INTRODUCTION

ELIZAVETA KHACHATURYAN

University of Oslo

The present issue comprises a selection of six refereed and revised papers, which were presented at the international workshop “Discourse Markers in Romance Languages” in Oslo, 28–29 November, 2008. The contributions covered four Romance languages (French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish) and analysed one or several discourse markers (DMs) in one or several Romance languages. The aim of the workshop was to create a dialogue between different methodologies and approaches working with discourse markers in Romance languages. Such a dialogue seems to be important both from a theoretical and a practical point of view.

Although the first descriptions of DMs appeared several decades ago (Van Dijk 1979, Ducrot et al. 1980, Schiffrin 1988) and many theories, hypotheses, descriptions and approaches currently co-exist (e.g. Fraser 1990, Fischer 2006), practical guidelines on how to use or to translate DMs are still lacking, as is a more general classification that can be useful in the acquisition of L2 and in translation.

Furthermore, despite the great interest in contrastive analyses of DMs, there is a dearth of studies dedicated to the contrastive studies of Romance languages. Even in the book “Pragmatic Markers in Contrast” (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, eds. 2006), which gives a comprehensive overview of different contrastive approaches, none of the contributions proposes a contrastive analysis of DMs of two or more Romance languages. A study of languages from the same group, however, can provide interesting and unexpected results on both the diachronic and synchronic levels.

This issue is one of the first anthologies to propose intra-Romance studies of DMs.¹ The problems connected with the study of DMs discussed in this volume can be divided into four groups, as presented below.

[1] THEORETICAL APPROACH

At present, we can distinguish between two main tendencies which also represent two main methodological and theoretical approaches in the description of

[1] The workshop in Oslo was followed up by a conference in Madrid organized by the Complutense University of Madrid in May 2010. This conference, titled “Marqueurs du discours dans les langues romanes: une approche contrastive”, gathered more than 40 papers and more than 100 participants. A volume of selected papers presented at the conference is in preparation.

DMs: the functional-pragmatic approach and the contextual-semantic (or semantic) approach.

The functional-pragmatic approach can be represented by the following definition of DMs (or connectives²): “Connectives are a pragmatic category, that is to say, what all connectives have in common is not the grammatical class to which they belong but their ability to signal a relationship between two units.” (Pons Bordería 2006, 82)³.

The semantic approach⁴ proposes another definition where the idea of the relationship is also present: “A DM is a word which defines the discursive status of the sequence *p* corresponding to its scope⁵. As forming the scope of the DM, the sequence *p* stands for a particular way to say a state of affairs *Z*. [...] A DM is therefore a relator that links a sequence to a state of affairs *Z*, which leads to the notation *p* DM *Z*.” (Franckel & Paillard 2008, 255).

The functional-pragmatic approach describes the role of DMs in the text or, more broadly, in the discourse. The main purpose of the semantic approach is to find formal (syntactic and prosodic) properties of DMs as a class of words that distinguish them from other classes of words. In the present issue Vladimirská's and Khachaturyan's papers are based on this approach, while the contributions from Bazzanella & Borreguero Zuloaga, Nome & Hobæk Haff, Lopez, and Fagard present different currents within the functional-pragmatic approach.

[2] ACQUISITION AND TRANSLATION OF DISCOURSE MARKERS

DMs are a very functional class of words: it is impossible to imagine communication without them. We all know the importance of organizing and structuring our discourse for successful communication. DMs play a crucial role in this process. But there are still not enough characteristics explaining how to use these words or the differences between words of the same function.

Moreover, there is the currently ubiquitous tendency towards the universal. It underlies the latest studies on “eurocomprehension” (EuroCom project: Klein 2004), which teaches you in a few months to read newspapers and even to speak in languages that belong to the same family. The only problem that persists is the DMs: it is difficult to learn their correct use and often difficult to understand and to translate them, as they are seemingly equivalent but functionally very differ-

[2] The differing terminology is one of the formal problems connected with DMs and accepted by all the researchers working in this field.

[3] Actually, a great variety of definitions are also proposed in the studies on DMs.

[4] This approach is based on the Theory of Enunciative Operations (Théorie des opérations énonciatives) of A. Culioli (1990, 1999). It is not presented in the recent collective volumes dedicated to DMs (e.g. Fischer 2006), but many publications have been produced in the last twenty years (e.g. Kisseleva & Paillard 1994, Paillard 1999, 2000).

[5] The term and definition of *scope* comes from logic: an operator's scope is that part of the enunciation on which it performs its action.

ent.

Bazzanella & Boreguero Zuloaga's contribution is dedicated to the acquisition of DMs. These authors examine one Italian and one Spanish discourse marker (*allora* and *entonces*) that are seemingly equivalent, but that have some important differences that explain the difficulties in the acquisition by the Spanish learners of the L2 Italian. Nome & Hobæk Haff's analysis describes the French discourse marker *donc* and its Norwegian equivalents, demonstrating the advantages of the contrastive approach and the importance of translation analysis.

