not it is possible to draw a line between these two types of linguistic expressions. The authors contributing to this volume have been asked to be explicit about how they categorize DMs and MPs. This common question has been addressed throughout all chapters and is hence the red thread of this book.

Over recent years, DMs and MPs have received quite some attention in the linguistic literature, but mostly independently from one another (but see e.g. Hartmann 1986; Traugott

2007; Haselow 2011). The chapters in this book all go beyond the statement that DM/MP are a fuzzy category that is difficult to describe, and explicitly address the complexity of categorizing multifunctional expressions. Indeed, as we will see, the authors hold the opinion that the analysis of the distributional constraints imposed on specific markers (in given languages) allows for the description of those features determining the uses of MPs and DMs. This should bring us closer to consistent criteria for a refined categorization of both types of linguistic expressions.

2. On categorization and linguistic categories

The central question in this book concerns the categorization of linguistic expressions: are MPs and DMs separate linguistic categories, or not? Are MPs a subtype of DMs, or should both be seen as subcategories of the more encompassing class of pragmatic markers (Fraser 1996) or discourse particles, as they both share a general indexical function (Fischer 2006)? If the latter is the case, what is it that distinguishes DMs from MPs? And, what makes it so difficult to tell them apart?

Before entering into the details of the categorization options for DMs and MPs, we would like to situate this research within the wider context of categorization work in linguistics. In his book with the telling title *Linguistic categorization*, Taylor (2003, 4) aims to uncover the "double role of categorization in the study of language", thus referring to "the process by which people, in using language, are categorizing their experience of the world", but also to "the categories of language itself", which appear to be structured much along the same lines as the non-linguistic ones. As to the principles for the formation of categories (be they linguistic or not), Eleanor Rosch (1978) in her seminal study "Principles of categorization" proposes two general ones: the principle of "cognitive economy" and the

principle of "perceived world structure". "The first has to do with the function of category systems and asserts that the task of category systems is to provide maximum information with the least cognitive effort." (Rosch 1978, 28). The second principle states that the perceived world comes as structured information rather than as arbitrary or unpredictable attributes. Thus maximum information with least cognitive effort is achieved if categories map the perceived world structure as closely as possible. This condition can be achieved either by the mapping of categories to given attribute structures or by the definition or redefinition of attributes to render a given set of categories appropriately structured.

These principles lie at the basis of the notion of 'prototype categories' as defined within cognitive linguistics. Typical of this approach is the notion of 'fuzzy boundaries', since it is often the case that categories have no clear boundaries. There may be borderline cases, where clear, unambiguous categorization is not possible. Thus, "an entity may be a marginal example of more than one category, but a good example of none" (Taylor 2003, 6).

The same applies to grammatical categories. Thus, determining whether a linguistic expression belongs to one grammatical class or another is not always straightforward. The topic of study of this book, i.e. DMs and MPs, is a case in point. Analysing whether they belong to the same grammatical category, or not, amounts to determining whether they display the morphological, distributional and semantic properties of that category. The most prototypical members will display all of these properties, while other members will be less typical (less focal) "and yet others are situated in the borderline area of the category, exhibiting grammatical properties of two or more categories." (Company 2002, 201). Croft (2000, 2001) advocates a 'constructionalist' definition of categories (see also Fischer and Alm in this volume), where "the constructions are the primitive elements of syntactic representation; categories are derived from constructions" (Croft 2000, 84). He formulates the following hypothesis: "[t]he internal category structure (e.g. prototype and extensions) of a

grammatical category is provided by the universal theory of grammar, while its boundaries are provided by the particular language grammar" (Croft 2000, 91).

The contributions in this volume regarding the categorization of DMs and MPs in several (typologically distinct languages) seem to offer evidence for this hypothesis in that some particular languages (German, Swedish, Estonian) seem to display a clear boundary between MPs and DMs, while others do so less (Catalan, French, Italian, Japanese).

3. On the categorization of modal particles and discourse markers

Both DMs and MPs are multifunctional linguistic expressions "functioning in cognitive, expressive, social, and textual domains" (Schiffrin 2001, 54). But MPs have often been described in a more restricted sense, i.e. as specifying "the relationship between speaker and hearer" (Hansen 1998, 42) or "to signal one's understanding of what the situation is all about with respect to the argumentative relations built up in the current situation" (Fischer 2007, 47), or as referring back to a communicately given propositional or illocutionary entity (Diewald 2006, this volume). On the other hand, DMs too "are related to the speech situation [and] (…) express attitudes and emotions" (Bazzanella 2006, 449). "The study of discourse markers is therefore a part of the study of modal and metatextual comment" (Lewis 2006, 43). Distinctions between MPs and DMs thus become hard to maintain, especially on purely functional grounds. As noted by Traugott (2007, 141):

"[o]ne approach is to distinguish sharply between discourse markers and modal particles on both formal and discourse functional grounds (…). Another is to make no difference between the terms, apparently on discourse pragmatic grounds, while recognizing that "formally" clause-internal position is the modal particle position".

