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Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: General Session and Parasession on Historical Issues in Sociolinguistics/Social Issues in Historical Linguistics (1995), pp. 377-388

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PRAGMATIC MARKERS IN A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral discourse in many languages is characterized by the occurrence of discourse markers, or PRAGMATIC MARKERS, which in Modern English include forms such as so, well, like, I mean, or you know. While numerous sociolinguistic studies have been concerned with the identification of these forms in Modern English (ModE) and with a specification of their functions, which include both the structuring of discourse and the maintaining and furthering of social interaction, this paper explores the existence of such forms from a diachronic perspective in the texts of Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME).

While it may initially seem implausible to speak of pragmatic markers in texts which exist only in written form, it is generally agreed that medieval discourse exhibits many structural and linguistic elements characteristic of oral discourse, what Ong (1984:3) has called an 'oral residue'. For example, Green (1990:270-72), while questioning many of the tenets of the so-called 'oral-formulaic theory', has acknowledged a fundamental 'symbiosis of orality and writing' in the middle ages, and Fleischman (1990:23) points out that 'many of the disconcerting properties of medieval vernacular texts ... can find more satisfying explanations if we first of all acknowledge the extent to which our texts structure information the way a spoken language does'. When reexamined within the framework of contemporary discourse analysis, these 'disconcerting' features of medieval discourse—traditionally dismissed as fillers, metrical expedients, or other defects of style—may provide the potential candidates for pragmatic markers. Some of these MYSTERY FEATURES (to adapt Longacre's 1976 term) are listed in the Appendix along with studies which implicitly or explicitly treat them from a discourse analytic perspective.

2.0 THE 'MYSTERY FEATURES' OF OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

Undertaking a kind of 'historical discourse analysis/historical text linguistics' (Enkvist and Wårvik 1987:222), or what Fleischman (1990:37) terms 'New Philology',² this paper investigates whether the mystery features of Old and Middle English:

- (a) have the syntactic, semantic, and distributional characteristics of Modern English pragmatic markers,
- (b) share the textual and interpersonal functions of their Modern English counterparts, and
- (c) develop diachronically in a way analogous to the postulated synchronic development of the modern forms.

The discussion is based on a book-length study of pragmatic markers in English (Brinton in press), with additional support from the studies cited in the Appendix. The main forms considered are exemplified below.³

(1) OLD ENGLISH

- a. <u>Hit gelamp ba</u> æfter fyrste <u>bæt</u> ba unge-leaffullan hæðenan ge-bundon þone bisceop . and to ðære byrig rauenna geleddon on bendum (Ælfric, *Lives of saints* [St. Apollinaris] 154-56).
 - 'It happened after a time that the unbelieving heathens bound the bishop and led him in bonds into the city of Ravenna'.
- b. <u>Hwæt</u>, we for dryhtene iu dreamas hefdon,/ song on swegle selrum tidum (*Christ and Satan* 44-45).
 - 'What, we before had joys in front of the lord, song in the heavens in better times'.
- c. þa het fabianus þæt he þam fulan Ioue . recels ge-offrode . oððe eode him sylf ofer byrnende gleda mid his barum fotum <u>Hwæt ða</u> tiburtius . bealdlice eode . ofer þa byrnendan gleda . unforbærnedum fotum (Ælfric, *Lives of saints* [St. Sebastian] 376-80).
 - 'then Fabianus ordered that he should offer incense to the foul Jove, or himself walk over burning coals with bare fee. What then Tibertius went boldly over the burning coals with unburned feet'.

