

The Structure of Discourse-Pragmatic Variation

Heike Pichler

John Benjamins Publishing Company

Studies in Language Variation

13

The Structure of Discourse-Pragmatic Variation

Heike Pichler

Newcastle University



John Benjamins Publishing Company

Amsterdam / Philadelphia



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Pichler, Heike.

The structure of discourse-pragmatic variation / Heike Pichler.

p. cm. (Studies in Language Variation, ISSN 1872-9592 ; v. 13)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Pragmatics. 2. Discourse markers. 3. Linguistic change. I. Title.

P99.4.P72P434 2013

401'.41--dc23

2012048981

ISBN 978 90 272 3493 3 (Hb ; alk. paper)

ISBN 978 90 272 7218 8 (Eb)

© 2013 – John Benjamins B.V.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm, or any other means, without written permission from the publisher.

John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands

John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

List of abbreviations and typographical conventions

BNC	British National Corpus
BwE	Berwick English
CA	conversation analysis
COLT	Corpus of London Teenage Speech
CPP	Cognitive Prominence Principle
CTRP	complex Transition Relevance Place
LIC	Linguistics Innovator Corpus
NEG-TAGS	negative polarity question tags
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
<i>p</i>	proposition
SAP	Social Agreement Principle
TAM	tense-aspect-modality
TCU	turn-constructional unit
TQ	tag question
*	denotes grammatically incorrect sentences
SMALL CAPITALS denote	the discourse-pragmatic variables analysed in Part II the primary verbs BE, HAVE and DO as lexical items
<i>lower case italics</i> denote	the formal variants of the discourse-pragmatic variables analysed in Part II discourse-pragmatic variables other than the ones analysed in Part II grammatical forms of the primary verbs BE, HAVE and DO

Key to transcription conventions

[], [[]]	overlap
==	latching
=	turn continuation
-	false start, truncation
“ ”	quoted speech
(h), (.h)	inbreath, outbreath
@	laughter
+	tisking
%	sniffle
\$	swallowing
<@ @>	produced with laughter
<£ £>	produced with smiley voice or suppressed laughter
< >	increased tempo
> <	reduced tempo
CAPITALS	louder than surrounding talk
<u>underlining</u>	emphatic stress
o o	soft speech
superscript font	higher than usual pitch
subscript font	lower than usual pitch
;, ::	syllable lengthening
(.), (..), (...)	short, medium, long pause
.	final intonation contour
,	continuing intonation contour
?	rising intonation contour
(text)	uncertain transcription
(?)	undecipherable words
((text))	extra-linguistic information
<i>italics</i>	used in examples to highlight the variable/variant discussed in the text

Glossary of dialect words

aggro	bother, inconvenience
auld	old
aye	yes
bog	toilet
cannae	can't
cannit	can't
Cockney	person from/dialect of London
dear	expensive
dinnae	don't
divn't	don't
doylem	idiot
fither	father
frae	from
gie	give
Geordie	person from/dialect of Newcastle/Tyneside
hae	have
hantle	head
heed	head
juggle	dog
kecks	trousers, underpants
ken	know
knaa	know
knacker	strenuous work
mind	remember
mingin	dirty, gross
-nae	-n't
nay	no
no	not
nowt	nothing
pet	love (endearment form)
skint	short of money
twang	language, dialect
wa	our
whae	who
wi	with
winnae	won't
youse	you

Acknowledgements

Writing this book has been both challenging and rewarding, and I count myself lucky to have learned from ongoing discussions with some of the very best: Jenny Cheshire, Alex D'Arcy, Stephen Levey, Sali Tagliamonte and Elizabeth Traugott. Many other fellow linguists have provided invaluable support and advice at various stages in the writing process: Alex Bellem, Oliver Bond, Lynn Clark, Karen Corrigan, Liesbeth Degand, Damien Hall, Daniel Ezra Johnson, Yuni Kim, Nick Roberts, Jane Setter, Dominic Watt and many others who, though not mentioned, have not been forgotten. Gisle Andersen, Elizabeth Traugott, Suzanne Evans Wagner and two anonymous reviewers have provided detailed and helpful comments on parts or the whole of earlier drafts of this book for which I am grateful. Of course, any remaining shortcomings of the book remain my own responsibility. Anne Sherwin came to the rescue when my stress levels failed to cope with EndNote, and Jeff Wilson helped with technical issues at the very end. I thank Paul Kerswill for inviting me to submit the manuscript to SiLV. At John Benjamins, the series editor Peter Auer, the acquisition editor Anke de Looper and the production coordinator Patricia Leplae have patiently provided guidance throughout the writing and production process.

To my family in Austria I must apologise for the numerous occasions where I was too busy to return their calls or thank them for their unconditional supply of chocolates. Thank you to Sue Fox, Erika Fulop, Iris Gruber-La Sala, Martha Marizzi, Martina Pfeiler, Annu Rist and Fran Sanchez for keeping me on-line company during insane hours and for providing encouragement when I needed it. Cheers to Olly Bond and Yuni Kim for entertainment and laughter. Andy Gordon has been my rock of love and support through all of this. Thank you for everything.

