

SDV Vol.30.1-2-2006

SDV. Sprache und Datenverarbeitung
International Journal for Language Data Processing
Heft 1-2/2006

Inhalt

Alonso i Alemany, Laura & Henk Zeevat

Introduction

Romero, Maribel

Biased Yes/No Questions: The Role of VERUM

McCready, Eric

Japanese Yo: Its Semantics and Pragmatics

Gutiérrez-Rexach, Javier

Discourse Particles, Quantification and Multi-Dimensional Meaning

Tsoulas, George & Artemis Alexiadou

On the Grammar of the Greek Particle *Re*. A preliminary investigation

Corcu, Demet

Analysis of Discourse Particles *Zaten* and *Ya* in Relation to the Informational Structure

Paillard, Denis

Discourse words in Russian. The case of *voobščē* and *v obščem*

González, Montserrat

Tag-Markers in Evaluative Segments

Lam, Phoenix

Well but that's the effect of it: The use of *well* as a discourse particle in talk shows

Nyan, Thanh

Discourse markers and the decision-making process

Eberhardt, Alexandra

Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten im Internet: mittels chat oder causette im forum oder per newsgroup – französische Gespräche im „cyber(e)space“

Wagner, Daniela

Strategien der Verständnissicherung in virtuellen Teams

Wollermann, Charlotte

Vergleichende Evaluation der linguistischen Leistungsfähigkeit von Langenscheidts T1 Professional 6.0 und Linguatecs Personal Translator 2006 pro

Abstracts

Introduction

Autor:

Alonso i Alemany, Laura & Henk Zeevat

Aufsatztitel:

Introduction

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

5-7

Abstract:

Discourse particles form an important borderline case in semantics, pragmatics and syntax and can be the source of new insights in these areas. Formal descriptions of their meaning and use are difficult and controversial and seem to involve more dimensions than are usually taken into account in semantics and pragmatics. Under the assumption that the main function of particles is to enlarge the space of possible speech acts, their formal treatment involves creating presuppositions, introducing implicatures, overriding implicatures of the matrix speech act and changing the epistemic and bouletic modalities typically associated with speech acts.

Historical linguistics and linguistic typology provide insightful data and may contribute significantly to the understanding of discourse particles. Studies of semantic maps and grammaticalisation paths in the area of modality, tense and contrast have helped understanding particle meanings. A central and difficult question is to understand what it is about normal human communication that causes the recruitment of adverbials in their new role of discourse particles.

The study of particles promises to contribute to two areas in computational linguistics. The generation of high quality natural language texts and achieving natural interaction styles in natural language interfaces cannot do without the use of particles and thus needs far more insight in the triggering conditions of the particles than is currently available. In discourse

understanding, elusive concepts like rhetorical relations and discourse structure do not seem to be feasible without a proper grasp of the function of the particles in these areas. The papers in this volume were part of a workshop held in the University of Barcelona in April 2005, in succession to the workshop at the ESSLLI Summer School in Vienna in 2002. The aim of the workshop was contribute to a common understanding of the current possibilities for the formal explanation of the nature of these linguistic items in indicating speech acts and discourse structure. To that aim, different perspectives on the theory and implementation of discourse particles and similar devices (tag questions, modal auxiliaries, etc.) are presented.

The papers cover a wide range of formal approaches to discourse particles, from dealing with previously undescribed particles to discussing various alternatives for the explanation of particles with an extensive record of studies, with some empirical studies of actual behaviour in real corpora.

CORCU, PAILLARD and TSOULAS & ALEXIADOU provide a description of the usage of some particles in Turkish, Russian and Greek, respectively, and propose a formal explanation of their semantics and pragmatics.

On the other hand, GUTIERREZ-REXACH, MCCREADY and ROMERO present extensive formal accounts of discourse particles in Spanish, Japanese and English, discussing various alternatives.

GONZALEZ and LAM present corpus studies of discourse particles, adopting and to some extent refining some of the premises of well-established theories of discourse.

