On Discourse Markers in Remote Language Contact

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Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti
Znanstveno polje: filologija
Znanstvena grana: anglistika

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Dubravka Vidaković Erdeljić

Osijek, 2023.

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Double BA program in English Language and Literature and Croatian Language and Literature

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BA Thesis

Supervisor: Dubravka Vidaković Erdeljić, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2023

University of J.J. Strossmayer, Osijek

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U Osijeku, datum 7.9.2023.

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Abstract

This paper deals with discourse markers (politeness expressions, vocatives, adverbials, act formulae, etc.) in situations of remote language contact, i.e., contact situation in which the speakers of two languages in contact live in geographically distant places. The first part of the paper presents some of the most significant definitions of discourse markers that have appeared in previous research (Schiffrin 1987, Heine 2019, Muller 2005, Blakemore 1987). We further look into their individual characteristics, explore their functions, and list their types. The second part of the paper deals with linguistic borrowing in situations of remote language contact and the impact this phenomenon has on discourse markers. Additionally, this paper provides a summary of previous studies on discourse markers in the situation of remote language contact and explores different situations of language contact, including the contact between English and languages such as Finnish, Polish, Cypriot Greek and Serbian. These studies share some common conclusions highlighting the coexistence of borrowed discourse markers with the native ones and indicating that discourse markers in situations of remote language contact are primarily used in informal contexts in the recipient language and are associated with youth and urbanity.

Key words: *discourse markers, language borrowing, remote language contact*

1. Introduction

Language is the basic medium of communication and therefore the main element of self-identification of the individual and the social group that uses it (Alshami 2019: 1–2). Through language we convey information, but also express our attitudes. Languages reflect the way of life, values and culture of the speakers, and contacts between different peoples and cultures, driven by migration, political changes, trade and other types of interactions (Alshami 2019: 3–5). Change is one of the most important features of everyday life, including language. Languages can change under the influence of many factors, but also because of the influence they have on each other. "In the simplest definition, language contact is the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time." Thomason (2001: 1). Access to different languages has become easier over the years, mostly driven by the development of technology and globalization in general. In the modern world, social networks have one of the biggest influences on the changes that occur in the use of a language. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc. have enabled easier global communication and encouraged the spread of words, phrases and expressions across language borders and have contributed to greater linguistic diversity.

This paper focuses on discourse markers (adverbials, vocatives, act formulae, politeness expressions etc.), exploring their definitions, functions, different types, and characteristics that make them such an important part of communication. Furthermore, the paper deals with the influence of language contact, especially the situation of remote language contact and the way it shapes the use and the interpretation of discourse markers. By reviewing various research studies and approaches, a deeper insight into their roles and use, as well as the way different scholars have approached the analysis of these linguistic elements, has been obtained. Analyzing how remote language contact affects discourse markers will provide deeper insights into the dynamics of interlanguage communication and allow us to better understand the complexity of linguistic interactions.

2. Defining discourse markers

2.1. Definitions and terminology

Based on the analysis of the available literature that deals with discourse markers, it can be noted that these elements were often regarded as particles, adverbs, conjunctions, exclamations, etc. (Schiffrin 1987, Blakemore 1987, and Halliday and Hasan 1992). Many authors (e.g., Heine 2019, Zarei 2013, Schourup 1999, Brinton 1996) no longer define discourse markers in terms of a specific word class, nor do they classify them according to their position in the sentence. Instead, they introduce functional approaches for the identification of discourse markers. However, even the distinction of discourse markers based on their function does not bring uniform conclusions. Due to many different problems, there is a variety of definitions and categorizations of discourse markers.

The study of discourse markers, linguistic elements that indicate relationship between units in a conversation, has its beginnings in the early work of Robin Lakoff (1971). She published an article named *Questionable answers and answerable questions*, which investigates the use of markers *why* and *well* (Lakoff 1971 quoted in Muller 2005: 2). In the past few decades, the research on pragmatic/discourse markers has been enriched not only by Schiffrin (1987), Blakemore (1987) and Halliday and Hasan (1992) but also by other linguists such as Fraser (1993), Andersen (2001), and Trujillo Saez (2003). The topic of discourse markers was also mentioned by Levinson in 1983 but the first thorough research was conducted by Schiffrin in 1987. She based her research on the analysis of the following expressions: *and, because, but, I mean, now, oh, or, so, then, well*. After completing the research, she came to the conclusion that discourse markers can be defined as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987: 1). Schiffrin defines discourse markers as:

