1   Introduction

1.1   General Extenders

We first wrote about general extenders more than twenty years ago (Overstreet and Yule, 1997a, b) and since then we have witnessed an explosion of studies and articles on the topic. The term "general extender" is used as a linguistic category label for a wide range of expressions with similar positional and compositional features. These expressions are described as "general" because they are non-specific in reference and "extenders" because they extend utterances that are otherwise grammatically complete. They have a basic structure of conjunction plus noun phrase and are normally syntactically optional constituents that typically occur in phrase- or clause-final position. There are two distinct types: those beginning with *and* are described as **adjunctive general extenders** and basically signal that "there is more" (that could be said) and those beginning with *or* are **disjunctive general extenders** that signal that "there are other possibilities" (that could be mentioned). They are mostly found in everyday spoken interaction and, perhaps as a consequence, are virtually absent from older descriptive grammars.

The only grammar to document the frequency and distribution of these expressions, the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber *et al*., 1999: 115–17), lists the following phrases, in order of frequency: *or something*, *and everything*, *and things (like that)*, *and stuff (like that)*. In that grammar, they are identified as "coordination tags," a label that has not been widely adopted, but the linguistic category it describes has clearly become established as part of the English language. Now more widely known as general extenders, these expressions have been documented in all varieties of English, as illustrated in the following set of examples, from southern British English in (1), (2), (6), (9) and (10); from American English in (11) and (12), from Australian English in (3), from Canadian English in (4), from Irish English in (5), from New Zealand English in (7), and from Scottish English in (8).[1]

(1)   *she came in a Hackney-Coach, and some Boxes* **and Things** *with her*
(2)   *sort of experts and psychics and wise men* **and things like that**
(3)   *Chaddy has lots of bargain shops downstairs* **and stuff**

1

(4)   *we used to just go to the Rouge-Valley and swim and have picnics **and stuff like that***

(5)   *he'd have a swimming pool **and everything** shur they all have their houses in Mayfair Road **and everything***

(6)   *the boys aren't left to do the washing-up **and that sort of thing***

(7)   *they're sort of typical medieval-type baggy things – uh pantaloons **and that sort of stuff***

(8)   *he was flying fae Prestwick across to Ireland **and that***

(9)   *What are you doing tonight, you know, do you want to go out **or something***

(10)   *if you wanted to be anonymous **or whatever.***

(11)   *Are you like planning to do that? I mean, I don't wanna step on your toes **or anything***

(12)   *If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied **and all** before they had me, **and all that David Copperfield kind of crap***

The examples in bold represent many of the most common forms of general extenders, but they are only a small selection of the wide range of forms that have been documented.[2] From a structural point of view, we can analyze these forms as either distinctly short, with only two parts, as in most examples, or distinctly long, with four or more parts, as in (2), (4), (6), (7) and (12). Example (12) is from the first sentence in J. D. Salinger's (1951) novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, and contains a basic general extender structure (*and all that kind of crap*) with more lexical material (*David Copperfield*) included, making a much more specific reference and creating what we will describe as a "specific extender." We will investigate some of these less frequent "specific extenders" in Chapter 2.

1.2   The Structure of General Extenders

The most frequent forms are short, consisting of two parts, a conjunction and a noun phrase containing a proform, which can be a generic noun or pronoun, usually indefinite, as shown in (13). We use curly brackets to indicate that one, and only one, of the possible constituents listed is used in the construction on any occasion.

(13)   conjunction   proform
           and   *{stuff / things / everything / that}*
           or   *{something / anything / whatever}*

Other short forms include *and all (that)*, *and others*, *and the like*, *and such*, *or what*.

Long forms have two different structures. In one, the comparative phrase (*like that/this*) is included as a modifier after some of the short forms, as shown in (14).

(14)   conjunction   proform   modifier
          and   *{stuff / things / everything}*   *like {that/this}*
          or   *{something / anything}*   *like {that/this}*

In the other long form, normally only used as an adjunctive, one version of the
"SKT-construction" is included before the generic noun as proform. The SKT-
construction consists of *sort of*, *kind of* or *type of* (Dehé and Stathi, 2016).