Finally, NYAN explains the function of discourse particles in language as constraints within a general theory of decision-making in human interaction.

ROMERO proposes an analysis of information-seeking yes/no questions through an operator that explains the epistemic bias on the speaker's side, introduced by particles like "really" or preposed negation. She argues that this explanation is more adequate than previous proposals (esp. Van Rooy 2003) discussed in the paper. MCCREADY attempts a formal explanation of the Japanese sentence-final particle "yo" within the framework of dynamic semantic analysis, incorporating the widely accepted intuitions that this kind of particle marks new information and emphasizes the sentence they appear in. He goes on further to explain modal uses of "yo" compositionally, by making use of underspecification at the discourse level.

GUTIERREZ-REXACH also develops a compositional analysis for a class of contrastive / reformulative discourse particles of Spanish, of the form "de + quantifier + noun", and predicts how their binding relationships vary depending on their syntactic position.

TSOULAS and ALEXIADOU present a description of the particle "re" in Greek, which had never studied from a formal perspective. They provide a detailed description of the distribution of the particle and its effects in the meaning of its matrix sentence. They show that it has complicated interactions at different levels of grammatical organisation, and propose an initial account of its behaviour within a minimalist framework.

CORCU also presents a descriptive study of the Turkish discourse particles "zaten" and "ya", and proposes a two-layered description of their function. The effects of these two particles are explained as an interaction with sentential information structure (VallduvÌ 1992). PAILLARD describes two discourse particles in Russian (voobšče and v obščem), and proposes to reduce the explanation of their multiple usages by factorising their meaning to a core meaning and four levels of variation, grounding on formal criteria (scope, prosodic break up of the particle, position).

GONZALEZ presents the analysis in an oral corpus of two Catalan discourse markers – "eh" and "no" – that are used in tag questions, relying on Sander's (1997) notion of source of coherence – semantic vs. pragmatic – as the basic distinction for the description of the pragmatic functions of the markers. LAM tries to describe the usage of the English particle

“well” by non-native speakers, namely Hong Kong Chinese speakers with English as a second language. She describes the uses of this particle in a large oral corpus of a TV current affairs talk show. Results show that “well” fulfils a wide range of functions, in contrast with the prevalent view in the Hong Kong educational setting that discourse particles are a sign of non-fluent speech. Important conclusions for the status of discourse particles in second language learning are put forward.

Finally, NYAN explains certain French discourse markers (*toujours*, *mais*, *justement*, *maintenant*) within the processing of argumentative discourse considered as a goal-oriented activity. Discourse markers are regarded as instructions or constraints that increase the efficiency of the decision-making process leading to the identification of a given proposal for action.

References

- Sanders, T. (1997): Semantic and Pragmatic Sources of Coherence: On the Categorization of Coherence Relations in Context. In: Spooren, W. and Risselada, R. (eds): *Discourse Processes*, Volume 24, Special Issue on Discourse Markers. Greenwich: Connecticut. Ablex Publishing Corporation, 119–147.
- Vallduví, E. (1992): *The Informational Component*. London: Garland.
- van Rooy, Robert (2003): Negative polarity items in questions: Strength as relevance. In: *Journal of Semantics* 20: 239–273.

Biased Yes/No Questions: The Role of VERUM

Autor:

Romero, Maribel

Aufsatztitel:

Biased *Yes/No* Questions: The Role of VERUM

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

09-24

Abstract:

Some information-seeking *yes/no* (*yn*)-questions convey an epistemic bias of the speaker. Examples are questions with the particle *really* (e.g., *Did he really bring a present?*), negative questions with preposed negation (e.g., *Doesn't John drink?*), and in some contexts even regular questions (e.g., *Is it raining?*). The goal of this paper is to compare two main approaches to biased *yn*-questions – the VERUM approach and the Decision Theory approach – and to argue that, while certain formal notions from Decision Theory are important, the

operator VERUM is needed to derive the full range of data. Furthermore, the paper explores the behavior of VERUM and *really* as expressive items.