> …linguistic, paralinguistic, or nonverbal elements that signal relations between units of talk by virtue of their syntactic and semantic properties and by virtue of their sequential relations as initial or terminal brackets demarcating discourse units. (Schiffrin 1987: 40)

Around the same time, Blakemore (1987) conducted research concerning the topic of discourse markers, but she called them "discourse connectives". Her proposition was that these expressions are used to indicate the dependency of the relevance of one discourse marker on another (Blakemore 1987 quoted in Šiniajeva 2005: 19). Following Schiffrin (1987) and Blakemore

(1987), Halliday and Hasan (1992) analyzed those linguistic elements as conjunctions, while the notion of discourse markers was still developing at the time, so it was challenging to determine exactly which part of speech they belong to. Another definition of discourse markers was brought by Heine (2019):

> Discourse markers are invariable expressions which are syntactically independent from their environment, typically set off prosodically from the rest of the utterance, and their function is metatextual, relating a discourse unit to the situation of discourse, that is, to the organization of texts, speaker-hearer interaction, and/or the attitudes of the speaker. (Heine 2019: 2)

Heine (2019) further stated that "the rise and development of discourse markers (DMs) is widely understood to be the result of grammaticalization" (Heine 2019: 1).

Spanish linguist Fernando Trujillo Saez defines discourse markers as:

> linguistic items, with no syntactic function at the sentence level, which serve, according to their morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties, as a guide for the interpretation of utterances. The speaker adds these markers to reduce the cognitive effort required from the hearer to interpret the utterance, by signaling which inference reflects more accurately the speaker's meaning. (Trujillo Saez 2003: 3)

The term "discourse marker" therefore generally refers to a diverse group of linguistic elements that mark parts of discourse and facilitate a better understanding of those elements within the wider context of communication. In this way, their functionality is highlighted, which focuses on their ability to shape communication. Such approach also helps to standardize terminology that has become widely accepted over the past decades. Simone Muller (2005) provides an overview of the terminology used for discourse markers. Some of the terms that were used by researchers to describe these linguistic elements are 'connectives', 'discourse particles' and 'pragmatic markers'. As noted by Muller (2005: 3) the term "discourse marker" was used by Schiffrin (1987), Schourup (1999), Jucker and Ziv (1998). Šiniajeva (2005) also gave a list of different terms for the phenomenon: "pragmatic markers, discourse markers, pragmatic particles, interactional signals, connectives, pragmatic expressions, small-words, and so on". She further explains what the term "pragmatic marker" implies: "a class of short linguistic elements that usually do not have much lexical meaning but serve significant pragmatic functions in conversation." (Šiniajeva 2005: 21). The majority of linguists use the term *discourse markers*. For example, Fraser (1993) proposed an

analysis of discourse markers by analyzing them as a pragmatic category. As noted by Šiniajeva (2005: 22) his definition was a bit narrower than the one proposed by Schiffrin (1987).

2.2. Characteristics

In his study about discourse markers in English, Zarei (2013) highlights the essential characteristics of these linguistic elements. He stated that discourse markers are usually characterized through some common features such as their ability to be stressed or separated from their surrounding context (by pauses or intonational breaks). They can also function as unstressed constructions, without pauses and undergoing a phonological reduction. Zarei (2013) also states the following:

> DMs usually derive from lexical categories (i.e., verbs, verbal constructs, prepositional phrases, adverbs). They are typically placed at the beginning of an utterance, but they can also be utterance-internal or even, on occasion, utterance-final. Regardless of their position, they are always syntactically separated from the rest of the sentence. Semantically they do not add anything to the propositional content of the utterance nor do they affect its truth conditions. In relation to their general function, DMs show the speaker's estimate of the role of the current utterance within a larger discourse. (Zarei 2013: 108)

Many different characteristics can be attributed to discourse markers. Schourup (1999) lists and describes seven of them. One of the characteristics most commonly attributed to DMs is connectivity (the ability of discourse markers to establish a relationship between utterances or other discourse units (Schourup 1999: 230)). "The connectivity of DMs is most often taken to be a necessary characteristic" (Schourup 1999: 230). However, there is some debate about discourse markers involving more than one textual unit. Schriffin's and Fraser's definition specify that discourse markers relate two textual units, and, in that way, they indicate that there is a clear relationship between those units. Discourse markers create a connection between the units of talk and contribute to the coherence in a conversation or written text (Zarei 2013: 108).