In the first contribution of this book with the telling title "*Same same but different" – Modal particles, discourse markers and the art (and purpose) of categorization*, Diewald observes that "modal particles and discourse markers have been a major testing ground for linguistic categorization". She furthermore draws our attention to the fact that we cannot answer the question whether MPs and DMs should be treated as one category, as two distinct categories, or as two subclasses of one more abstract category without deciding upon some preliminary issues first, which she formulates as follows:

1.   Are DMs and MPs seen as cross-linguistically relevant – universal – categories or as language specific ones?

2.   What are the essential characteristics evoked for a definition or classification? Are they functional or formal? Should they be approached onomasiologically or semasiologically?

3.   Are these criteria used equally for both classes? Or is there a difference in the classificational bases between MPs and DMs?

While not all authors in this volume address these three questions as explicitly as Diewald does, all theoretical concepts and research lines presented in the chapters involve the issue of categorization, focusing on those criteria which are deemed crucial in determining whether MPs and DMs belong to the same or different (lexical or grammatical) classes. First of all, the cross-linguistic dimension present in this volume, with studies covering languages as diverse as German, Catalan, French, Japanese, Estonian, Italian, Swedish and English, offers a solid ground towards an exploration of the cross-linguistic validity of the distinction between MPs and DMs. Secondly, all authors of the papers explicitly provide both a formal and a functional definition of MPs and DMs and address the question whether there are paradigms

of MPs and DMs. Thirdly, a general meta-theoretical discussion of the definitions provided is at the heart of each article. It should also be added that the theoretical discussions included in this volume are based on examing empirical data, mostly authentic corpus data, very often belonging to interactional contexts, which are used to support the different classification proposals.

Closely related to the question of categorization is the one of the semantic description of these (complex) linguistic expressions: which features are prominent in the semantics of DMs/MPs? Which of these semantic components may account for the extensions from DMs to MPs and the other way around? There seems to be agreement on the multifunctionality of these linguistic expressions, i.e. that there is no one-to-one mapping between an expression and its meaning and function. Depending on their context of use some meaning components of an expression may become prominent or not. This gives rise to the inevitable question of whether these linguistic expressions should receive a monosemic or a polysemic account (cf. Fischer 2006).

3.1 On Discourse Markers

It has become standard in any overview article or chapter on DMs to state that reaching agreement on what makes a DM is as good as impossible, be it alone on terminological matters (cf. Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen 2011; Degand and Simon-Vandenbergen 2011; Dér 2010; Fischer 2006; Fraser 1999; Lewis 2011; Norrick 2009; Schourup 1999; to name but a few). A great deal of the disagreement can be put on the account of the fact that DMs are multifunctional linguistic expressions and that they do not form a recognized (closed) word class. Indeed, there is "little consensus on whether they are a syntactic or a pragmatic category, on which types of expressions the category includes, on the relationship of discourse

markers to other posited categories such as connectives, interjections, modal particles, speaker-oriented sentence adverbials, and on the term "discourse marker" as opposed to alternatives such as "discourse connective" or "pragmatic marker" or "pragmatic particle"" (Lewis 2011, 419-20). Among the many functions that DMs may fulfill in different "domains" (Schiffrin 1987, 2006), there are "the sequential structure of the dialogue, the turn-taking system, speech management, interpersonal management, the topic structure, and participation frameworks" (Fischer 2006, 9). This large variety of functions DMs may fulfill is, in our view, an important challenge for the attempt to define one overall category of DMs, and it calls for further sub-classification, e.g. response signals, segmentation signals, hesitation markers, discourse connectives, evidential markers, conversational management markers, etc. (Diewald this volume; Fraser 2006).

Schiffrin (1987, 328) presents a number of "tentative suggestions" for an expression to be used as a DM:

a) "it has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence

b) it has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance

c) it has to have a range of prosodic contours (e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction)

d) it has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse, and on different planes of discourse this means that it either has to have no meaning, a vague meaning, or to be reflexive (of the language, of the speaker)"

Sankoff and colleagues (1997) distinguish three major types of DMs: discourse coordinators, interaction markers, and punctors. They tend to have the following properties:

1. They do not enter into the construction syntactically with other elements of the sentence. This property excludes sentence adverbs and conjunctions used with their original semantics.

2. The propositional meaning of the sentence does not depend on their presence.

3. They are subject to semantic bleaching as compared with their source forms.

4. They undergo greater phonological reduction than their source forms.

5. They are articulated as part of smoothly following speech production. This property excludes hesitation markers.

Of course, as soon as one kind of operationalization is given, counterexamples can be found of linguistic expressions that are used as DMs in spite of obeying to one of the above mentioned properties (cf. also Heine and Kaltenböck 2012).