Japanese Yo: Its Semantics and Pragmatics

Autor:

McCready, Eric

Aufsatztitel:

Japanese *Yo*: Its Semantics and Pragmatics

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

25-34

Abstract:

This paper presents an analysis of the Japanese sentence-final particle *yo* in a dynamic modal semantics. The particle is argued to have an underspecified meaning dependent in part on discourse structure and causal relations.

Introduction and Overview

This paper takes a formal approach to the semantics and pragmatics of the Japanese sentence-final particle *yo*, an example of which is shown in (1).

- (1) Taroo-ga kita yo
Taro-NOM came YO
'Taro came.'

Yo is one of the class of Japanese particles known as the *sirase* 'notification' particles (cf. Masuoka and Takubo 1989), along with *zo* and *ze*. The *sirase* particles are said to mark new information and further emphasize the sentence they appear in, in some sense making it stronger. I will combine these two facts about *yo* in a dynamic semantic analysis. The paper begins with a consideration of some facts and relevant data about *yo*. I then, in section 3, present the formal framework I use in my analysis: a dynamic system involving sets of epistemic possibilities based on the semantics of Asher and McCready (2004). The final part of the paper considers another use of *yo* on which it has a modal interpretation; I show that this interpretation constitutes a nonlocal dependency on other parts of the discourse, and that it can be handled compositionally by making use of underspecification at the discourse level.

Discourse Particles, Quantification and Multi-Dimensional Meaning

Autor:

Gutiérrez-Rexach, Javier

Aufsatztitel:

Discourse Particles, Quantification and Multi-Dimensional Meaning

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

35-46

Abstract:

Following recent trends in the formal analysis of discourse particles, a group of counter-argumentative/reformulative Spanish discourse particles is analyzed as a structured class comprising three types of adverbs of quantification, with universal, existential or negative force. Several arguments are presented in support of this hypothesis, as well as of the claim that these particles are associated with distinctive constraints at the levels of descriptive and expressive meaning.

On the Grammar of the Greek Particle Re. A preliminary investigation

Autor:

Tsoulas, George & Artemis Alexiadou

Aufsatztitel:

On the Grammar of the Greek Particle Re. A preliminary investigation

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

47-56

Abstract:

This paper is an proposes an initial investigation of the syntax semantics and pragmatics of the particle *Re* in Greek. *Re* is a very common particle in familiar spoken discourse. We show in the this paper that this particle is worthy of in depth investigation as it seems to have a significant impact on the focus structure of the sentences where it occurs but most importantly also it affects the scope of indefinites. Thus a discourse only theory as has been advocated for other similar particles seems not enough. We offer here various pointers at possible analyses at the different required levels.

Analysis of Discourse Particles *Zaten* and *Ya* in Relation to the Informational Structure

Abstract leider nicht vorhanden.

Discourse words in Russian. The case of *voobščē* and *v obščem*

Autor:

Paillard, Denis

Aufsatztitel:

Discourse words in Russian. The case of *voobščē* and *v obščem*

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

69-81

Abstract:

In this paper, I give a description of two Russian discourse words (DW) *voobščē* and *v obščem*, standing for two types of discursive semantics: the semantics of “adequacy” and the semantics of “point of view”. A theoretical framework is proposed, in which the contribution of the DW to the utterance meaning is divided into two interrelated aspects: a core meaning and four levels of variation. The different uses of *voobščē* and *v obščem* result from the

unfolding of the core meaning according to various factors of variation.

The wide range of terms such as particles, connectors, connectives, pragmatic markers, discourse markers, discourse words (DW), etc can be partly related to theoretical and methodological choices, resulting in different data taken into account. We will therefore discuss for a start the specificities of our own approach, compared to others.

The pattern of communication underlying most of the research works on the DW (in particular those coming under the theory of relevance) take it for granted that communication should be analysed through its final natural purpose, namely the way it is interpreted by the addressee. Communication is required to attain the goal of fully achieved interpretation.

