Introduction

Elizabeth Peterson, Turo Hiltunen, and Joseph Kern

Work in the area known as discourse-pragmatic variation and change (see Pichler 2016b) occupies a natural position between linguistics and pragmatics and the interactional and structural aspects of language, making use of methods and concepts spanning several subfields of linguistics (see Östman, Foreword, this volume). Discourse-pragmatic features, by definition, are themselves multiplex, multifunctional, context-dependent parts of language. By *discourse-pragmatic features*, we refer to an unlimited but delineated set of features consisting of *discourse markers*, *pragmatic particles*, *discourse particles*, and so on but also other elements that fulfill pragmatic functions: epistemic parentheticals, quotatives, general extenders, consequence markers, politeness markers, intensifiers, and filled pauses – all of which are highlighted in the present volume. The volume offers a contemporary incarnation of a robust and thriving research area, showcasing the work of well-established experts along with a fresh slate of researchers, addressing perennial as well as newly encountered issues relating to discourse-pragmatic research.

In this introduction to the volume, we first contextualize the field of discourse-pragmatic variation and change and then move on to describe the format of the volume and some of its major contributions. We then offer a short overview of each of the volume's thirteen chapters. The introduction ends by presenting some of the major implications of the body of work in this volume, with comments about how work in the area can continue. In the Afterword to this volume, Heike Pichler examines in further detail how the field has expanded and continues to expand.

Background

The field of discourse-pragmatic variation and change picks up a thread of variation research that was lifted to scrutiny in relation to the groundbreaking work in variationist sociolinguistics in the 1960s and 1970s (notably, Labov 1963, 1966, 1972a, whose work is cited numerous times in this volume). As is now well established, variationist sociolinguistics tends to primarily be motivated by explorations of phonological and morphosyntactic variables. Many

contributions of the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., Lavandera 1978; Dines 1980) were concerned with the inclusion of discourse-pragmatic features within the overall consensus of defining a sociolinguistic variable – which became established as "two or more ways of saying the same thing" (Weiner and Labov 1983: 30). Discourse-pragmatic features clearly do not fit neatly in this characterization because, among other issues, they are (arguably) optional elements – unlike, say, vowels or consonants.

As highlighted in Jan-Ola Östman's Foreword to this volume, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a spate of research on discourse-pragmatic features from differing perspectives, different academic disciplines, and with even widely divergent basic definitions. For example, the 1980s and 1990s showed a wealth of contributions from researchers more oriented toward pragmatics and discourse (e.g., Östman 1981; Schourup 1983; Erman 1987; Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1999), issuing important insights, for example, about the structural versus interactional functions of discourse-pragmatic features. At the same time, the field of conversation analysis made strides showing the interpersonal and turn-structuring aspects of discourse-pragmatic features (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Jefferson 1991; Sacks 1995; Schegloff 2007). During the same period, historical linguists traced how, for example, lexical items can grammaticalize into discourse-pragmatic features (e.g., Traugott 1982, 1995; Erman 1987; Tottie 1991; Brinton 1996; Aijmer 2002). Alongside all of these contributions were a small but steady band of variationist sociolinguists who continued to push the boundary of what was meant by "sociolinguistic variable," offering measured and convincing perspectives on various discourse-pragmatic features, including general extenders, quotatives, and intensifiers (among many other features; e.g., Cheshire 1981, 2007; Dubois 1992; Tagliamonte 2005; D'Arcy 2005; Buchstaller 2006).

Building on this wealth of perspectives and insights, Heike Pichler (see Afterword, this volume) founded the Discourse-Pragmatic Variation and Change (DiPVaC) research network in 2012 and hosted the first two conferences devoted to this research topic. Pichler's (2010, 2013, 2016a) research contributions – including advancing the cover term *discourse-pragmatic feature* – ushered in a holistic approach to how we approach and work with discourse-pragmatic variables, essentially bringing together the distinct strands that have contributed (and continue to contribute) to how we work with these aspects of language. Indeed, a strength of discourse-pragmatic research is its openness to methods, perspectives, and even the variables of focus. This volume demonstrates that researchers of discourse-pragmatic variation and change are able to operate in different modes but with complementary and equally valuable outcomes.

Aims and Scope

This volume showcases contemporary research in the growing and thriving research area of discourse-pragmatic variation and change. A key aim of this volume is to demonstrate the multiple, integrative threads of research that contribute to the overall quality and robustness of the field. A look at the chapters reveals a number of perspectives, data sources, languages of analysis, areas of focus, and, importantly, breakthroughs and critiques with regard to method, analysis, and theoretical underpinnings. While the overall theme of the volume is rooted in discourse-pragmatic variation and change, scholars from a wide range of disciplines will find topics of interest in this book. These disciplines include, for example, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, conversation analysis, second language acquisition, corpus linguistics, and language contact.