A number of authors suggest restricting the category of DMs to "linguistic items of variable scope, and whose primary function is connective. (…) they do not contribute to the propositional content of their host units (…) and they function as instructions from the speaker to the hearer on how to integrate the host unit into a coherent mental representation of the discourse" (Hansen 1997, 160-161). Fraser shares a similar view when he states that DMs "impose a relationship between some aspects of the discourse segment they are a part of, call it S2, and some aspect of a prior discourse segment, call it S1. In other words they function like a two-place relation, one argument lying in the segment they introduce, the other lying in the prior discourse" (Fraser 1999, 938). By doing so, these definitions seem to abandon the idea of a macro category of DMs to the detriment of non-connective DMs. These definitions have in common that they focus on the text connecting function of DMs, where the coherence of the text results from its coherent mental representation (to which DMs may contribute) (see also Knott and Dale 1994; Louwerse and Mitchell 2003). This is what Diewald (this volume)

refers to as text connective markers, belonging to "school 1". Basing herself on Fischer's (2006b) introduction to the volume *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, she further defines "school 2" where

> "discourse markers are defined as indexical elements by relating items of discourse to other items of discourse, whereby their indigenous functional domain is all that connective work essential and distinctive of spoken dialogic communication: They point to organizational and structural features, and to chunks of the non-linguistic situation and environment; they take care of the thematic structure as well as of the turn-taking system or of speech management". (Diewald, this volume).

3.2 On Modal Particles

The situation is slightly different for the class of MPs, which are generally recognized as a specific word class, at least in Germanic (and Scandinavian) languages (see e.g. Abraham 1988, 2000; Aijmer 1996; Braber 2010; Diewald 2006, this volume). As for the defining features of this language-specific word category, most authors agree that they are not inflected, are most often unstressed, cannot form an utterance by themselves and have no referential meaning. MPs are furthermore mutually combinable, restricted to a specific distributional position (generally the middle field in Germanic languages), and they have scope over the utterance (Hansen 1998; Waltereit and Detges 2007; the chapters by Diewald, Cuenca, Schoonjans in this volume). We would like to suggest here that the focus on the affective, attitudinal, opinionating, illocutionary meanings and uses of this class of particles[1]

---

[1] Cf. "Mit ihrer Hilfe kann der Sprecher Gewißheit, Annahme, Distanzierung, gefühlsmäßige Einstellung oder rationale und qualitative Bewertung signalisieren". (Helbig & Helbig 1990, back cover page) [With their help, the speaker can indicate certainty, supposition, distancing, emotional adjustment or indicate rational and qualitative assessment.]

(Hartman 1986; Izutsu and Izutsu, this volume; Weydt 1969) might be one of the sources for the "fuzzy boundaries" between MPs, on the one hand, and DMs, on the other (Cuenca, this volume). Such meanings can of course also be expressed in languages that lack this specific MP class. In Waltereit's (2001, 1392) words, "it seems difficult to conceive of the *function* of modal particles as being restricted to particular languages". Thus, Romance languages or English, which lack for such particles, must have "other means for expressing the same thing" (*ibid.*). Waltereit (2001) indeed shows that there are other modalization forms carrying out a function analogous to MPs. Interestingly, Fischer (2000:27) mentions that English tag questions have been found to be used as translation equivalents for German MPs (Kohler 1978; Fillmore 1981; Nehls 1989). In Spanish complex grammatical constructions such as the duplication of the infinitive serve as equivalents of MPs (e.g. *fumar fumar no fuma* 'he doesn't really smoke'. Cf. Valenzuela, Hilferty and Garachana 2005; Gras 2011).

3.3 On the fuzzy boundaries between DMs and MPs

Attractive as it is from a typological point of view, the meaning-based approach detracts from morpho-syntactic (formal) criteria, with the risk that we lose our grip on the categorization exercise. It appears indeed that quite a number of linguistic expressions that have been described as DMs share meanings that can be qualified as attitudinal, expressive, or speech-act bound. Fairbanks (2009, 59), for instance, when trying to define DMs as one encompassing category, describes them as "operat[ing] on different planes of discourse (i.e. serv[ing] some discourse function), contributing to either textual coherence or interpersonal/epistemic meanings, or both simultaneously". Liu (2009) adds that "they have textual and/or interpersonal functions", and according to Heine and Kaltenböck (2012) "[t]he main function of DMs is to relate an utterance to the situation of discourse, more specifically

to speaker-hearer interaction, speaker attitudes, and/or the organization of texts", while Brinton (2008, 18) refers to their "interpersonal functions" among which she counts "subjective functions such as expressing responses, reactions, attitudes, understanding, tentativeness, or continued attention, as well as interactive functions such as expressing intimacy, cooperation, shared knowledge, deference, or face-saving (politeness)". Clearly, some of these meanings can be expressed by MPs too.

Another source for the possible confusion between the categories of MPs and DMs is the diachronic link that can be established between the two. Cuenca (this volume) refers to the studies by Fitzmaurice (2004), Traugott (2007), and Waltereit and Detges (2007), who have highlighted the diachronic relationship between MPs and DMs. To this literature we can add the chapters in this volume by Izutsu and Izutsu and by Valdmets and the diachronic case studies of German MPs in Molnár (2002). The different case studies do not seem to suggest cross-linguistically attested directionality from either MPs to DMs or from DMs to MPs.