(15)   conjunction demonstrative   SKT noun   proform
          and   *{that/this}*   *{sort / kind / type} of*   *{stuff / thing}*

This long form can be used in the plural, as in *and those kinds of things*. The
quantifier *all* is sometimes included, and a large number of other nouns can be
used instead of *stuff* or *thing*, as in *and all that kind of nonsense/mess/crap/shit /
jazz.* Each of the long forms in (14) and (15) can be used with a pause instead of
a conjunction.[3]

   The structures analyzed in (13)–(15) have some variation in their compo-
nents and hence flexibility in terms of which elements can be used in
a particular expression on a particular occasion. In addition to those, there
are some fairly fixed expressions with a variety of different components that
also fill the structural slot of general extender. Some forms are more often
found in formal speech and writing: *et cetera/etc.*, *and so on*, *and so forth*,
or so, or thereabouts. Other fixed expressions are used with variable
frequency in token counts from different corpora: (*and*) *blah, blah, blah*,
and (all) the rest of it, *and (all) that stuff*, *and/or what not*, *and/or what have
you* (cf. Aijmer, 2002: 221–23; Pichler and Levey, 2011: 469–71;
Tagliamonte and Denis, 2010: 362–63). In studies of corpora of spoken
discourse, there is an enormous range of forms identifiable as general
extenders, many found only once in a corpus, some only used in certain
contexts (*and this, that and the other*) and some restricted to a particular
dialect (e.g. *or summat*, *or owt like that*). We will explore some aspects of
sociolinguistic variation in Chapter 7.

   It is tempting to see the short forms (e.g. *and things*) as a "reduced" version
of the longer form (e.g. *and things like that*), following a general pattern of
linguistic change, where frequency of use results in reduction in form, but there
is little evidence to support this idea in the case of general extender variants, as
Aijmer (1985: 373) pointed out and Tagliamonte (2016: 130) has more recently
confirmed using archival data. In the historical record, as we will see in Chapter
6, some short forms came into use before the associated longer forms in the
contemporary language. Moreover, short forms (*and stuff*) are not used in quite
the same way as their long-form counterparts (*and stuff like that*). Short forms
are often reduced in speech (*'nstu*) and are typically used inside a tone unit with
a preceding constituent, whereas longer forms are much more likely to be in
a separate tone unit by themselves. The short forms are also used much more

frequently. This aspect of general extender use suggests that the short forms have become more integrated into the rhythmic structure of utterances, making them less salient in phonological terms (cf. Aijmer, 1985, 2002; Channell, 1994; Warren, 2007).

1.3   Structures with General Extenders

The basic syntactic structure of general extenders is conjunction (*and/or*) plus noun phrase (NP). We would expect that a structure of this type would normally combine with another preceding noun phrase to form a basic NP *and/or* NP structural context for general extenders in use. This is illustrated in *some Boxes and Things* in example (1) earlier. This example, from the year 1739, cited in the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (Kytö and Culpeper, 2006), comes from a time when nouns in English were written with initial capital letters and the *Things* referenced were almost certainly real physical "things." Looking at historical examples, we can see that general extenders may have originally been used with referential meaning, identifying objects in the real world, a conclusion supported by the grammatical agreement between *Boxes* and *Things*, both having non-animate [− animate] and countable [+ plural] as features. This grammatical agreement relationship continues to be very common, as illustrated in example (6) presented earlier, connecting a singular non-animate in *the washing-up* with *sort of thing* in the general extender.

Other structures incorporating general extenders can be found without strict grammatical agreement between the two noun phrases. In example (2), there are NPs with the feature [+ human], as in *wise men*, attached to an NP (*things*) with the feature [− human] in *and things like that*. In (3), the combination involves an NP (*shops*) with the feature [+ countable] and an NP (*stuff*) with the feature [− countable] in the general extender. Similarly in (7), a plural noun *pantaloons* is connected to the non-plural *stuff*. A further erosion of the expected grammatical agreement can be identified in (10), where an adjective (*anonymous*) is combined with the general extender (*or whatever*). In (4), (9) and (12), the expected NP *and/or* NP structure has been replaced by a VP *and/or* NP structure where verb phrases such as *have picnics*, *go out* and *were occupied*, combine with *and stuff like that*, *or something* and *and all* respectively. Perhaps more radical is a development whereby whole clauses or sentences, as in (8) and (11) seem to be used in combination with the noun phrase elements (*that*, *anything*) in the general extenders. To understand this phenomenon, consider example (11) where there is an NP *or* NP structure (*your toes or anything*) at the end, potentially indicating that *your toes*

could be what *or anything* is attached to. In that interpretation, the general
extender would potentially be implicating "or any other possible part of
you, as an alternative to *toes*, such as one or both of your feet or your
ankles." Familiarity with the idiom, however, prevents us from going
along with this misinterpretation (since it really doesn't have anything to
do with actual "toes") and leads us to see that the general extender is
actually attached to the whole idiom. We will investigate this aspect of
general extender use in greater detail in Chapter 4.