And, finally, thank you to the people of Berwick for supplying the discourse-pragmatic variables celebrated in this book.

Table of contents

List of figures	XI
List of tables	XIII
List of abbreviations and typographical conventions	XV
Key to transcription conventions	XVII
Glossary of dialect words	XIX
Acknowledgements	XXI

Part I

CHAPTER 1

Introduction 3

- 1.1 Variationist sociolinguistics and discourse-pragmatic features 3
- 1.2 Discourse-pragmatic features: Definition of scope and terminology 4
- 1.3 Reasons for the neglect of discourse-pragmatic features
in variationist research 6
- 1.4 Arguments in favour of the quantitative analysis
of discourse-pragmatic features 10
- 1.5 Aims and focus of the book 17
- 1.6 Organisation of the book 18

CHAPTER 2

Data, methodology and theoretical framework 21

- 2.1 Introduction 21
- 2.2 Data 22
 - 2.2.1 Corpus 22
 - 2.2.2 Speaker sample 25
 - 2.2.3 Summary 27
- 2.3 Variationist sociolinguistics 27
 - 2.3.1 Premises of variationist sociolinguistics 27
 - 2.3.2 Discourse-pragmatic variables 28
 - 2.3.3 Quantitative methods 32
 - 2.3.4 Summary 35

2.4	Grammaticalisation	35
2.4.1	Mechanisms of change in grammaticalisation	35
2.4.2	Grammaticalisation and discourse-pragmatic features	38
2.4.3	Grammaticalisation in synchronic data	41
2.4.4	Summary	41
2.5	Conversation analysis (CA)	41
2.5.1	Choice of CA	42
2.5.2	Key concepts of CA	42
2.5.3	Functional domains	45
2.5.4	Quantifying multifunctionality	47
2.5.5	Validating qualitative analyses	48
2.5.6	Summary	48
2.6	Conclusion	49

CHAPTER 3

The BwE verb negation system

51

3.1	Introduction	51
3.2	The evolution of verb negation and negative particles	52
3.3	Negative auxiliaries in BwE	53
3.3.1	Negative auxiliary variants in BwE	53
3.3.2	Geographical distribution and categorisation of negative particle/ negative auxiliary variants	55
3.4	Previous research on negator and negative auxiliary variation	56
3.4.1	Extra-linguistic distribution of variants	56
3.4.2	Intra-linguistic distribution of variants	57
3.5	Quantitative analysis of negative particle and negative auxiliary variation	59
3.5.1	Distributional analysis	59
3.5.2	Multivariate analysis	63
3.5.3	Summary of results	65
3.6	Conclusion	65

Part II

CHAPTER 4

The construction I DON'T KNOW

69

- 4.1 Introduction 69
- 4.2 Previous research on I DON'T KNOW 71
 - 4.2.1 Qualitative studies: Discourse-pragmatic functions of I DON'T KNOW 71
 - 4.2.2 Quantitative studies: Variation and change in the use of I DON'T KNOW 73
 - 4.2.3 Aims and contribution of this chapter 76
- 4.3 The variable context and data coding 77
 - 4.3.1 The variable and the envelope of variation 77
 - 4.3.2 The dependent variable: Variants of I DON'T KNOW in BwE 78
 - 4.3.3 Independent variables: Data coding 80
- 4.4 Qualitative analysis of I DON'T KNOW 81
 - 4.4.1 Functions performed by unbound I DON'T KNOW 82
 - 4.4.2 Functions performed by bound I DON'T KNOW with phrasal or clausal complements 93
 - 4.4.3 Functions performed by I DON'T KNOW with dependent WH-words 97
 - 4.4.4 Summary of functions 98
- 4.5 Quantitative analysis of I DON'T KNOW 100
 - 4.5.1 Distributional analysis 100
 - 4.5.2 Multivariate analysis 108
 - 4.5.3 Summary of results 115
- 4.6 Discussion 116
- 4.7 Conclusion 122

CHAPTER 5

The construction I DON'T THINK

123

- 5.1 Introduction 123
- 5.2 Previous research on I DON'T THINK 125
 - 5.2.1 Qualitative studies: Discourse-pragmatic functions of I DON'T THINK 125
 - 5.2.2 Quantitative studies: Variation and change in the use of I DON'T THINK 128
 - 5.2.3 Aims and contribution of this chapter 130