[3] FORMATION OF DISCOURSE MARKERS

There are many DMs that became DMs during the evolution in the process of grammaticalization (Hopper & Traugott 1993, Marchello-Nizia 1999). But why did the same starting point (i.e. Latin for Romance languages) lead to such different results? Fagard's paper proposes a possible answer to this question. Through a diachronic study of a discourse marker of the same form in four Romance languages (the French *in effect* and its formal equivalents in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese), his analysis explains the differences that exist between these markers in modern languages.

Moreover, it is well known that one of the properties of the class of DMs is its heterogeneity (e.g. Bazzanella 1995, 2006). Most DMs also have another status in the modern language: *bien* (Fr.) is also an adverb; *guarda* (It.) is a verb (imperative form, 2 pers. sing); *bueno* (Sp.) is an adjective; *you know* is a combination of a pronoun and a verb; and so forth. On the synchronic level, we can ask ourselves why the same forms evolve into DMs with different functions. Khachaturyan tries to answer to this question: she explains differences between the formally equivalent Italian and French DMs (i.e. *dison* – *diciamo*) by analysing the lexeme of the origin, i.e. the verbum dicendi (*dire*).

[4] SEMANTICS AND FUNCTIONS OF DISCOURSE MARKERS

The main question that the study of DMs tries to answer concerns the functions of the DM (in terms of the functional-pragmatic approach). Or alternatively, what kind of discourse status is given to the scope (according to the contextual-semantic approach)? In trying to answer these questions, Lopez' contribution examines a Portuguese polyfunctional discourse marker *afinal* from a pragmatic point of view, while Vladimirska's analysis describes the differences between two French discourse markers, *bien entendu* et *naturellement*, formulating them in terms of the contextual-semantic approach.

REFERENCES

- Aijmer, K., and A.M. Simon-Vandenberg. 2006. *Pragmatic markers in contrast*, vol. Studies in Pragmatics 2. Elsevier.
- Bazzanella, C. 1995. I segnali discorsivi. In *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*, ed. L. Renzi, G. Salvi, and A. Cardinaletti, vol. III, 225–257. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- . 2006. Discourse markers in Italian: Towards a “compositional” meaning. In *Approaches to discourse markers*, ed. K. Fisher, vol. Studies in Pragmatics 1., 449–464. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Culioli, A. 1990, 1999. *Pour une linguistique de l'énonciation*, vol. 1-2-3. Paris: Editions Ophrys.
- Ducrot, O. et al. 1980. *Les mots du discours*. Paris: Minuit.
- Fischer, K. 2006. *Approaches to discourse markers*, vol. Studies in Pragmatics 1. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Franckel, J.J., and D. Paillard. 2008. Mots du discours: Adéquation et Point de vue. L'exemple de 'réellement', 'en réalité', 'en effet', 'effectivement'. In *Estudos linguísticos / linguistic studies 2*, ed. H. T. Valentim and B. Moreira, 255–274. Lisboa: Edições Colibri / CLUNL.
- Fraser, B. 1990. An approach to discourse markers. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(3): 383–398.
- Hopper, P.J., and E.C. Traugott. 2003. *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kisseleva, K., and D. Paillard, eds. 1998. *Diskursivnije slova russkogo jazika. (Les Mots du discours du russe : essai de description sémantico-contextuelle)*. Moskva: Metatekst.
- Klein, H.G. 2004. L'eurocompréhension (EuroCom), une méthode de compréhension des langues voisines. *Accès aux langues proches et aux langues voisines. Coordonné par J.M. Robert. Revue de didactologie des langues-cultures et de lexiculurologie* 136:403–418.
- Marchello-Nizia, C. 1999. Language evolution and semantic representations: A case study of the evolution from “subjectivity” to “objectivity” in French. In *Language Diversity and Cognitive Representations*, ed. C. Fuchs and S. Robert, 53 ff. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Paillard, D. 1998, 2000. Les mots du discours comme mots de la langue I et II. *Le Gré des langues* 14 & 16.

Pons Bordería, S. 2006. A Functional Approach for the Study of Discourse Markers. In *Approaches to discourse particles*, ed. K. Fisher, vol. Studies in Pragmatics 1, 77–100. Elsevier.

Schiffrin, D. 1988. *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Van Dijk, T.A. 1979. Pragmatic connectives. *Journal of Pragmatics* 3(5):447–456.

AUTHOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Elizaveta Khachaturyan

University of Oslo

Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages

Postboks 1003, Blindern

N-0315 Oslo

Norway

elizaveta.khachaturyan@ilos.uio.no