At this point, it is worth noting that general extenders are best classi-
fied as examples of pragmatic markers rather than discourse markers in
terms of their syntactic role, though both share the feature of being
normally syntactically optional (Aijmer, 2013; Beeching, 2016; Brinton,
2017). Generally, we can distinguish between the role of pragmatic
markers as establishing and maintaining "social cohesion" through the
marking of shared background knowledge and experience, interpersonal
relationships and the interpretation of social action while discourse mark-
ers are used in establishing and maintaining "textual cohesion," that is,
marking formal connections between parts of text (spoken and written)
and their information status within the larger discourse. Discourse mark-
ers (e.g. *Oh*, *Well*, *So*), as characterized by Schiffrin (1987: 40), are
a disparate group of linguistic items, belonging to different word classes,
most of which are used at the beginning of utterances, though utterance-
final uses have also been explored (cf. Beeching and Detges, 2014).
Unlike discourse markers, general extenders are not used utterance-
initially and are typically in phrase- or clause-final position, with
a limited range of structural components, as shown in (13)–(15).
However, these are basically formal differences. When it comes to func-
tion, there is less of a dichotomy, and general extenders can be used with
textual functions, such as topic- and turn-completion, for example, as we
will document in Chapter 5. Attempts to list and analyze pragmatic
markers (Brinton, 1996, 2017) include parenthetical forms such as *you
know* and *I mean*, which are also considered to be discourse markers (cf.
Schiffrin, 1987). We will also treat *you know* and *I mean* as pragmatic
markers which often accompany general extenders and, like them, can be
analyzed as "simultaneously serving textual and interpersonal functions"
(Brinton, 2017: 7). As Aijmer and Simon-Vandenbergen point out as
a general observation, pragmatic markers "can overlap with other markers
in some of their meanings. Describing and constraining the multifunc-
tionality of pragmatic markers is therefore a challenging task" (2011:
229). Accepting that challenge, at least with regard to general extenders,
we will try to tease apart some of the factors involved in that
multifunctionality.

1.4   The Functions of General Extenders

1.4.1   Referential Function

As we noted earlier, the longer forms of general extenders are less integrated into the stream of speech and contain an indexical form, typically *that*, which points to a connection with an element in an earlier part of the utterance, suggesting an antecedent–anaphor type of cohesive relationship. This type of connection has led a number of scholars to view general extenders as a means of indicating that, combined with the referent of the antecedent expression, there is a set or category being implicated by the speaker. Interpreting general extenders in this way assumes that they have a referential function and a role in the propositional information contained in utterances. In clear cases like example (4) earlier, this approach would identify *swim and have picnics* as two examples of a set of activities, of which there are more (*and stuff like that*), and which the speaker expects the hearer to be able to recognize based on pre-existing knowledge, and probably identify as a category of some kind, such as "outdoor activities." Similarly in (6), with a single antecedent (*the washing-up*) and a long general extender already indicating other similar activities (*and that sort of thing*), we find it easy to think of the category of "housework" or "household chores." In much of the early research on general extenders, the set-marking or category-identifying function was virtually the only one recognized and, for some researchers, remains the only one that they discuss. We will explore this (referential) interpretation of the role of general extenders in more detail in Chapter 2.

In addition, general extenders can be interpreted in terms of another referential function involved in the creation of lists. Because they are phrase-final and clause-final, general extenders are frequently at the end of utterances and, in many cases, signal that something is finished or complete. This is also illustrated in example (4), where the speaker begins a list with one item *swim*, then gives a second item *have picnics* and completes it, not with a third item, but with *and stuff like that*. This function of general extenders can be described as list-completion, explored in detail in Chapter 2. The signaling of a completion point can also serve a textual function when it marks the end of the speaker's turn in the course of an interaction. That is, the use of *and stuff like that*, as exemplified in (4), can simultaneously serve more than one function, marking a referential function ("outdoor activities") as well as both list-completion and turn-completion, with a textual function. Although we will be attempting to isolate and identify each of the key functions of general extenders, we shouldn't forget that their use may be multifunctional on any occasion, as illustrated in Overstreet (1999: 148).