5.3	The variable context and data coding	131
5.3.1	The variable and the envelope of variation	131
5.3.2	The dependent variable: Variants of I DON'T THINK in BwE	134
5.3.3	Independent variables: Data coding	135
5.4	Qualitative analysis of I DON'T THINK	136
5.4.1	Functions performed by I DON'T THINK	137
5.4.2	Summary of functions	148
5.5	Quantitative analysis of I DON'T THINK	150
5.5.1	Distributional analysis	150
5.5.2	Multivariate analysis	156
5.5.3	Summary of results	162
5.6	Discussion	162
5.7	Conclusion	168
CHAPTER 6		
	Negative polarity question tags (NEG-TAGS)	169
6.1	Introduction	169
6.2	Previous research on question tags	171
6.2.1	Qualitative studies: Discourse-pragmatic functions of question tags	172
6.2.2	Quantitative studies: Variation and change in the use of question tags	174
6.2.3	Aims and contribution of this chapter	178
6.3	The variable context and data coding	179
6.3.1	The variable and the envelope of variation	179
6.3.2	The dependent variable: NEG-TAG variants in BwE	182
6.3.3	Independent variables: Data coding	185
6.4	Qualitative analysis of NEG-TAGS	186
6.4.1	Functions performed by NEG-TAGS	187
6.4.2	Summary of functions	192
6.5	Quantitative analysis of NEG-TAGS	193
6.5.1	Distributional analysis	194
6.5.2	Multivariate analysis	202
6.5.3	Summary of results	205
6.6	Discussion	206
6.7	Conclusion	212

Part III**CHAPTER 7****Discussion & conclusion 215**

- 7.1 Introduction 215
- 7.2 Synthesis of the results 216
- 7.3 Implications of the results 220
- 7.4 Conclusion 224

CHAPTER 8**Challenges for the future 227**

- 8.1 The state of the art and beyond 227
- 8.2 Dealing with low token frequency 228
- 8.3 Developing reliable analytical methods 230
- 8.4 Exploring intra-linguistic constraints
on discourse-pragmatic variation 231
- 8.5 Exploring patterns of discourse-pragmatic change 232
- 8.6 Investigating the range of discourse-pragmatic variables 234
- 8.7 Conclusion 236

References 237**Appendices 259**

- 1. Inventory of functions of unbound I DON'T KNOW
in the BwE corpus 261
- 2. Inventory of functions of bound I DON'T KNOW
in the BwE corpus 264
- 3. Inventory of functions of I DON'T KNOW + WH-word
in the BwE corpus 265
- 4. Inventory of functions of I DON'T THINK
in the BwE corpus 266
- 5. Inventory of functions of NEG-TAGS
in the BwE corpus 269

Index 271

List of figures

Figure 2.1 Location of Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland	23
Figure 3.1 Overall distribution of negator and localised negative auxiliary variants in productive constructions	59
Figure 4.1 Overall distribution of the variants of I DON'T KNOW	101
Figure 4.2 Distribution of variants of I DON'T KNOW across speaker sex and age	102
Figure 4.3 Distribution of variants of I DON'T KNOW across syntactic contexts and functional categories	104
Figure 4.4 Normalised frequencies of referential uses of I DON'T KNOW across individuals	107
Figure 4.5 Normalised frequencies of pragmatic uses of I DON'T KNOW across individuals	107
Figure 5.1 Overall distribution of the variants of I DON'T THINK	151
Figure 5.2 Distribution of variants of I DON'T THINK across speaker sex and age	152
Figure 5.3 Distribution of variants of I DON'T THINK across functional domains and complement types	154
Figure 5.4 Normalised frequencies of I DON'T THINK across individuals	155
Figure 5.5 Distribution of variants of I DON'T THINK across micro-functions	160
Figure 6.1 Distribution of NEG-TAG variants across speaker sex and age	197
Figure 6.2 Distribution of NEG-TAG variants across syntactic-semantic contexts	199
Figure 6.3 Distribution of NEG-TAG variants across functional categories	201
Figure 6.4 Normalised frequencies of NEG-TAGS across individuals	202

List of tables

Table 2.1 Speaker sample	25
Table 3.1 Inventory of negative particle and negative auxiliary variants in BwE	56
Table 3.2 Distribution of negator variants across auxiliaries and distribution of localised negative auxiliary variants	61
Table 3.3 Distribution of negator and localised negative auxiliary variants across clause types	62
Table 3.4 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>-nae</i> , <i>no</i> and <i>divn't</i>	64
Table 4.1 Inventory of variants of the construction I DON'T KNOW in BwE	80
Table 4.2 Coding schema for I DON'T KNOW functions	99
Table 4.3 Distribution of I DON'T KNOW across syntactic configurations	103
Table 4.4 Frequency in per cent of unbound I DON'T KNOW across functional categories by age and sex	105
Table 4.5 Frequency in per cent of bound I DON'T KNOW across functional categories by age and sex	105
Table 4.6 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>I don't know</i>	109
Table 4.7 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>I dunno</i>	111
Table 4.8 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>I dono</i>	113
Table 4.9 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>I divn't knaa</i>	114
Table 5.1 Inventory of variants of the construction I DON'T THINK in BwE	135
Table 5.2 Coding schema for I DON'T THINK functions	149

Table 5.3 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>I don't think</i> , <i>I doØ think</i> and <i>I divn't think</i>	157
Table 6.1 Inventory of NEG-TAG variants in BwE	185
Table 6.2 Coding schema for NEG-TAG functions	193
Table 6.3 Overall distribution of NEG-TAG variants	195
Table 6.4 Inventory and frequency of auxiliary-negative-pronoun combinations in non-localised canonical tags	198
Table 6.5 Contribution of external and internal factors to the probability of <i>ininit</i> and non-localised canonical tags	204

PART I