Finally, one of the probably most obvious reasons for the difficulty of defining the class of DMs, leading to potential conflicts with other categories of 'linguistic expressions functioning at the discourse level', lies in their loose, and non-restrictive definitions, of the type "discourse markers (…) mark discourse. They instruct discourse participants about how to consider an upcoming utterance, providing a path toward the integration of different components of language use into one coherent discourse (…)." (Louwerse and Mitchell 2003, 202); they are "sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987, 31); "defined as linguistic items, with no syntactic function at the sentence level, which serve, according to their morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties, as a guide for the interpretation of utterances." (Trujillo Saez 2003), etc. Such general definitions are very hard to translate into operational criteria for identifying DMs in actual data.

4.   Overview of the volume

The contributors in this volume approach the issue of categorizing DMs from a different perspective, namely focusing on one potential subclass: MPs. According to a number of authors (Diewald, Squartini, Valdmets), MPs are a clearly distinct grammatical category functioning on a different level; according to others, MPs and DMs share a remarkable number of functional features that lead to a fuzzy boundary between the two categories, which are however viewed as distinct (Cuenca; Izutsu and Izutsu; Fischer and Alm). From a broader epistemological point of view, Schoonjans suggests on the basis of the concept of vertical granularity that it is justified to put together several categories in one superordinate category (hence also MPs as subtype of DMs), if similarities are more important than differences.

As already mentioned, the contributions in this volume describe the distributional behavior and the functional properties of DMs and MPs in a variety of languages. The relation between DMs and MPs can strongly differ from language to language. The first chapters of the book are devoted to the analysis of DMs and MPs in languages that allow for a disentanglement of the functions of MPs and DMs because they show a clear formal distinction between these two groups of linguistic expressions. These are the Germanic languages (Diewald; Fischer and Alm; Aijmer), but also Estonian (Valdmets), a Finno-Ugric language. The following chapters examine the distinction between MPs and DMs in Romance languages. Romance languages do not have a topological utterance structure that is as well defined as in German; still some distributional constraints are recognizable especially in French (Schoonjans) and Northern Italian (Squartini), less in Catalan (Cuenca): this areal situation allows for a study of the distribution and functions of MPs and DMs in a perspective

of typological syntax. The volume ends with the contrastive chapter by Izutsu and Izutsu on the comparison between Japanese and French DMs and MPs.

Gabriele Diewald's chapter, which has already been mentioned above, thus takes the lead by making explicit the issues involved in the categorization problem of DMs and MPs. In her view, the two types of linguistic expressions work on different layers of linguistic structure and therefore are non-comparable. In her terms "the guiding question of this volume, i.e. whether MPs and DMs are two sides of the same coin, is slightly misleading: DM and MP are coins belonging to different currencies. As such they may be exchanged against each other but they cannot be integrated into one valuta system". In her article, she then undertakes to disentangle the two notions for German, a language displaying DMs as well as MPs, and proposes two, or rather three, distinct (language-specific) classifications. In German, MPs form a proper word class that is distinct from and can be viewed as a missing link between "two much less clearly delimited, only universally specified groups (DMs and TCMs [Text Connective Markers])". Referring to prior work (Diewald 2006, 408), she considers MPs to "cover an intermediate domain between the functions of text-connecting elements such as conjunctions and conjunctional adverbs on the one hand, and discourse-structuring elements such as turn signals, hesitation markers, etc. on the other". TCMs, then, fulfill "strictly textual functions" (*ibid.*), while DMs fulfill "strictly discourse-relational functions" (*ibid.*). Thus, while all three classes share an indexical function, in that they connect the linguistic host they occur in with some element beyond, the elements of these classes operate on different levels: MPs have scope over propositions or speech-acts; DMs have scope over non-propositional discourse elements (which need not be linguistically expressed); and TCMs connect textually encoded (propositional) elements.

The second chapter is co-authored by Kerstin Fischer and Maria Alm, and is titled *A radical construction grammar perspective on the modal particle-discourse particle*

distinction. In this contribution, the authors – who prefer the term *discourse particle* to *discourse marker* – propose to make use of a construction grammar approach to "shed light on the discourse particle – MP distinction on the basis of two particles, German *also* and Swedish *alltså*". These two particles can indeed function in both ways, thus allowing for a direct comparison of the functions of discourse particles and MPs. In line with Diewald's contribution, Fischer and Alm note that the lexemes themselves "are unspecified for the functions they are going to fulfill in interaction, as well as for the word class to which they belong". Rather, it is their use in a specific grammatical construction that determines their function, and this may differ according to the language in question, even for languages as close as Swedish and German. Interestingly, Fischer and Alm observe that there is concordance between the interpretations that *also* and *alltså* receive when used within a certain construction and other items in the same construction. In other words, the functional components identified for uses of *also/alltså* belong to the construction and not to the item within the construction. In our view, these findings strengthen Izutzu and Izutzu's cross-linguistic model (although the theoretical framework diverges), where a given sentential position allows for the development of certain meanings. Broadly speaking, following prior work by Diewald and Fischer (1998), Diewald (2006) and Fischer (2007), Fischer and Alm distinguish three main communicative tasks that have to be fulfilled in interaction: "a) the reporting of events, i.e. what is talked about, b) the anchoring of the current utterance in the argumentative structure of the discourse, i.e. it concerns why something is said and defines the participants' attitude towards it, and c) the contingencies of the current interaction, including the management of the communicative event itself". In this context of division of tasks, specific constructions are tuned towards specific communicative functions. In particular, MP constructions refer to the rhetorical or argumentative domain while discourse particle constructions refer to aspects of the communicative background frame. In sum, not

the linguistic items themselves are specified for word class, it is the constructions that make a linguistic expression a discourse or a MP. In conclusion, the authors state that "within a language the definition of the two classes of discourse particles and MPs has to be construction-based and thus language-specific".