According to Schourup (1999: 230) another important characteristic of discourse markers is optionality. There are usually two ways in which discourse markers are considered as optional. They are seen as syntactically optional, which means that their removal from a sentence does not affect the overall grammatical structure. Secondly, discourse markers are considered optional in a

semantic sense. In the case of the discourse marker being omitted, the semantic relationship between the elements stays connected (Schourup 1999: 230).

Another characteristic of discourse markers according to Schourup (1999: 231) is non-truth-conditionality. This refers to the argument that the presence or absence of discourse markers does not influence the truth-value of the statement: "DMs are generally thought to contribute nothing to the truth-conditions of the proposition expressed by an utterance" (Schourup 1999: 231). Accordingly, some scholars believe that discourse markers have no impact on the truth-conditions of individual sentences, while others propose that the truth-conditions are linked to mental representations, which go beyond the scope of individual sentences (Zarei 2013: 109).

The characteristic of weak clause association refers to the tendency of discourse markers to occur "either outside the syntactic structure of a sentence or to be attached to it" (Brinton 1996: 34). Zarei (2013: 109) stated that while discourse markers may have a weak association with central clause elements, some discourse markers have their own internal syntactic structure despite their potential lack of intonational independence.

The characteristic of initiality refers to the ability of discourse markers to function as introducers to the discourse segments they mark (Schourup 1999: 233). Schourup (1999) further states that the tendency of discourse markers to occur in an initial position should not be seen as being the first word but should be understood in relation to central clause elements.

Orality is a characteristic of discourse markers which refers to the mode of communication that is characterized by spoken language. Schourup (1999: 234) claims that the distinction between discourse markers in speech and in written language is not always clearly marked:

> while it might be possible to distinguish predominantly oral from predominantly written DMs based on functional or semantic grounds, the grounds in question do not appear to be those on which DM status is usually determined. (Schourup 1999: 234)

Multi-categoriality is the last characteristic listed by Schourup (1999: 234). He presents two perspectives of discourse markers: one suggesting that "DM status is independent of syntactic categorization" (Schourup 1999: 234), which means that some words can keep their original syntactic category while also taking on a role as a non-truth-conditional connective, and the other suggesting that discourse markers "arise from other categories through historical processes" (Schourup 1999: 234).

Hlavac (2006: 1874) argues that discourse markers are not generally found in simple answers or in utterances that are short, objective and without much speaker involvement. He suggests that discourse markers are more frequent in elaborate discourse (descriptive or analytic discourse) (Hlavac 2006: 1874).

2.3. Functions

Discourse markers have many functions in communication. Their diversity and semantic background allow them to perform different functions within communication, such as making transitions between parts of the text or speech, indicating important points, etc. Muller (2005: 8) states that many researchers share the view that discourse markers help the listener to better understand the speaker's utterances. According to the list that Muller (2005: 8) provides, discourse markers have many functions including initiating discourse, marking boundaries in conversation, prefacing responses or reactions, acting as fillers or delaying tactics, assisting the speaker in maintaining control of the conversation, fostering interaction between the speaker and the listener, marking information as either foregrounded or backgrounded (Muller 2005: 8).

Schiffrin (1987) proposes three main functions of discourse markers:

1. they function as "contextual coordinates for utterances: they index an utterance to the local contexts in which the utterances are produced and in which they are to be interpreted"

2. they establish a connection of the utterance and the following discourse

3. they link adjacent utterances to either the speaker or the hearer (Schiffrin 1987: 326).

Andersen (2001: 65) proposes a classification of discourse markers based on three basic aspects of pragmatic meaning. Accordingly, one of the key functions of discourse markers is the subjective one. He states that all discourse markers express subjectivity and that any utterance "expresses a speaker's intention to make something manifest to an individual" (Andersen 2001: 65). Therefore, discourse markers play a significant role in understanding the mutual context between a speaker and a listener. The second function he proposes is the interpersonal (interactional) one, which involves expressing attitudes, feelings and evaluations which makes them hearer-oriented. These discourse markers have an interactive role, which is related to the ability of discourse markers to indicate the extent of the shared experience and knowledge between the speaker and the hearer.