In a departure from the bulk of the work done on discourse-pragmatic variation (see, e.g., Pichler 2016a), this volume offers a number of chapters making use of data from languages other than English – including Finnish, (several varieties of) Canadian French/French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Brazilian Portuguese, Polish, and Spanish – as well as language contact situations. While a few chapters focus on standardized, norm-providing varieties of English, several others use data from less mainstream varieties of English, including regional varieties of Canada, Ireland, Australia, and the UK.

The volume highlights a range of approaches to data, including corpora, conversations, elicitation tasks, and matched guise tests – and even diachronic perspectives. Chapter 11, for example, by Blondeau, Mougeon, and Tremblay, offers a forty-year overview on changes in the use of consequence markers in two different regions of francophone Canada. The collection of variable features explored in this volume is vast yet well-centered around the main theme, including now-classic features such as *you know* and quotatives, as well as advancing our understanding of elements such as *totally*, *is all*, *uh* vs. *um*, and *please* (the latter as an example of a borrowing into Norwegian and Finnish).

The methodological and theoretical concerns addressed in this volume cannot be understated. While Part I of the book is devoted specifically to innovations in theory and method, breakthroughs are not limited to the four chapters comprising this section. Subsequent chapters take on issues such as the Principle of Accountability (Labov 1972b; see also Gadanidis and Denis, Chapter 7; Diskin-Holdaway, Chapter 9; and Peterson, Hiltunen, and Vaattovaara, Chapter 13, this volume), the role of interactional turns in accounting for discourse-pragmatic variation (Eiswirth, Chapter 8), and the use of discourse-pragmatic features in a second language (Diskin-Holdaway, Chapter 9) and among bilingual speakers (Kern, Chapter 10).

Terminology

The title of this book, *Discourse-Pragmatic Variation and Change: Theory, Innovations, Contact* reflects that, importantly, the name used to describe this overall research effort is, in fact, discourse-pragmatic variation and change. We treat this as an umbrella term encompassing interrelated and complementary avenues of research (following Pichler 2016a, 2016b, and others). While the term *discourse-pragmatic feature* is considered an "alternative, conceptually more neutral label" (Pichler 2016b: 3) than previous more nuanced – and contested – terms, the editors of this volume did not instruct individual authors to adhere strictly to the use of the term *discourse-pragmatic feature* in their own writing (although some did). Authors were encouraged to utilize terms that best expressed the core meaning of their own focal point of investigation. Readers will notice a range of terms all falling under the general rubric of *discourse-pragmatic feature*, but in each instance the authors have defined and delineated their own perspective on the feature in question.

Organization and Overview

In many ways, this volume has the luxury of presenting key works in a field of research that is already flourishing; there was no need to lay out the basic principles, which have been treated in previous work (e.g., Pichler 2016a). The contributions to this volume have been selected around three main themes, to illustrate the growth of this thriving field. Part I of the book, titled "Innovations in Theory and Method," comprises four chapters that address, in turn, theoretical questions, methodological questions, and issues of reliability relating to claims about language change and cross-linguistic annotation schemes. In Chapter 1, Denis makes an example of epistemic parentheticals (e.g., *I think, I suppose*) to investigate claims about the constant rate hypothesis of language change. Chapter 2, by Schleef and Mackay, uses matched guise techniques as a perception test to investigate a relatively neutral feature, *you know*, enabling them to draw conclusions about its social versus pragmatic functions. In Chapter 3, Levey, Kastronic, Digesto, and Chiasson, in the only investigation of quotatives in this volume, explore data from three varieties of French in addition to Brazilian Portuguese and Italian, determining the supposed influence from English is not always confirmed – and thereby calling into question the role of intuition and assumptions made by researchers to explain change. Chapter 4, which rounds out this section, offers a perspective from Degand, Broisson, Crible, and Grzech, demonstrating a system for annotating and thereby comparing the functions and use of discourse markers in four different languages: French, Spanish, English, and Polish.