(2) MIDDLE ENGLISH

- a. Criseyda gan al his chere aspien,/ And leet it so softe in hire herte synke,/ That to hireself she seyde, 'Who yaf me drynke?' (Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* II, 649-51).
- b. And so they lay todydir untyll underne of the morne; and all the wyndowys and holys of that chambir were stopped, that no maner of day myght be seyne. And anone sir Launcelot remembryd hym and arose up and wente to the wyndow ... (Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur 11, 2, 795, 17-20).
- c. And so <u>bifel it</u> on a Saterday,/ This carpenter was goon til Osenay (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ['Miller's Tale'] A.3399-400).
- d. Whan sir Bors was departed from Camelot he mette with a religious man ... (Malory, Le Morte d'Arthur 16, 6, 955, 1).
- e. And cryde 'Awake!' ful wonderlich and sharpe;/ 'What! Slombrestow as in a litargie?' (Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* I, 729-30).
- f. 'What! Nicholay! What, how! What, looke adoun!/ Awak, and thenk on Cristes passioun!' (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ['Miller's Tale'] A.3477-78).
- g. 'I am yong and unkonnynge, <u>as thow woost</u>, And <u>as I trowe</u>, with love offended moost ...' (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ['Knight's Tale'] A.2393-94).
- h. That in his herte he demed, as I gesse, / that ther nys lovere in this world at ese/ So wel as he (Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde III, 1727-29).
- i. 'His answere shal she have, <u>I undertake</u>' (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ['Merchant's Tale'] E.2317).
- j. I have, <u>God woot</u>, a large feeld to ere,/ And wayke been the oxen in my plough./ The remenant of the tale is long ynough (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ['Knight's Tale'] A.886-88).
- k. For truste wel, hir flesshly love was deedly hate (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* ['Parson's Tale'] I.204).

- 2.1 CHARACTERISTICS. The syntactic, semantic, and distributional properties of OE and ME mystery features can be compared with those identified in studies of pragmatic markers in Modern English:
- (a) Marginality in word class: Lexicographers are at a loss, for example, to account for OE hwæt, calling it an 'interjection' or a 'particle'.
- (b) <u>Heterogeneity of forms</u>: OE and ME mystery features include individual lexical items such as ME gan (a verb) or anon (an adverb), phrases such as ME for the nones, reduced clauses such as ME I gesse or ye knowen, and full clauses such as OE ha gelamp hæt or ME then (it) happened that.
- (c) <u>High frequency (in oral discourse)</u>: ME anon, for example, occurs more frequently than expected for a word with the meaning 'at once'; gan, too, would appear to be more common than an ingressive aspect marker would normally be. Moreover, the frequency of ba's in OE narrative discourse is very high.
- (d) <u>Phonetic 'shortness' or reduction</u>: OE *pa* exists alongside a longer form *panne* or *ponne*, which occurs in 'non-narrative' contexts (Wårvik in press), while ME *gan* is an aphetic form of OE *on-/aginnan* and occurs concurrently with the prefixed form *beginnen*, which is usually a pure ingressive marker.
- (e) <u>Asyntacticality, or occurrence outside the core syntactic structure</u>: OE *hwæt* is always appended loosely to a clause; the ME *I gesse* forms, in their pragmatic uses, occur parenthetically, either clause finally, initially, or medially; and ME *bifel*-constructions are also occasionally parenthetical.
- (f) Restriction to, or possibility in, sentence-initial position: OE hwæt and hwæt þa almost always appear sentence initially, as do OE gelamp- and ME bifel-constructions. ME I gesse parentheticals may, and frequently do, occur sentence initially, and ME anon, while positionally quite free in Chaucer, seems to be restricted to initial and anon collocations in Malory. By definition, preposed whan-clauses occur sentence initially.
- (g) Lack of semantic or propositional content: Many of the mystery features are traditionally described as 'meaningless', 'empty', or 'colorless'. ME anon often seems bleached of any real sense of immediacy. ME gan cannot be translated 'began' because of the presence of incompatible aspectual elements. OE hwæt has no interrogative sense, but rather is said to have 'vague meaning'. ME for the nones is described by dictionaries as having 'no special meaning', and the gelamp- and bifel-constructions both contain extremely general verbs of happening.
- (h) <u>Difficulty in translating</u>: OE *hwæt* has been variously—and unsatisfactorily—translated as 'what ho', 'list', 'alas', 'lo', 'indeed', and 'hear (me)'.
- (i) Optionality: The absence of any one of the forms studied renders the discourse neither ungrammatical nor unintelligible. Even the *gelamp-* and *bifel-*constructions, which would seem to be grammatically more central, can be omitted, with the original complement clause assuming main clause status.
- (j) <u>Stylistic stigmatization</u> (due to frequency, orality, and apparent lack of meaning): When seen as a metrical expedient, inserted by (incompetent) poets to add a syllable to a line of verse or to move the infinitive into rhyme position, gan is considered a defect of ME style. Similarly, for the nones is described as a 'stop-gap', 'mere tag', or 'weak expletive'. Moreover, the gelamp- and bifel-constructions might be considered clumsy, unsophisticated, or naive.