Additionally, discourse markers shed light on the level of shared experience, knowledge and logical connection between the assumptions and the speaker's knowledge. They also often have a role in speech acts and politeness strategies (opening conversations, changing the subject, etc. (Andersen 2001:66). Andersen (2001) presents the third function of discourse markers: the textual function. Textual meaning includes contextual relevance, both within the text and within the situation. This function is relevant when it comes to written discourse. The textual function of discourse markers contributes to coherence and textuality in discourse, bringing ideas and shaping textual relationships (Andersen 2001: 67). Lastly, it can be stated that:

> Discourse markers constitute a complex category, as they can be primarily associated with one of the three functions. That is, some markers have dominating subjective function, others – interactional, and still others – textual. (Šiniajeva 2005: 36)

2.4. Types

Different types of discourse markers contribute to the dynamics of communication in different ways. Some discourse markers may indicate the speaker's train of thought or redirect the listener's attention, while others may emphasize a more emotional tone or suggest the speaker's intent (Qasim 2009: 49-50). There have been many different ideas that have been proposed regarding the classification of discourse markers. Biber et al. (1999) suggest a classification that presents a wide range of discourse marker types (Biber et al. 1999 quoted in Qasim 2009: 50–56):

1. Interjections – serve to express sudden emotions or reactions (examples: *"oh", "ah", "wow",* etc.)

2. Greeting and farewells expressions – conventionalized responses used in specific situations, mostly to maintain social links among people (examples: *"good morning", "good evening",* etc.)

3. Linking adverbials – words or phrases used to establish a connection between an utterance and prior discourse (examples: *"however", "still", "therefore",* etc.)

4. Stance adverbials – lexical items that function as operators on the entire sentence, they provide speaker's attitude and opinion towards the content of the sentence (examples: *"maybe", "usually", "honestly", "of course",* etc.)

5. Vocatives – noun phrases used to refer to the addressee in a conversation, prosodically and syntactically separate from the main sentence (two types: calls and addresses)

6. Response elicitors – function as generalized question tags (examples: *"huh?", "eh?", "okay?"*, etc.)

7. Response forms – brief and routine linguistic expressions used as replies to previous remarks in conversation (examples: *"yes", "no", "ok",* etc.)

8. Hesitators – used to fill hesitation pauses in speech (examples: *"er", "erm", "uh",* etc.)

9. Act formulae (polite speech) – used to achieve speech acts (making requests, asking questions, apologizing, etc.) in social interactions (examples: *"sorry", "thank you", "please",* etc.)

10. Expletives – words and phrases that do not contribute any meaning to the text (examples: *"Damn!", "My God!", "Good heavens!",* etc.).

The variety of discourse markers and their different functions greatly contribute to the complexity of effective communication, helping to convey meaning and structure in conversation.

3. Language borrowing in remote language contact and its effects on discourse markers

3.1. Language borrowing and borrowability scale

Throughout history and up to the present, many linguists and other experts have researched and tried to define the phenomenon of language contact. One of the definitions is provided by Sarah G. Thomason who says the following: "In the simplest definition, language contact is the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time" (Thomason 2001: 1). Thomason (2001: 1-2) provides a simple example that supports the given definition:

> for instance, if two groups of young travelers are speaking two different languages while cooking their meals in the kitchen of a youth hostel, and if each group speaks only one language, and if there is no verbal interaction between the groups, then this is language contact only in the most trivial sense (Thomason 2001: 1-2).

Furthermore, language contact most often involves "face-to-face interactions among groups of speakers, at least some of whom speak more than one language in a particular geographical locality." (Thomason 2001: 4). An example of that situation can be the situation in Switzerland, where there are four languages that have the national-language status (German, Italian, French and Romansh) (Thomason 2001: 4). Another example of direct language contact is the contact between English and Spanish in parts of Florida and California that happens due to a large number of Spanish-speaking citizens who migrated to U.S. (Thomason 2001: 14). Throughout human history, social interactions have often been shaped by mixing different groups of individuals. That was usually accompanied by various social practices (e.g., marriage outside one's own ethnic group), forced slavery, migration, etc. (Thomason 2001: 5).

Thomason (2001: 3) stated that language contact does not necessarily occur in the same place: "the most striking example in the modern world is the pervasiveness of English outside the traditionally English-speaking nations" (Thomason 2001: 3). Remote language contact occurs between languages which are geographically distant, i.e., speakers of the two languages in contact are not in the same place.