Part II of the book, "Innovative Variables in English," carries on the tradition of exploring discourse-pragmatic features in varieties of the English language but either focusing on those not often encountered in the literature or offering a new position on previously documented features. For example, the first chapter in this section, by Kolbe-Hanna and Brinton (Chapter 5), offers a corpus-based synchronic and diachronic overview of sentence-final *is all*, a feature chiefly noted in US English from the twentieth century onward. In Chapter 6, Aijmer offers the only study of intensifiers in this volume, focusing on the adoption of *totally* in UK English. Hers is largely a grammatical exploration, looking at the different contexts in which *totally* occurs. In Chapter 7, Gadanidis and Denis simultaneously offer an account of the distribution of *uh* and *um* in Canadian English, while using this description as a means of defending a normalization approach to counting discourse-pragmatic features. The final chapter of this section, by Eiswirth (Chapter 8), offers the most overt stance in the volume on the merits of employing interactional turns in conversation as units of analysis, including statistical analysis. In doing so, Eiswirth describes an underexplored feature: listener responses in interaction.

Finally, the Part III of the book offers insights into a research area not previously encountered in a dedicated fashion in the literature on discourse-pragmatic variation: "Language Contact." Here, the notion of language contact is broad enough in scope to account for at least four different phenomena: the (English) second language acquisition of immigrant communities, individual bilingual speakers of US Spanish and US English, long-standing community level contact between Canadian French and Canadian English, and, in the final two chapters of the volume, the remote language contact relationship of English with Norwegian and Finnish, respectively. In Chapter 9, Diskin-Holdaway looks at immigrant communities in two different English-speaking areas: Ireland and Australia. Her chapter is one of two in the volume that focuses on *you know*. Chapter 10, by Kern, offers an unusual perspective on so-called balanced bilinguals, meaning bilinguals who are equally proficient in two or more languages. He finds, much like Levey, Kastronic, Digesto, and Chiasson (Chapter 3), that influence from English is negligible in how general extenders are used in the Spanish discourse of the individuals he recorded. Chapter 11, by Blondeau, Mougeon, and Tremblay, is a rare study of the same communities – in this case French-speaking communities in Canada – over a span of forty years. Through their longitudinal study, the authors were able to confirm the hypothesis that synchronic variation from the 1970s offered insights into where the use of consequence markers was headed. In Chapter 12, Andersen offers the first corpus-based exploration of how English-sourced politeness markers are used in Norwegian. In the final chapter of the volume, Chapter 13, Peterson, Hiltunen and Vaattovaara demonstrate the

limitations of using only one type of data for research on discourse-pragmatic features, especially an elicitation task. In their exploration of *pliis* "please" in Finnish, they underline the context-sensitivity of discourse-pragmatic features and the need for mixed methods.

In addition to thirteen chapters, the volume draws additional insights from the reflections of Östman (Foreword) and Pichler (Afterword). As a founding contributor to the literature on discourse-pragmatic features with his groundbreaking work on *you know*, Östman offers an informed perspective on the philosophies and intentions that led to the current state of the field. As a final note in the Foreword, Östman reminds us that discourse-pragmatic variation is imbued with speaker responsibility, which extends to us as researchers of these features. In the Afterword, Pichler identifies and elaborates on priorities for discourse-pragmatic variation and change research in the future, in addition to offering reflections and critiques of the chapters in this volume.

Descriptions of Chapters

While the previous section distilled some of the highlights of the different sections of the book, the following section offers a brief description of each of the volume's thirteen chapters. This was deemed a necessary tool for readers, given that the chapters comprise a relatively heterogeneous set of backgrounds and perspectives.

Part I: Innovations in Theory and Method

Chapter 1, by Denis, tackles the bold aim of investigating the observation that pragmatic markers primarily develop through the gradual grammaticalization of lexical items. Using data from Canadian English, Denis makes use mostly of epistemic parentheticals (e.g., *I think*, *I suppose*, *I guess*) to demonstrate that their grammaticalization process is not necessarily gradual but rather can be seen as a sequence of abrupt changes, mirroring the claims made by Kroch (1989, 1994) regarding morphosyntactic change in English. Based on these observations, Denis outlines a schematic conceptualization of systems of change that involve upward reanalysis (in line with Roberts and Roussou 2003). He proposes that the chief meaning of *I think*, from propositional to expressive, has been abrupt – not gradual. Denis tackles some evasive elements of what we know about variation and change, and he spins them in a new light, observing the measures of position, doxastic strength, grammatical subject, and time.