Of the forms examined, OE hwæt would seem to be most similar to a pragmatic marker: it is a phonetically short item of indeterminate word class, with no obvious lexical or grammatical meaning, occurring optionally outside of the clausal structure in sentence-initial position. A number of OE and ME forms fail to meet some of these criteria: for example, ME gan never appears sentence initially, anon belongs to a clearly recognizable lexical category, and OE gelamp- and ME bifel-constructions, as well as not being phonetically 'short', constitute part of the core syntactic structure. But the same types of exceptions can be found in many of the Modern English pragmatic markers.

- 2.2 PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS. Stronger evidence for the status of mystery particles as pragmatic markers is provided by their functions. Pragmatic markers in Modern English serve two broad purposes, which following Halliday (1970) can be termed 'textual' and 'interpersonal'. Together these can be classified as 'pragmatic', as opposed to propositional or referential (see Leech 1983). Generally speaking, in the textual mode, the speaker structures utterances as text, while in the interpersonal mode, the speaker expresses subjective attitudes and evaluations as well as acknowledges and maintains a social exchange with the hearer.
- 2.2.1 Textual functions. The mystery features of Old and Middle English serve two types of textual roles:
- (a) Salient event marking: In Old English, ba, accompanied by verb second order, is commonly recognized as a foregrounder or peak marker, and in Middle English, the historical present is also seen as a foregrounder. It can be argued that both gan and anon have foregrounding functions as well (see 2a and 2b), but denote different levels of the foreground. Gan denotes 'pivotal' events which would constitute part of a high level summary of the text, while anon marks 'backbone' events which would be part of a more detailed summary. Furthermore, gan focuses on the action itself and slows the narrative down, while anon emphasizes the sequence of events and serves to speed up the pace of the narrative. In a somewhat similar way, hwxet ba in Old English can be seen as moving the narrative forward by indicating that the event which follows is to be inferred from the one that preceded (see 1c).
- (b) Narrative segmentation: Episode or topic shift is a function attributed to pa, to aspectual forms and to word order in Old English and to pa 'then', to the perfect, and to the historical present in Middle English. More importantly, both the OE gelamp-construction and the ME bifel-construction have the primary purpose of demarcating the beginning, and sometimes the end, of a narrative unit, or episode (see 1a and 2c). The that-clause denotes the inciting or instigating event of the episode and the main clause verb of happening serves as a metacommentary on the narrative structure, orienting the listener to the structural shape of the narrative, while the accompanying adverbial is a temporal or causal frame which grounds the episode within the narrative. Both the framing and the orienting functions are assumed by preposed whan-clauses in later Middle English (see 2d).

Additionally, one may note that the multifunctionality that characterizes pragmatic markers in Modern English is also true of mystery features. For instance, OE *ba* has been identified as a foreground 'dramatizer', a sequencer of events, a marker of colloquial speech, and an indicator of narrative segmentation (Enkvist 1986).

- 2.2.2 Interpersonal functions. In the interpersonal component, the mystery features of Old and Middle English exhibit both more speaker-oriented (i.e. subjective) and more hearer-oriented (i.e. interactive) functions:
- (a) <u>Subjective functions</u>: Many of the mystery particles serve as devices for internal evaluation, a function traditionally designated as 'emphatic' or 'intensive', whereby the speaker highlights the importance of various narrative situations without breaking the narrative frame. Since evaluation is logically aligned with foregrounding, it seems clear that both ME anon and gan can have this function. In Old English hwæt may serve the purposes of both internal and external evaluation. An evaluative dimension has also been attributed to the historical present and to the perfect in Middle English. The ME I gesse parentheticals have the subjective function of indicating the speaker's epistemic uncertainty (hedging) or less often certainty, while the speaker's sense of surprise or astonishment may be expressed by (eala) hwæt in Old English and by what in Middle English (as well as in Modern English) (see 2e).
- (b) Interactive functions: The interactive functions of OE and ME mystery features are quite varied. OE hwæt can focus the attention of the hearer or reader (cf. ModE y'know what?); similarly, ME what (ho) claims the attention of an interlocutor (see 2f). The main function of OE hwæt, however, is to preface information which is, or is presumed to be, shared (see 1b). By confirming shared knowledge, OE hwæt may establish intimacy or solidarity between the speaker and hearer ('positive politeness') and is often intended to elicit the hearer's favorable reception of the information. The parenthetical ye knowen has an analogous function in Middle English (see 2g). ME God woot and trusteth me wel are attempts by speakers to persuade hearers of the truth of their utterances by invoking authority (see 2j and 2k). Finally, I gesse parentheticals are primarily a means of speaker self-effacement or deference serving the purpose of 'negative politeness' (see 2g, 2h, and 2i).

