The janus-like nature of disjuncts in discourse

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This paper examines the distribution, function and collocates of the first-person-singular cognitive-verb-based syntagmatic configurations *I think, I mean* and *I believe* in argumentative political discourse, considering their status as disjunct in monologic and dialogic spoken data, and in selected subsections of the BNC. The explicit accommodation of local context allows for a fine-grained analysis, filtering out not only those contextual configurations in which the cognitive-verb-based configurations may count as ECCs, but also particularising possible discourse patterns, which may signify their multiple functions in discourse.

Its goal is twofold: First, to supplement the beyond-the-clause-anchored definition of disjunct (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik 1985), which is an ECC par excellence, with systemic-functional metafunction and multiple theme (Halliday 1994), arguing for a conjunctive function of disjuncts (Thompson & Zhou 2000) which goes beyond the ideational plane of discourse, connecting the ideational with interpersonal and textual planes. Second, to identify discourse-domain-specific patterned co-occurrences of *I think, I mean* and *I believe* with other interpersonal (IT) and textual themes (TT), which assign them the status of a discourse pattern (Ariel 2008, Fetzer 2014).

The janus-like nature of the syntagmatic configurations under investigation fulfils an important function in the construal of local and global discourse coherence regarding its ideational, textual and interpersonal planes. They connect what-is-said with what-has-been-said and what-may-be-said, thus displaying both anaphoric and cataphoric reference. As regards their syntax, they play a superior role to other clause elements, being somewhat detached from and superordinate to the clause, over which they have scope, while at the same time contributing to the construal of discourse coherence on the interpersonal plane. However, it is not only the cognitive-verb-based syntagmatic configurations, which are of relevance to the construal of discourse coherence. Rather, it is their patterned co-occurrences with other ITs and TTs, e.g. [TT, IT] (*and I think)* or [IT, IT] (*I mean I think)*, which particularize their conjunctive function, connecting the textual and interpersonal planes with the ideational one, or the interpersonal plane with the ideational plane.

To capture the fine details of the orchestrated interplay of ECCs and clauses in discourse, an integrated approach considering quantitative and qualitative methodologies is needed. This allows not only for the explicit accommodation of the local contextual constraints and requirements, but also for the more global constraints genre.

References

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