> Millions of non-English speakers have come into contact with English through radio, television, Hollywood films, popular music (on CDs and cassettes as well as on the radio and television), and writings of all kinds. Of course some English can be learned through these media, though the knowledge is likely to remain passive unless the listeners have opportunities to practice their speaking or writing skills. (Thomason 2001: 3).

As argued by Peterson (2017: 2), in cases of remote language contact, English has a foreign language status, it is frequently used as a dominant language in the situations of language contact and is a lingua franca in most of Europe. An example of remote language contact can be seen in the contact between English and Finnish, English being the dominant language, and Finnish the recipient language.

> It is clear that the unidirectional influence of a dominant language and culture over others is not a new concept: what is new is the breadth and penetration of the influence of English, due in large part to the personal connection many language users have with English through new media forms. (Peterson 2017: 9)

Filipović (1986: 17) argues that languages in contact imply a situation in which some word or construction of the donor language is taken over into receiving language, or a situation in which a speaker of one language, the mother tongue, adopts foreign language. Filipović (1986: 19) further

defines contact linguistics as a branch of linguistics that investigates languages in contact and related phenomena: bilingualism, language borrowing, cross-linguistic influence, etc.

Borrowing linguistic elements from one language to another provides specific challenges and adaptations occur, which often result in changes in meaning and use. According to Heine (2016: 271) speakers borrow elements for different reasons in the context of bilingual contact. He presents the main factors which are related to the code-switched or borrowed discourse markers. The first category consists of formal linguistic factors which include syntactically unattached status, short and unanalyzable form, metalingual function, and text frequency. The second factor is text organization implying that discourse markers are used to organize and structure the flow of discourse. The next factor listed by Heine (2016: 271) is speaker-hearer interaction which indicates that discourse markers are important because they set the relationship between the speakers, they show agreement or disagreement, and they keep the flow of the conversation. Lastly, Heine (2016: 272) listed the factor of attitudes of the speaker and suggests that discourse markers convey the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the information they carry. Discourse markers also reflect the politeness of the speaker and can indicate less or more direct message.

When talking about the borrowability of discourse markers Heine states that "crosslinguistically, discourse markers belong to the linguistic material that is fairly frequently transferred from one language to another in situations of language contact" (Heine 2019: 18). He further argues that discourse markers are segments that are among the first grammatical features that get code-switched or borrowed by speakers in situations of intense language contact, "frequently but not only from the language of the more dominant or prestigious group involved" (Heine 2016: 246).

Andersen (2014) describes the phenomenon of pragmatic borrowing defining it as "the incorporation of pragmatic and discursive elements into a recipient language" (Andersen 2014: 19). Andersen (2014: 19) also states that "the pragmatic borrowing research conducted so far often originates in communities where English has foreign language status" (Andersen 2014: 19). Similarly, Peterson (2017: 2) emphasizes that researchers studying pragmatic borrowing are not only interested in enumerating borrowed elements, "but in observing and accounting for their social, pragmatic and linguistic functions within recipient languages" (Peterson 2017: 2). Matras (2009: 161) argues that elements from one language can be borrowed into another based on their functionality, usefulness, and frequency of use. He argues that this type of borrowing is evident in traditional contact settings and proposes the "utilitarian hierarchy" (Matras 2009: 151) as one of the borrowability hierarchies in language contact situations. However, there are some exceptions

from the proposed hierarchies which imply external constraints on the system, which in case of borrowing “for example, includes a need or desire to fill gaps or convey prestige” (Matras, 2009: 15).

When it comes to borrowing, certain elements take precedence over others, which further shapes the dynamics of a language. Matras (2007: 61) has proposed a hierarchy, which he established based on 27 different languages. This hierarchy is grounded on the principle of frequency, which means that parts of discourse that are used more often in the donor language are borrowed more often by the recipient language. At the top of his hierarchy are nouns and conjunctions which take precedence over verbs. Ranking lower that nouns and conjunctions are discourse markers, our topic of interest, and they take precedence over adjectives. Following adjectives are interjections, which are positioned just above adverbs. Other elements such as other particles, numerals, pronouns, derivational affixes and inflectional affixes take the lower positions.