1.4.2   Interpersonal Function

General extenders have also been identified as having a role in social aspects of language use in spoken interaction, where their use can be described in terms of an interpersonal function. When one speaker says to another, as in example (9) earlier, *do you want to go out or something*, the function of *or something* doesn't necessarily involve alternatives in referential terms, but may be indicating the possibility of alternatives as a way of softening a potential imposition on the other speaker. In example (11), the idiomatic use of "(not) step on your toes" actually announces a possible imposition that is given wide range via *or anything*, signaling a strong desire not to impose. In these examples, the general extenders would seem to have little referential function, and more of a politeness function based on a social expectation that can be stated simply as "avoid imposing." Viewed in this way, general extenders seem to be functioning like pragmatic markers, which, along with others such as *you know* and *sort of*, are linguistic mechanisms speakers use "to create and maintain relationships with each other and to mitigate the strength of their assertions" (Beeching, 2016: 1).

The uses of *or something* and *not . . . or anything* in examples (9) and (11) earlier are both examples of negative politeness strategies in spoken interaction, based on the idea inherent in "avoid imposing." By including the general extenders, the speakers are trying to mitigate the kind of imposition inherent in asking about another person's projected behavior. In interpersonal terms, the speaker in (9) is using *or something* as a hedge to reduce the potential threat to the other's independence and freedom of action. In (11), in an utterance including *I mean*, the speaker is clarifying her intention not to do "anything" to upset the other and is essentially marking deference in interpersonal terms.

We can also use adjunctive forms in interaction as part of a positive politeness strategy that indicates the two speakers are socially similar and have certain things in common. Adjunctive extenders can be used by speakers to mark an assumed "co-conception of the world" (Aijmer, 2002: 240) and to signal invited solidarity in interpreting what is being said. Often accompanied by *you know*, another form marking an assumption of shared experience, adjunctive extenders appeal to intersubjectivity, the sense in which our backgrounds are so similar that we share mutual understanding of the world. A very clear example of these assumptions in play is illustrated in (16), from Overstreet and Yule (1997b: 254).

(16)   *y'know back when we were buddies and we used to ride our bikes together and stuff*

Not all interpersonal uses of general extenders are as transparent as example (16), but we can use such clear instances as a guide to the interpretation of more

complex structures as we expand the discussion of intersubjectivity, politeness strategies and other instantiations of the interpersonal function in Chapter 3.

1.4.3   Personal Function

Another aspect of general extender use is the capacity to indicate how the speaker feels about what is being said. This personal type of expressive function is apparent in example (12) earlier, where the inclusion of a pejorative term *crap* in the general extender structure indicates a negative, or at least downgrading, attitude to the idea being articulated. Other pejorative terms (e.g. *nonsense*, *junk*, *shit*, *rubbish*) can be found in general extenders used to downgrade the nature of the information attached. Not quite as negative, but also capable of sending a signal that the speaker isn't too concerned about accuracy is the typical use of *or whatever*, as in example (10) earlier. Depending on the intonation (and possibly an accompanying gesture), this general extender can simply indicate a lack of commitment to the appropriateness or accuracy of what is being said or "can convey a stronger dismissive attitude of 'I don't care'" (Overstreet, 1999: 147). This evaluative element may not be immediately obvious to second language learners of English, who may inadvertently send an "I don't care" signal by mistake while thinking that *or something* and *or whatever* are interchangeable. What disjunctive general extenders do seem to have in common is a "subjective alternativity" feature described for the discourse (i.e. non-truth conditional) uses of *or* in Ariel and Mauri (2019: 40). We will look at the challenges facing learners in the use and interpretation of general extenders in Chapter 9.

In contrast, a speaker can signal that something has high value, as in the use of *and everything* twice in example (5) earlier. The implication here is that the speaker is referring to individuals whose wealth enables them to have extremely expensive things, exemplified by *a swimming pool* and houses in an expensive neighborhood. In this case, the phrase *and everything* doesn't just communicate that "there is more," but acts as an intensifier, emphasizing an evaluation of the preceding information as something extreme or remarkable. What is interesting about *and everything* is that the evaluation it conveys has to do with something being extreme, not just extremely good, but also extremely bad, as in (17), transcribed as it is presented in Evison *et al*. (2007: 151). The speaker had earlier talked about a trip from Birmingham to Nottingham in "the most crappy train" and in (17) provides more details to support that opinion.