In the absence of an oral context, the interactive functions of the mystery features are particularly significant in suggesting their classification as pragmatic markers.

2.3 GRAMMATICALIZATION. While studies of the development of pragmatic markers in Modern English have generally been concerned only with the relation of propositional to non-propositional meaning, a number of studies have considered their development as a process of grammaticalization, seen as a synchronic phenomenon.⁶ Most important here are Romaine and Lange (1991) on (be) like and Thompson and Mulac (1991) on I think. While recognizing a lack of historical depth in their study, Romaine and Lange suggest that for both the discourse marker use of like and the 'quotative' use of be like, the original semantic and syntactic properties lead to the pragmatic functions that develop: 'Semantically, it is because like has the referential meanings of 'comparison', 'for example', 'as if', and so on, that it is suitable for use in a construction reporting hypothetical discourse or thought. Syntactically, it is because it can occupy a slot immediately preceding the comparison ... that it can function as an anaphor whose scope is forward or backward' (1991:246). Using quantitative data, Thompson and Mulac (1991) argue that the development of 'epistemic parentheticals' I think and I guess, albeit not a 'textbook case', shows many of the features of grammaticalization, including, most importantly, the fact that the forms are decategorialized from subject + verb to a 'unitary epistemic morpheme', that they can continue to function (in ungrammaticalized form) as regular complement-taking verbs, and that in their grammaticalized form they retain vestiges of their earlier meanings (cf. Hopper 1991).

The mystery features of Old and Middle English do seem to undergo many of the morphosyntactic and semantic changes identified with the process of grammaticalization, 7 though never, of course, being fully 'grammaticalized' in the sense of being incorporated into a recognized grammatical paradigm (see Lehmann 1985:307, 309 on 'paradigmaticization').

2.3.1 Morphosyntactic changes. In respect to morphosyntactic changes, it should be acknowledged from the outset that mystery features do not undergo either phonological reduction or morphological bonding,⁸ which are thought to be typical of grammaticalization. However, function words (auxiliaries, case markers, etc.) are generally considered clear instances of grammaticalization, even though they retain their lexical independence and often their full phonetic substance. It should also be acknowledged that the mystery features often begin the grammaticalization process as phrases or clauses rather than as individual words, but this too has not been seen as a barrier to grammaticalization (Heine et al. 1991:24-25; Thompson and Mulac 1991:318, 324).⁹

Mystery features are subject to one of the central processes of grammaticalization, namely, decategorialization, or loss of the morphological and syntactic characteristics of their original category, with movement down the scale from more major to more minor word class membership (Heine et al. 1991:213; Hopper 1991:30-31; Hopper and Traugott 1993:103-13). OE hwæt loses the characteristics of an interrogative pronoun, evolving into a particle of indeterminate status. ME gan undergoes a shift from a full complement-taking verb into a quasi-auxiliary found only in the third person preterite. As Thompson and Mulac (1991) argue for I think, the ME I gesse and ye knowen parentheticals develop into more or less unitary epistemic particles similar to adverbs, restricted to first-person subjects and present tense verb forms. ME bifel-constructions become more unified and particle-like in nature, as they are increasingly followed by that-less complements or are found parenthetically. Even gelamp-constructions are characterized by Gorrell (1895) as 'introductory particles'.