Table 1- The borrowability scale according to Matras (2007: 61)

1.	Nouns, conjunctions
2.	Verbs
3.	Discourse markers
4.	Adjectives
5.	Interjections
6.	Adverbs
7.	Other particles, adpositions
8.	Numerals
9.	Pronouns
10.	Derivational affixes
11.	Inflectional affixes

Peterson (2017: 5) discusses structural borrowing of sentence structures or discourse markers and argues that the exceptions to the hierarchies mainly refer to "cognitive processing at the level of the bilingual individual; such forms are difficult for bilingual speakers to disambiguate between their respective languages" (Peterson 2017: 5). Peterson (2017: 5) further states that borrowing of English discourse markers into a native language is not dependent on individual bilingualism, and speakers use them to express social meaning which resembles the flexible use of linguistic tools in multi-ethnolects and metrolingualism.

Similarly, the characteristics and functions of discourse markers lead to the emergence of very interesting and in many cases contradictory uses when it comes to language contact situations.

> Discourse markers are highly practical for even semi-proficient users of a language, due to their non-declension and non-integration within a clause; at the same time, the salience of discourse markers lends readily recognizable social and pragmatic associations. (Peterson 2017: 7)

Studying the influence of language contact on the use of discourse markers has an important role in expanding the understanding people have of language, but also the understanding they have of communication and cultural interactions. These interactions are the ones through which people discover the adaptability and flexibility of a language, which serves as a social tool and reflects the complexity of connections between different language communities.

4. Previous studies on discourse markers in remote language contact

One of many linguists that contributed to the research of discourse markers is Constantina Fotiou (2017). Her paper *English discourse markers in Cypriot Greek* investigates the use and functions of English discourse markers in informal discourse among Greek Cypriots. The research is based on a set of data from recorded conversations (40 hours of recordings) that were collected in the period from 2008 to 2011. Fotiou (2017) discusses the way English discourse markers shape and change codes in informal Cypriot Greek. The main argument of the paper is that all English discourse markers in the set of data have parallel structural and functional equivalents in Cypriot Greek. The paper discusses different English discourse markers found in the data, *anyway* being the most common, followed by *so* and *by the way*. Fotiou (2017) also investigates the use of a

borrowed politeness marker *sorry*, also serving as a discourse marker in Cypriot Greek, as other researchers have argued. The research concludes that English discourse markers coexist with native markers in informal conversation among Greek Cypriots. The marker *sorry* showed to have evolved from a marker of sincere apology to a discourse structuring tool (Fotiou 2017: 112). Furthermore, Fotiou (2017) stated:

> …while English *sorry* is used for sincere apologies for serious offences as well as non-serious offences or no offences at all, here it is not used for apologizing for serious offences since its Cypriot Greek counterpart(s) are responsible for this. (Fotiou 2017: 112)

The borrowed English discourse markers do not fill any gaps in Cypriot Greek, nor have they replaced the original Cypriot Greek discourse markers. The function of English discourse markers equivalents in Cypriot Greek is enriched due to the bilingual communication context. Lastly, Fotiou (2017) stated that "future research should focus on a comparison of these DMs with their Cypriot Greek counterparts as well as on investigating whether their use is evident in formal discourse as well" (Fotiou 2017: 112).

Peterson (2017) published an article dealing with the concept of pragmatic borrowing and how it manifests itself in the language contact situation between English and Finnish. She (2017) analyzes the behavior of pragmatic elements in traditional settings of language contact and talks about the contemporary aspects of the phenomenon. The article looks into the integration of discourse markers like *pliis, oh my god* and *about* into Finnish at the same time showing how these borrowed markers differ from both English and Finnish forms. Peterson (2017) discusses the phenomenon of borrowing pragmatic elements which coexist with native forms and serve as alternatives with distinct social and pragmatic values. She argues that pragmatic borrowings from English fit into the Finnish language in such way that they differ from the original English as well as from the existing equivalent from linguistic heritage (Peterson 2017: 31). Borrowed elements retain characteristics such as youth and urbanity and they act as substitutes for pragmatic functions such as politeness. Furthermore, the process of borrowing and incorporating English discourse markers in Finnish results in forms that have unique values (pragmatic, grammatical…) within the context of Finnish.

Peterson (2017: 13) further stated that the incorporation of borrowings from English has often been associated with youth language. For example, the use of *pliis* (*please*) is associated with young, urban females (Peterson 2017: 14). In comparison with Finnish politeness marker *kiitos, pliis* is associated with positive politeness and solidarity, while *kiitos* serves as a marker of negative

politeness (Peterson 2017: 17). The marker *oh my god* has its functional Finnish equivalents (*herran jumala* or *minun luojani*) but the study concluded that they are limited to use by older speakers. When it comes to the marker *about*, there is a difference in meaning both from the English original and the Finnish equivalent *noin*, i.e., "such examples indicate a distinct, non-English pattern of use for the borrowing *about* in Finnish" (Peterson 2017: 22).