(17)   *The seats were dirty and ripped. And the floor was dirty. And everything.*

Clearly this speaker had an extremely negative evaluation of the train trip. We will return to the analysis of the personal function of general extenders in Chapter 4.

1.5 Textual Function

Although they have not typically been analyzed as such, general extenders can be used with a textual function in the organization of discourse. We have already noted in connection with example (4) that speakers can use general extenders to signal that they are completing their turn at that point in the interaction, a procedural use further exemplified in Overstreet (2014: 111). General extenders have also been identified as having a role in co-constructed turn taking, where their use "supports the co-construction by projecting a bond of shared knowledge with the speaker and other participants" (Clancy and McCarthy, 2014: 440). We will look more closely at the structural role general extenders can play in conversational turn construction in Chapter 5.

Within their turns, speakers can also use a general extender as a "bracket" around a phrase or clause, with other pragmatic markers in the position of the other bracket. The general extender is naturally a right-hand bracket, with other markers forming the left-hand bracket. One effect of "bracketing" is to mark off smaller chunks within a longer utterance, a process that allows general extenders to assume a role that Secova (2014) describes as "a segmentation signal dividing discourse into smaller, more easily processed units" (2014: 290). The pattern in examples (2) and (7) is for *sort of* to fill the left bracket before a description, and for a general extender (*and things like that*, *and that sort of stuff*) to occur in the right bracket. Other left-bracket pragmatic markers are illustrated in (9) with *you know*, indicating the speaker's appeal to a shared perspective on things, and in (11), with *I mean*, indicating a clarification attempt, both ending with the disjunctive general extenders (*or something*, *or anything*) as right brackets. We will look in greater detail at this type of internal structure in utterances in Chapter 5.

One other aspect of the textual function of general extenders that may only be characteristic of the speech style of some individuals and not others was highlighted by Macaulay (1985) in his study of an individual who used the general extender *and that* with very high frequency. Example (8) from earlier is reproduced here in (18) as it was originally published, with Macaulay's (1985: 114) commentary in parentheses.

(18)　　*he was flying fae Prestwick across to Ireland **and that*** (i.e. to Ireland and nowhere else)

With this and a number of other examples, Macaulay (1985) argues that, far from having a referential function, many general extenders in his data were being used more like punctuation, that is, having a relatively simple rhythmic function in the structure of this individual's way of talking. If they can indeed be used as oral punctuation marks when speakers are organizing what they are trying to say, then general extenders can be seen as fulfilling another textual function that will be the subject of further analysis in Chapter 5.

1.6   Historical Development

After looking at the various functions of general extenders in the contemporary language, we will take a step back in Chapter 6 and try to discover where these current forms come from. Some researchers have looked at variation in the contemporary language as a possible window into historical processes. Others have searched older texts, and the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online* (3rd edition online, www.oed.com/) in particular, to find versions of general extenders in use at earlier periods. These two approaches can be characterized in terms of their main concerns. One is concerned with the grammaticalization of general extenders, the process whereby lexical items and constructions go through formal changes and develop grammatical functions, as evidenced in the contemporary language. The other approach attempts to document the history of general extender development using diachronic data. Let's begin with the latter, and an examination of historical record.

1.6.1   The Historical Record

We have already noted that a novel published over seventy years ago, *The Catcher in the Rye*, made use of general extenders from the very first sentence. The frequent use of general extenders, particularly *and all*, is a salient feature in the speech of the main character, in many ways representing the vernacular of the era. However, finding illustrations of the vernacular from much earlier periods can prove to be a challenge. This may be, as Tagliamonte and Denis (2010: 339) point out, because the historical record mostly consists of written, typically published, material and rarely includes examples of everyday interactive spoken language use where general extenders might have been flourishing.

Tagliamonte and Denis (2010) made use of one of the few historical records of spoken English in Kytö and Culpeper's (2006) *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* in their attempt to identify earlier forms, several of which will be included in Chapter 6, with the dates of their appearance. A much more thorough search through a wide range of historical records is evidenced in the work of Carroll (2007, 2008), whose examples (with dates) will also be included in our study. One of Carroll's (2008: 13) earliest recorded examples has the form *ant so vorth*, as in (19), which has the word *vorth*, with an earlier meaning involving physical motion (cf. De Smet, 2010), that had already developed into an abstract marker of continuation in this Middle English usage from the year 1325.