Karin Aijmer presents her view on the problem in question in her chapter *Analysing modal adverbs as modal particles and discourse markers*. On the basis of a case study of *of course*, Aijmer argues for a functional split between adverbial, DM and MP uses of a certain form; the modal adverb use being differentiated both from DMs and MPs. The latter two uses are distinguished primarily on functional grounds on the basis of a translation corpus. A first observation concerns the discourse-marking functions of *of course*, which are observed when *of course* expresses contrast or concession, or when it shows up in combination with adversative markers such as *but* and with additive markers such as *and*. The DM status of these *of course* uses follows from their emphatic role in the discourse organization. As for the syntactic surrounding of *of course* as a DM, it is usually placed in sentence-initial position (followed by a comma) but also shows up after a conjunction. The MP uses of *of course*, by contrast, are syntactically integrated in the clause and do not appear in sentence-initial position. Functionally speaking, the MP uses of *of course* are closely associated with common ground and context-adjustment. The MP *of course* is most often used for marking consensus and consolidating a harmonious relationship with the hearer. This interactional feature leads Karin Aijmer to conclude that "there is nothing obviously modal about modal particles".

In her chapter on *Modal particles, discourse markers, and adverbs with lt-suffix (Eng. '-ly') in Estonian*, Annika Valdmets addresses the question of the developmental paths of four Estonian MPs/DMs/adverbs with *lt*-suffix, namely *loomulikult* 'naturally; of course', *ilmselt* 'visibly; apparently', *tegelikult* 'in reality; actually' and *lihtsalt* 'simply; just'. She shows that the adverbs under examination all have the tendency to evolve into pragmatic markers. The

group of pragmatic markers is divided into two: MPs and DMs. On the basis of corpus data, Valdmets clearly distinguishes between MP and DM uses of the same forms. All of those items have their initial / dictionary function as an adverb. However, over the course of time they come to be used more and more as MPs or DMs. As adverbs, they are content words that have all of the characteristics of a typical adverb: primarily the analysis shows that the item has grammatical relations with the clause and it carries a concrete meaning. As a MP or a DM, the adverbial forms have omitted their previous function and they are now semantically abstract items that have only marginal grammatical relations with the clause.

As for the relation between MPs and DMs, Valdmets shows that the scope of MPs is smaller than that of DMs. MPs function on a clausal level while DMs have scope over the discourse or at least over larger chunks of text. DMs are connective units between two sentences. DMs are placed at the beginning of a sentence, whereas MPs are usually in the middle field, although the left or right periphery is not rigidly held apart in Estonian. Estonian MPs and DMs also have features in common. They may be considered (inter)subjective procedural items which add a speaker-oriented dimension to what is being said. Finally, the question of the directionality of the change is also addressed for the Estonian markers. The corpus analysis suggests that MPs and DMs both evolve from adverbs.

In his chapter on *Modal particles: problems in defining a category*, Steven Schoonjans elaborates further on the flexibility of categorization. From a meta point of view, he discusses the problems of the current delineations of the class of MPs in German, thus countering the idea that in German MPs form a well-defined word class. He first shows that the established criteria for defining MPs cannot be considered necessary conditions, because of the existence of quite a few "exceptions". He also points out that whether an expression is a member of the class or not is also a matter of discussion. Only eight particles seem to be described consistently as MPs, whereas more than ten other particles appear in only some of the

literature. It is also shown that there is no agreement on whether MPs can be a specific word class. This should not be a problem according to Schoonjans, who argues that the category of MPs has a prototypical structure with fuzzy boundaries and shows overlap with other categories. Interestingly, "each particular type is to a higher or lower degree a prototypical member of this category, and can at the same time be a prototypical member of different categories" (Schoonjans this volume). Schoonjans argues for interpreting prototypicality in terms of granularity and conceptualization. Whether a form is a MP depends, according to him, on "the level of horizontal granularity, i.e. on the amount of variation the prototype may show and to the extent a form may deviate from the prototype and still be a (non-prototypical) member of the category". Conceptualization then is concerned with the idea that "how the category is conceived partly determines which features are thought to be more important or more salient". Hence, via their conceptualization analysts and speakers have an impact on the structure of the prototype and the level of horizontal granularity chosen. Finally, after having discussed German examples, he also presents a comparison with French data, which confirm that the weight that scholars give to certain features determines the linguistic categorization.