Another research study that deals with pragmatic borrowings of discourse markers is the study conducted by a Polish linguist Lach Mirghani (2022). Her research is based on the analysis of the use of English politeness markers such as *thank you, sorry* and *please.* The main goal of the research was to analyze how mentioned politeness markers are used in communication in Polish. Lach Mirghani (2022) starts with the assumption that Polish speakers understand and accept the English politeness markers, but they may not substitute the Polish equivalents, mainly due to differences in pragmatic strength. This hypothesis was confirmed, English politeness discourse markers are embedded in the Polish language. The marker *sorry* is the most commonly used one, while the marker *please* is the least used. The results of the study reveal that the English discourse marker *sorry* seems to be increasingly used together with the Polish discourse marker *ale* (which means *but*), which suggests that *sorry* is used as a softening device. The results also indicate that the English discourse markers analyzed in the study are more frequently used in online interactions compared to other forms of communication. Lach Mirghani stated that the study has some limitations because of the dated corpus (Lach Mirghani 2022: 114). The marker *thank you* is not very common in Polish, one reason for that being the difficulty of pronouncing the sound /θ/ because it does not exist in Polish. The marker *please* is mostly used on Internet forums, mainly as a pragmatic borrowing. Lach Mirghani (2022) concludes the following:

> The use of diminutive forms of *sorry (sorka, sorki, sorunia)* and *please (pliska)*, as well as the preference of Polish speakers for *thanks* over more formal *thank you* confirms the observation that the borrowed politeness markers tend to be preferred in informal situations and are less suitable for contexts involving serious face threats than the native ones. (Lach Mirghani 2022: 112)

A recent study dealing with pragmatic aspects of language contact and borrowing has been conducted by Serbian researcher Mišić Ilić (2021). She focused her article on the borrowing of the pragmatic (discourse) markers from English into Serbian, discussing several phenomena associated with pragmatic borrowing. The article provides many contextualized examples of borrowed English discourse markers in Serbian (*please, sorry, OMG,* etc.), that were drawn from

various written sources. Similarly to Mirghani's (2022) study of Polish, this study has also concluded that the borrowed discourse markers express less commitment and seriousness compared to the English one (recipient language). Therefore, English discourse markers in Serbian are often used for stylistic purposes (Mišić Ilić 2021: 139). The range of appropriate contexts for the use of English origin discourse markers is limited, mostly to informal situations and specific types of discourse:

> The borrowings seem to be confined to informal settings, are used mostly in spoken language by (trendy, younger, cosmopolitan) urban users, and are appropriate for conveying laid-back, joking and generally positive overtones, to strengthen peer and in-group rapport (Mišić Ilić 2021: 139).

The marker *sorry* has some restrictions regarding its functions, i.e., it is more restricted than the English *sorry* and more than the Serbian *izvinite* (Mišić Ilić 2021: 140). The symbolic nature of these discourse markers is what distinguishes them from their equivalents in English. Furthermore, Mišić Ilić (2021: 146) stated that the English discourse markers that get borrowed into other language are often indicators of modernity and informality, and sometimes may indicate various social factors such as age, gender, class, etc.

> Being clearly marked as anglicisms, and different from the native Serbian functional counterparts, the borrowed *pliz/please* and *sori*/*sorry* also gain additional pragmatic meanings, non-existent in English. They mark attitudes such as positive politeness, and social indices such as urbanicity, coolness, cosmopolitanism, youthfulness, modernity, in-group membership (Mišić Ilić 2021: 141).

By presenting such data from the Serbian language, this paper contributes to cross-linguistic research, when it comes to the topic of pragmatic borrowing, and offers analyses that confirm the conclusions already reached in previous research related to borrowing of discourse markers (Mišić Ilić 2021: 146).

These research studies share some common themes and conclusions. All studies are focused on pragmatic borrowing of discourse markers. Each study explores the adaptation of foreign discourse markers into the recipient language, their functions, meaning and usage. Studies compare the borrowed discourse markers and their equivalents in the recipient language. Sociolinguistic context is also taken into account, factors such as age, gender, urbanicity, etc. All four studies note the adaptations that discourse markers undergo in the recipient language (stylistic, functional, etc.).

Finally, in all the studies, there is a suggestion for future research, saying that there is still a need for further research.