Success and efficiency are therefore taken as the core of the analysis. It must be admitted, though, that recent works on vagueness in conversation call into question some aspects of such a conception (cf. « the addressee may be able to make sense of the speaker's word even if this is not the sense intended by the speaker, Jücker et alii, 2003, p. 1743).

Our conception of the language activity as production and recognition of texts (generic term for any type of written or oral verbal production) is based on the notion of regulation and mutual fitting process (adjustment) between autonomous subjects, which can be summed up by the set phrase: "if you see what I mean" (in French: "si tu vois ce que je veux dire par là"). Interlocution is also the right and capacity to refuse the interlocution, or to break it, or to distort the frame of the dialogue, or to seek an agreement on another ground than that set up for a start. Duplicity, rhetorical strategy, failure, lies, are an integral part of the communication and should not be reduced to mere deviation.

Tag-Markers in Evaluative Segments

Autor:

González, Montserrat

Aufsatztitel:

Tag-Markers in Evaluative Segments

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

83-98

Abstract:

Pragmatic markers (PMs) set up pragmatic coherence relations which are text genre and context specific. In this paper I particularly concentrate on the role of two tag-markers that mostly appear in internal evaluation segments: Catalan *no* and *eh*. I will discuss their role in coherence relations terms (in the Ideational, Rhetorical, Sequential and Inferential components). The text within which these elements are framed - Labov's (1972) narrative - is a genre that shows structural regularities at both discourse and clause levels (abstract, orientation, developing of action, evaluation -internal and external- result and coda). This study follows the line of research on discourse structure developed mainly by Redeker (1990,

1991), Grosz and Sidner (1986, 1989), and Polanyi (1985). Sander's (1997) notion of source of coherence - semantic vs pragmatic- provides the ground for the description of the pragmatic functions attached to the markers. My main hypothesis is that PMs help in the organization of textual segments and that certain markers are bound to occur at particular segments. Similarly, because of their structural function, some markers will be systematically found at particular segment boundaries.

Well but that's the effect of it: The use of well as a discourse particle in talk shows

Autor:

Lam, Phoenix

Aufsatztitel:

Well but that's the effect of it: The use of well as a discourse particle in talk shows

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

99-108

Abstract:

Discourse particles have been a topic of interest in the research community for decades. Despite the vast number of scholarly outputs dedicated to this area, it appears that little has been done on the use of discourse particles by non-native speakers. This paper attempts to address this largely neglected issue by examining the use of well as a discourse particle by Hong Kong Chinese speakers of English in a series of a TV current affairs talk show. Results show that contrary to the prevalent view in the Hong Kong educational setting that discourse particles are a sign of dysfluent speech, the discourse particle well in the data fulfils a wide range of functions which are crucial for participants to sail through different situations. This raises the question whether the status of discourse particles in second language learning, if they have any, should be re-assessed.

Discourse markers and the decision-making process

Autor:

Nyan, Thanh

Aufsatztitel:

Discourse markers and the decision-making process

Jahrgang:

30

Heft:

01 (2006)

Seiten:

109-118

Abstract:

Argumentative discourse, as a goal oriented activity, would seek to induce in the Respondent a decision-making process leading to the identification of a given proposition. The role played by certain discourse markers in this process is one of increasing processing efficiency. How they achieve this is by means of coded instructions (or constraints) levelled at various stages of the decision-making process

Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten im Internet: mittels chat oder causette im forum oder per newsgroup – französische Gespräche im „cyber(e)space“

Abstract leider nicht vorhanden.

Strategien der Verständnissicherung in virtuellen Teams

Abstract leider nicht vorhanden.

Vergleichende Evaluation der linguistischen Leistungsfähigkeit von Langenscheidts T1 Professional 6.0 und LINGUATECS Personal Translator 2006 pro

Abstract leider nicht vorhanden.