In his chapter entitled *From TAM to discourse via information structure: North-Western Italian* già *'already' and its French cognate* déjà, Mario Squartini argues that DMs and MPs can be considered two sides of the same coin. On the basis of an in-depth analysis of *già* he reveals that both types of markers share the information status feature of 'given' information. Yet, this feature has different functions according to the different uses of *già*: in interrogative/MP uses *già* is involved in 'backchecking', whereas the use of *già* as an interjection/ DM refers to 'confirmativity'. On the other hand, the case of *già* also shows that formal properties including morphosyntactic and scopal behaviour "keep the two coins mutually exclusive". The MP uses of *già* confirm that MPs are integrated within the utterance, whereas the DM uses, which derive from a more independent, interjectional use of *già*, have

extrasentential scope allowing them to regulate and connect discourse chunks. The DM use of *già* can also be observed in combinations such as *ah già*, *eh già* and *oh già*. The latter expression is a conclusive marker in regional Italian playing a role in turn alternations, which is undoubtedly a prototypical function of DMs.

Mario Squartini discusses North-Western Italian *già* in relation to French, Spanish and Central Italian. The comparison of the four Romance varieties illustrates that only North-Western Italian combines both MP and DM uses. Spanish and Central Italian only have DM uses, whereas French has a MP use, and hence, does not witness any overlap with DM uses. Interestingly, according to Squartini, the MP use in French is currently undergoing an extension of the backchecking function towards more general illocutionary domains. This extension process is in line with other processes involving semantic change such as pragmaticalization and intersubjectification.

Studying frequent discourse phenomena in oral Catalan, Maria Josep Cuenca confronts us with linguistic expressions that exhibit features typically associated with both modal markers and DMs. In her chapter on *The fuzzy limits between discourse marking and modal marking*, she sets out to describe "focal category behaviors in a cline from discourse to modal marking" which makes it possible "to account for 'anomalous' items that challenge any attempt of classification, and (…) to define category boundaries assuming a dynamic and fuzzy model of categorization". Cuenca identifies several reasons for the existence of these fuzzy boundaries between linguistic categories. In the first place, identifying the word classes implementing discourse marking and modal marking functions is far from trivial a task because both DMs and modal markers have been recognized as a set of expressions that include different word classes. Noteworthy here is that Cuenca introduces the term *modal marker* (MM), of which MPs are just one word class among others on the 'modal' side of her cline. Other reasons to end up with fuzzy category boundaries include the lack of necessary

and sufficient conditions to classify a linguistic expression as a modal marker or a DM; the multifunctionality of the linguistic expressions under scrutiny, where some linguistic forms may have both modal and discourse marking functions; and the contextual dependence of the items where "the same form, even as a particle, can develop various pragmatic functions according to factors such as its position, the units in which it occurs (type, modality, etc.) or intonation". Within her gradient view of categorization of the two classes, Cuenca identifies conjunctions and parenthetical connectives as prototypical DMs, since they make explicit the relationship between two content units, i.e. they bracket unit of talks and function as two position operators. On the other end of the cline, she identifies modal adverbs, interjections and MPs as prototypical MMs that typically modify the illocution of an utterance and act as one position operators. In the middle of this cline, i.e. occupying the intersection between modal and DMs, we find pragmatic connectives, and to some extent also interjections and MPs. To support this gradient classification model, Cuenca provides evidence from the modal and connective functions of a number of (oral) Catalan expressions, namely *home/dona, (és) clar* and *és que*, that appear to present a hybrid character.

In the final chapter of this volume, Katsunobu Izutsu and Mitsuko Izutsu pursue a definitely cross-linguistic endeavor in their chapter *From Discourse Markers to Modal/Final Particles: What the Position Reveals about the Continuum*. Within the theoretical framework of grammaticalization, the authors propose a cross-linguistic model for the development of modal/final particles from DMs. DMs and MPs are thus linked in sofar that the former are viewed as the source form for the development of the latter. More precisely, they argue that some DMs in "German, French, and Japanese have come to serve as modal particles by developing (inter)subjective meanings in a limited sentential position: the middle field in German and the final or internal position in French, and the final position in Japanese". The autors observe "striking similarities" between some German MPs and their "equivalents" in

French and Japanese, which makes it necessary "to devise a broader perspective of modal particles and a cross-linguistic framework or model for their analysis". The central idea of this model is that the development of (inter)subjective meanings in DMs in (language-specific) restricted sentential positions gives rise to the emergence of MPs. According to Izutsu and Izutsu, MPs are thus typical (inter)subjective markers in that they indicate the speaker's (positive or negative) assumptions, including emotive or affective meanings, related to the content expressed. Such meanings have long been recognized to be typical of right peripheral position in final particle languages such as Japanese. Izutsu and Izutsu suggest interpreting such final particles as peripheral members of the MP category.

5.   Conclusions

The articles collected in this volume help us to provide an answer to the question asked in the title of this introduction: are DMs and MPs two sides of the same coin? The most straightforward, but probably not most satisfying, answer is: it depends on the approach adopted for the categorization task. If DMs and MPs are defined in pragmatic terms, the answer is yes, MPs and DMs are linguistic elements encoding two aspects of a general indexical function. Both relate the utterance in their scope to the context: DMs relate the utterance in their scope to the linguistic context; MPs relate the utterance in their scope to the situational context.