One of the most prominent similarities between the abovementioned studies is the topic politeness markers in the context of pragmatic borrowing. The most commonly borrowed politeness markers are *please* and *sorry.* Politeness markers that are borrowed are mostly used in informal contexts. Borrowing of politeness markers is most often associated with young and urban individuals. In addition to that, borrowed discourse markers can serve as an indicator of factors such as age, gender, modernity, etc. The politeness marker *sorry* is used for non-serious offences in Cypriot Greek, as a softening device in Polish, and for stylistic purposes in Serbian (expresses less commitment and seriousness). The marker *please* is associated with solidarity and positive politeness in Finnish, and it is used in informal contexts, mainly on Internet forums in Polish. The usage of these borrowed discourse markers is not completely the same as in English (e.g., they come in various orthographic variations). Positive politeness is also one concept that is mentioned. It has to do with borrowing of markers *please* and *sorry.* This concept involves the use of language for expressing solidarity, maintaining social harmony and a friendly attitude. One of the factors that affects the borrowed discourse markers is the age group that uses them in communication. Peterson's (2017) research concluded that the use of the discourse marker *pliis* is associated with young, urban females. Similarly, Mišić Ilić (2021) concluded that *please* and *sorry* are most often borrowed and used by younger, cosmopolitan users. Therefore, the borrowed markers in the recipient language are characterized by modernity and youthfulness.

Studies concluded that the borrowed discourse markers coexist with the native ones. In most cases, they do not replace the original equivalents in the recipient language, but they do serve as alternatives to them. Some borrowed discourse markers differ from the original English markers (in meaning and function), but also from the forms in the recipient language, as is the case in the contact between English and Finnish and the markers *pliis, oh my god* and *about.* Lach Mirghani (2022) and Mišić Ilić (2021) both discuss the urbanity of the users and highlight the laid-back and positive connotations of the use of the borrowed discourse markers.

5. Conclusion

The classification of discourse markers is one of the more complex phenomena in the field of linguistics. Numerous approaches to defining them have been proposed by many linguists (Schiffrin 1987, Blakemore 1987, Hallyday and Hasan 1992, Brinton 1996, etc.), which has been shown in the number of research concerning this topic. Discourse markers are defined as linguistic elements that indicate the relationship between units in a conversation. They have no syntactic function at the sentence level but rather serve as a guide for the interpretation of utterances (Trujillo Saez 2003: 3). Discourse markers are derived from different lexical categories, in many cases they are placed at the beginning of the sentence, and they are syntactically separate from the rest of the sentence. They feature characteristics such as connectivity, optionality, non-truth-conditionality, weak clause association, initiality, orality and multi-categoriality (Zarei 2013: 108).

Discourse markers have many functions. They initiate discourse, act as fillers, foster the interaction between the speaker and the listener, mark boundaries in conversation, etc. (Muller 2005: 8). Qasim (2009: 50) provides a list of many different types of discourse markers including interjections, greeting and farewells expressions, adverbials, vocatives, response elicitors, response forms, hesitators, and expletives.

The focus of our paper was the borrowing of discourse markers in remote language contact. Language contact can be defined as the use of several languages at the same place and the same time (direct language contact). In addition to that, there is also a situation of remote language contact, where the languages in contact are geographically distant. This type of contact often occurs through media such as movies, music, social media, television, etc. In such situations, borrowing of linguistic elements is a very common occurrence. This also applies to discourse markers, which rank high on the borrowability scale, just behind nouns and verbs.

This paper presents four research studies on the topic of discourse markers in remote language contact. All these studies have one language in common: English (which is the dominant language). Other languages (Cypriot Greek, Finnish, Serbian and Polish) have the roles of recipient languages, i.e., they borrow discourse markers from English. All the above-mentioned research studies have focused on the integration of borrowed discourse markers into the recipient language, but also on the pragmatic and social values they carry. The results of the presented research studies mostly indicate that borrowed discourse markers can coexist with native forms and serve as an alternative form that have distinct meaning and connotations. Research studies in question focused on politeness markers such as *please* and *sorry* and concluded that they are used in informal

contexts in the recipient language and are associated with youth and urbanity. They can have different functions and meaning when compared to English originals (softening devices in Polish, stylistic purposes in Serbian). Finally, the presented studies highlight the adaptation and use of borrowed discourse markers and show the dynamics of language contact, while taking into account various sociolinguistic factors.

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