Chapter 2, by Schleef and Mackay, makes an important methodological contribution by demonstrating the use of an innovative audio matched guise experiment to investigate the perceptions of *you know* in the English spoken in

the Manchester, UK, area. This chapter, one of two studies of *you know* in the volume, offers an additional methodological contribution in its aims to compare discourse without *you know* versus discourse with *you know*, thereby offering additional validity to previous claims about this particular discourse-pragmatic feature. The authors find that perceptions of *you know* are relatively weak, thereby making it an example of a pragmatic marker that does not elicit overtly negative biases. Likewise, *you know* is not associated with any particular social groups. Some findings from the study indicate that use of *you know* is associated with features such as lack of formality, untrustworthiness, and less precision, although the authors argue that interpretations of the social values of *you know* are best considered in its immediate discourse context. Because it does not vary socially, the authors pose that the chief task of *you know* is pragmatic.

The first of two corpus-based, cross-linguistic studies in the volume, Chapter 3, by Levey, Kastronic, Digesto, and Chiasson, focuses on three varieties of French, with additional insight gained from Brazilian Portuguese and Italian data. In light of the extensive amount of work on quotative systems, the authors address a pertinent and timely issue: the possibility that English is a source of cross-linguistic influence in the quotative systems of other languages. The authors conduct a comparison of the quotative systems of three varieties of French (Quebec, Acadian, and European) in addition to the two additional Romance languages. The results of the comparison essentially show that claims of widespread changes in quotative systems are overstated. The Quebec and Acadian French varieties show evidence of change that may be attributed to contact with English (namely, *être comme*), but the other languages and varieties investigated demonstrate a paucity of such evidence. Based on their evidence, the authors call into question the practice of linguistic researchers who rely on intuition to explain change rather than relying on empirical evidence.

Like Chapter 3, Chapter 4 is a cross-linguistic study, focusing on four different languages from three different language families. The authors, Degand, Broisson, Crible, and Grzech, take on the much-needed call to supply insights into reliable, cross-linguistically applicable discourse marker annotation schemes. They supply a validity test of a two-dimensional annotation scheme for the domains and functions of discourse markers across the four spoken languages (English, French, Polish, and Spanish). Their analysis shows that the model can be applied to all four languages in the sample and accurately depicts the polyfunctional behavior of discourse markers, allowing for fine-grained observations of polysemy (several functions) and polyfunctionality (several domains). The researchers found that all four languages made use of discourse markers to structure language, with differences in the frequency of discourse markers for interpersonal purposes. The main aim of the chapter is to

offer insights and annotation schemes for other researchers to find the balance between methodological elegance and cognitive soundness. As they state in their introduction, "*how* we use DMs [discourse markers] is a crucial step in finding out *why* we use them."

Part II: Innovative Variables in English

Chapter 5, by Kolbe-Hanna and Brinton, offers an up-to-date analysis of the English discourse-pragmatic feature *is all*, a form that emerged in sentence-final position in early twentieth-century American English. Using corpus data, the authors demonstrate the main uses and meanings of this innovative form, showing that speakers seem to use *is all* to close a topic and to distance themselves from an unwanted interpretation of the preceding utterance, among other functions. In their historical overview of the form, the authors propose that sentence-final *is all* derives from processes of phonological reduction and deletion with subsequent reanalysis – not, as previous accounts have postulated, a shortening of a longer construction such as *that is all I say/mean*.

In Chapter 6, Aijmer conducts a corpus analysis of the innovative emphasizer *totally* in UK English, with the hypothesis that its use has diversified in the past two decades. The purpose of this chapter is to establish a baseline of the syntactic, social, and pragmatic properties of a "new" *totally* in UK English in the 2010s, as demonstrated through the Spoken British National Corpus 2014 (BNC2014S) as compared to data from the original British National Corpus (BNC1994D). In addition to looking at structural properties, the chapter also reports on social factors such as age and gender, offering information on the social meanings of *totally*. Aijmer offers a comprehensive overview of *totally* across different grammatical settings, including as a modifier of adjectives, verbs, negatives, noun phrases, and prepositional phrases, and as a discourse marker. In fact, she finds that the most dramatic change taking place during the twenty-year period under investigation is the expansion of *totally* to the area of pragmatics and discourse.

In Chapter 7, Gadanidis and Denis investigate the use of *uh* and *um* as manifestations of filled pauses in Canadian English (the Farm Work and Farm Life Since 1890 oral history collection of the Earlier Ontario English Collection), using their investigation as a means of defending the use of normalization as an approach to gaining representativity in analyzing discourse-pragmatic features. Namely, like Eiswirth in Chapter 8, the authors propose that statistical methods including Poisson regression can disentangle social and linguistic constraints on variation. While the first stage of their analysis demonstrated a loss in proportional frequency of *um* compared to *uh*, a second stage of analysis, applying Poisson regression, enabled them to

determine that *um* is weighted for utterance-initial use, while *uh* is used elsewhere.