If DMs and MPs are defined in formal terms, the answer is clearly no, they are not two sides of the same coin. MPs are a clearly defined word class in German and some other Germanic (and Finno-Ugric) languages, characterized by their middle field position in the topological structure of utterances, whereas DMs are a much more heterogeneous collection

of linguistic expressions fulfilling various indexical functions and not characterized by precise distributional constraints.

It should be said though that, by combining the two approaches, viz., by taking into account at the same time formal and functional properties of DMs and MPs, and by adopting a broad cross-linguistic perspective, the precise distinction between the two classes of linguistic elements becomes clearer.

Formal approaches to MPs help us to identify the functional specificity of MPs: some languages have a class of distributionally constrained words dedicated to semantically qualify the speech act with regard to the pragmatic presupposed context. This very particular indexical function appears to be 'grammaticalized', at least in Germanic languages. Other languages do not show exactly the same constraints, nevertheless, the same semantic function can be fulfilled by a group of pragmatic markers characterized by distributional properties distinguishing them from other DMs.

All in all, the articles gathered in the present volume show that DMs and MPs are two subclasses of the general class of pragmatic markers. They both have an indexical function. DMs relate items of discourse to other items of discourse, whereas MPs qualify speech acts with regards to a pragmatic presupposed context. MPs as a well defined word class are mainly present in German and other Germanic languages, but the pragmatic function of MPs is encoded in many languages by more or less grammaticalized sub-classes of pragmatic markers, clearly distinct from DMs.

contributors to this volume and the Series editor for the very nice collaboration while working on this volume. We are most grateful to two anonymous reviewers from the Pragmatics and Beyond New Series for their very thoughtfull comments and suggestions that helped improve the present introduction and the chapters hereafter.

References

Abraham, Werner. 1988. "Vorbemerkungen zur Modalpartikelsyntax im Deutschen." *Linguistische Berichte* 118: 443-465.

Abraham, Werner. 2000. "Modal Particles in German: Word Classification and Legacy beyond Grammaticalisation." In *Approaches to the Typology of Word Classes*, ed. by Petra Maria Vogel, and Bernard Comrie, 321-350. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Aijmer, Karin. 1996. "Swedish Modal Particles in a Contrastive Perspective." *Language Sciences* 18 (1-2): 393-427.

Aijmer, Karin. 2002. *English Discourse Particles: Evidence from a Corpus*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bazzanella, Carla. 2006. "Discourse Markers in Italian: Towards a Compositional Meaning." In *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, ed. by Kerstin Fischer, 449-464. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Braber, Nathalie. 2006. "Emotional and Emotive Language: Modal Particles and Tags in Unified Berlin." *Journal of Pragmatics* 38 (9): 1487-1503.

Brinton, Laurel J. 2008. The Comment Clause in English: Syntactic Origins and Pragmatic Development. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Company Company, Concepción. 2002. "Grammaticalization and Category Weakness." In *New Reflections on Grammaticalization*, ed. by Ilse Wischer, and Gabriele Diewald, 201–215. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Croft, William. 2000. "Parts of Speech as Language Universals and as Language-Particular Categories." In *Approaches to the Typology of Word Classes*, ed. by Petra Maria Vogel, and Bernard Comrie, 65-102. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Croft, William. 2001. *Radical Construction Grammar: Syntactic Theory in Typological Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cuenca, Maria Josep. [this volume]. "The Fuzzy Boundaries Between Discourse Marking and Modal Marking."

Diewald, Gabriele. 2006. "Discourse Particles and Modal Particles as Grammatical Elements." In *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, ed. by Kerstin Fischer, 403-425. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Diewald, Gabriele. [this volume]. ""*Same same but different*" – Modal Particles, Discourse Markers and the Art (and Purpose) of Categorization."

Diewald, Gabriele, and Kerstin Fischer. 1998. "Zur diskursiven und modalen Funktion der Partikeln *aber, auch, doch* und *ja* in Instruktionsdialogen." *Linguistica* 38: 75-99.

Fairbanks, Brendan. 2009. *Ojibwe Discourse Markers*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Minnesota.

Fillmore, Charles J. 1981. "Pragmatics and the Description of Discourse." In *Radical Pragmatics,* ed. by Peter Cole, 143-166. New York: Academic Press.

Fischer, Kerstin. 2000. *From Cognitive Semantics to Lexical Pragmatics. The Functional Polysemy of Discourse Particles*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Fischer, Kerstin. 2007. "Grounding and Common Ground: Modal Particles and their Translation Equivalents." In *Lexical Markers of Common Grounds*, ed. by Anita Fetzer, and Kerstin Fischer, 47-65. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Fischer, Kerstin (ed.). 2006. *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, [Studies in Pragmatics 1]. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Fraser, Bruce (2006). "Towards a Theory of Discourse Markers." In *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, Kerstin Fischer (ed.), 189–204. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Fischer, Kerstin and Alm, Maria. [this volume]. A Radical Construction Grammar Perspective on the Modal Particle-Discourse Particle Distinction.

Fraser, Bruce 1999. "What are discourse markers?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 31 (7). 931-952.