Eiswirth's contributions in Chapter 8 provide a new perspective in applying conversation analysis insights to investigations of quantitative analysis of discourse-pragmatic features, in direct response to calls from, for example, Pichler (2013) to make use of conversation analysis principles. The features under investigation in this chapter are non-interrupting listener responses (*I see*, *mm*, etc.). Eiswirth's data set comes from recorded conversations of English-speaking participants in Edinburgh. She incorporated innovative aspects such as the number of words in a turn to establish that variation of listener responses in the conversations are more revealing as variables than the social parameters of the individuals involved. In her overview, Eiswirth returns to a well-known concern for variationists: the Principle of Accountability, showing that achieving this aim can be effectively rooted in the turn-by-turn unfolding of everyday interaction.

Part III: Language Contact

In Chapter 9, Diskin-Holdaway's study is the only in the volume that highlights the speech of second-language learners. Her analysis of the discourse marker *you know* looks at two native speaker varieties of English (Irish and Australian English) and two non-native varieties of English (Polish and Chinese migrants in Ireland). While she argues that the salience of *you know* contributes to the frequent use of this form in non-native varieties of English, especially among Polish migrants, Diskin-Holdaway uncovers important differences in the functions that *you know* fulfills across native and non-native varieties. The native Irish English speakers favored the use of *you know* for interpersonal reasons (i.e., "pragmatic" uses), whereas non-native speakers preferred to use *you know* for "coherence" (i.e., discourse/structuring functions).

Kern's study in Chapter 10 is unique in this volume in its expressed focus on simultaneous bilingual speakers. Kern analyzes the use of general extenders among Spanish–English bilingual friends from southern Arizona. It was expected that general extenders would be susceptible to borrowing in a language contact situation similar to other discourse-pragmatic features, but contact with English did not appear to influence the use of general extenders in Spanish in the speech of the same Spanish–English bilinguals. As the first study to analyze the use of general extenders in both languages spoken by the same bilinguals, these results underline the ability of bilinguals to both understand and reproduce the subtleties of the use of these features in the two languages they speak.

In Chapter 11, Blondeau, Mougeon, and Tremblay offer a rare investigation of speech communities spanning a longitudinal overview of forty years. In addition, their contribution makes a comparison of two different francophone

populations in Canada. The focus of the authors' investigation is consequence markers, which they explore in two communities over two time periods: the French majority community of Montreal and the French minority community of Welland, using corpora from the 1970s and the 2010s. Their multivariate analysis permits them to assess the degree of convergence and divergence in the use of consequence markers between communities over a forty-year period. The majority and minority francophone communities were already diverging in the use of consequence markers in the 1970s, especially in the use of the English borrowing *so* in Welland, and this divergence further intensified in the 2010s. The authors conclude that the linguistic vitality of French plays an important role in the use of consequence markers in each of these communities.

The volume finishes with two chapters on remote language contact. In Chapter 12, Andersen assesses the use of domestic and borrowed discourse-pragmatic features to make requests and to apologize in Norwegian. His analysis demonstrates that domestic and borrowed forms are primarily used interchangeably (with the exception of *vær så snill* 'please') to show, among other functions, exasperation. Domestic and borrowed forms were used with both strong and weak commitment to the speech act they perform, although the illocutionary force of *please* in requests was stronger than that of similar forms in Norwegian, while the illocutionary force of *sorry* to apologize was weaker than that of its domestic counterparts.

Finally, in Chapter 13, Peterson, Hiltunen and Vaattovaara investigate the lexical politeness marker *pliis* 'please' as an example of a pragmatic borrowing in Finnish. As such, this is the only chapter in the volume to use data from a non-Indo-European language. Like Chapter 12, Chapter 13 is an investigation of remote language contact with English as a source language, considering the borrowed form *pliis* to be a variant of the heritage form *kiitos*. This chapter makes use of various data sources, including a so-called opportunistic corpus, in an attempt to offer a grounded and accountable picture of how the borrowed politeness marker, a relatively syntactically free element, is situated grammatically in Finnish, a typologically unrelated language.

Implications

Many insights are gained from the contributions to this volume, in terms of both application for future research in the area of discourse-pragmatic variation and change and our general understanding about how these features function in language and interaction. The work in this volume carries on established traditions, as well as introducing new topics for consideration.

There are several examples in this volume of following through on ongoing concerns in this field and related disciplines. One example treated in several chapters is the Principle of Accountability (Labov 1972b), which implies that