Gras, Pedro. 2011. *Gramática de Construcciones en Interacción. Propuesta de un modelo y aplicación al análisis de estructuras independientes con marcas de subordinación*. Doctoral dissertation. Universitat de Barcelona.

Hansen, Maj-Britt Mosegaard. 1998. "The Semantic Status of Discourse Markers." *Lingua* 104 (3-4); 235-260.

Hartmann, Dietrich. 1986. "Context Analysis or Analysis of Sentence Meaning? On Modal Particles in German." *Journal of Pragmatics* 10 (5): 543-557.

Haselow, Alexander. 2011. "Discourse Marker and Modal Particle: The Functions of Utterance-Final *then* in Spoken English." *Journal of Pragmatics* 43 (14): 3603-3623.

Helbig, Gerhard, and Helbig, Agnes. 1990. "*Lexikon deutscher Modalwörter*." Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie.

Heine, Bernd, and Günther Kaltenböck (2012). On Discourse Markers: Grammaticalization, Pragmaticalization, or Something Else? Ms. University of Köln.

Izutsu, Katsunobu & Izutsu, Mitsuko Narita. [this volume]. "From Discourse Markers to Modal/Final Particles: What the Position Reveals about the Continuum."

Knott, Alistair, and Robert Dale. 1994. "Using Linguistic Phenomena to Motivate a Set of Coherence Relations." *Discourse Processes* 18: 35-62.

Kohler, Klaus. 1978. "Englische "Question Tags" und ihre deutschen Entsprechungen." *Arbeitsberichte des Instituts für Phonetik der Universität Kiel* 10: 61-77.

Lewis, Diana. 2006. "Discourse Markers in English: A Discourse-Pragmatic View." In *Approaches to Discourse Particles*, ed. by Kerstin Fischer, 43-59. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Lewis, Diana. 2011. "A Discourse-Constructional Approach to the Emergence of Discourse Markers in English." *Linguistics* 49 (2): 415-443.

Liu, Binmei. 2009. "Chinese Discourse Markers in Oral Speech of Mainland Mandarin Speakers". *Proceedings of the 21st North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics* (NACCL-21). Vol 2. ed. by Yun Xiao, 358-374. Smithfield, Rhode Island: Bryant University.

Louwerse, Max M. and Heather Hite Mitchell. 2003. "Toward a Taxonomy of a Set of Discourse Markers in Dialog: A Theoretical and Computational Linguistic Account." *Discourse Processes* 35 (3): 199-239.

Matras, Yaron. 2000. "Fusion and the Cognitive Basis for Bilingual Discourse Markers." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 4 (4): 505-528.

Molnár, Anna. 2002. Die Grammatikalisierung deutscher Modalpartikeln: Fallstudien. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Nehls, Dietrich. 1989. "German Modal Particles Rendered by English Auxiliary Verbs." In *Sprechen mit Partikeln*, ed. by Harald Weydt, 282-292. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.

Rosch, Eleanor. 1978. "Principles of Categorization." In *Cognition and Categorization*, ed. by Eleanor Rosch, and Barbara L. Lloyd, 27-48. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Sankoff, Gillian, Pierrette Thibault, Naomi Nagy, Helene Blondeau, Marie-Odile Fonollosa, and Lucie Gagnon. 1997. "Variation in the Use of Discourse Markers in a Language Contact Situation." *Language Variation and Change* 9 (2): 191-217.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 1987. *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 2001. "Discourse Markers, Meaning, and Context." In *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. by Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton, 54-75. [Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics]. Oxford/Maldon, MA: Blackwell.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 2006. *In Other Words. Variation in reference and narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schoonjans, Steven. [this volume]. "Modal Particles: Problems in Defining a Category."

Taylor, John R. 2003. *Linguistic Categorization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2007. "Discourse Markers, Modal Particles, and Contrastive Analysis, Synchronic and Diachronic." *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 6: 139-157.

Trujillo Saez, Fernando. 2003. "Culture in Writing: Discourse Markers in English and Spanish Student Writing." In *Tadea seu liber de Amicitia*, ed. by Departamento de Didactica de la Lengua y la Literatura, 345–364. Granada, Imprenta Generalife.

Valdmets, Annika. [this volume]. "Modal Particles, Discourse Markers, and Adverbs with *lt*-suffix (Eng. '-ly') in Estonian."

Valenzuela, Javier, Joseph Hilferty, and Mar Garachana. 2005. "On the Reality of Constructions. The Spanish Reduplicative-Topic Construction." *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 3: 201-215.

Waltereit, Richard, and Ulrich Detges. 2007. "Different Functions, Different Histories. Modal Particles and Discourse Markers from a Diachronic Point of View." *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 6: 61-80.

Waltereit, Richard. 2001. "Modal Particles and their Functional Equivalents: A Speech-Act-Theoretic Approach." *Journal of Pragmatics* 33 (9), 1391-1417.

Weydt, Harald. 1969. *Abtönungspartikel. Die deutschen Modalpartikeln und ihre französischen Entsprechungen*. Bad Hamburg v.d.H.