To some extent, mystery features also undergo syntactic fixation, in which they lose syntactic variability and come to occupy a fixed slot (Lehmann 1985:308, 309). In its pragmatic functions, hwæt (ha) is restricted to initial position, while hwæt always precedes clauses with first- or second-person subjects. At least in later Middle English (Malory), anon becomes confined to initial position as well. ME gan, which may be followed by to or to-less infinitives in earlier Middle English, later becomes restricted to bare infinitives and may not be separated from its infinitive. ¹⁰

Comparing grammaticalized and non-grammaticalized forms, there is strong evidence that the mystery features experience 'divergence', 'split', or 'form-meaning asymmetry', that is, the retention of full lexical characteristics in some contexts alongside grammaticalization in other contexts (Heine et al. 1991:212-13; Hopper 1991:24-25; Hopper and Traugott 1993:116-20; Lehmann 1985:311). OE hwæt continues to function as an interrogative pronoun/adjective/adverb (in the

propositional mode) while also serving as a complementizer (in the textual mode) and an interactive marker (in the interpersonal mode). ME gan remains as an ingressive aspectual marker and ME anon as a temporal adverbial while at the same time taking on pragmatic functions. ME suppositional verbs such as gessen, witen, trowen may still be used as regular verbs with nominal and sentential complements and a full range of personal subjects, maintaining their 'full' meaning and denoting actual acts of cognition. Finally, the impersonal verbs of happening in both Old and Middle English continue to denote single, isolated events.

The phenomenon of 'layering', the continuation of older, more highly grammaticalized forms next to newer, less grammaticalized forms (Hopper 1991:22-24; Hopper and Traugott 1993:123-26), can also be observed among the OE and ME mystery features, in, for example, the overlapping use of *bifel*-constructions and preposed *whan*-clauses for denoting episode boundaries in Middle English and in the concurrent loss of 'you know' senses of *what* and rise of *ye knowen* parentheticals during the same period.

2.3.2 Semantic changes. The mystery features of Old and Middle English all exhibit a 'semantic aptitude' (Lehmann 1985:315), or appropriateness for the type of pragmatic marker that they become. It is the general interrogative sense of hwæt that allows its development as a marker which questions common knowledge, expresses surprise, and focuses attention. It is the subjective epistemic/evidential sense of the I gesse parentheticals that permit their development as markers of negative politeness. It is the inceptive semantics of gan that motivates its development as a textual marker which focuses on the ensuing action and slows the pace of the narrative, while it is the perfective sense of anon—its portrayal of an event as occurring in an instant or as a whole—that motivates its development as a textual marker which emphasizes the sequence of events and speeds up the pace of the narrative. Finally, it is their very general verbal meaning of happening that makes the gelamp and bifel verbs suitable for episode boundary marking. Thus, like other items undergoing grammaticalization, it is the original lexical meaning of the mystery features which in large part determines the extended meanings or functions that develop.

In all cases, the semantic development of the mystery features provides evidence for referential (propositional) meaning being the source for pragmatic (textual and interpersonal) meanings. And such unidirectionality from propositional to pragmatic meaning has been seen as characteristic of grammaticalization, where there is a 'tendency to recruit lexical (propositional) material for purposes of creating text and indicating attitudes in discourse situations' (Traugott in press).¹¹

The semantic development of the mystery features of Old and Middle English can frequently be explained by the conventionalization of conversational implicature, what Traugott (in press) calls the 'semanticization' of implicature and Heine et al. (1991) call 'context induced reinterpretation', which, along with metaphor, has been seen as a central process in grammaticalization. For example, the textual meaning of saliency or sequentiality of ME anon is an implicature of the word's sense of suddenness or urgency: if something happens in great haste, this implicates that it follows quickly in succession and that it carries some importance. The interpersonal 'you know' sense of OE hwæt is an implicature of the word's interrogative sense: that is, from a questioning of what the hearer knows is inferred an expression

of the speaker's confirmation of what the hearer knows. The surprise sense of ME what is a result of the speaker's request for reasons, such a request suggesting that she or he is puzzled, surprised, or impatient and hence needs reasons. The textual meaning of gan is also contextually implied, an implication of the lexical meaning of the verb that arises in the context of an event sequence: rather than denoting the beginning of an action occurring in isolation, it comes to denote the beginning of an action seen as part of a series of actions; the textual meanings of the gelamp- and bifel-constructions are similarly implied by the narrative context.

3.0 CONCLUSION

In the history of English, there appears to be a continuity in pragmatic functions, at the same time that the forms—which are highly ephemeral—are in a continual process of renewal; such replacement is also characteristic of grammaticalization (Hopper 1991). Thus, OE hwæt is comparable to ModE y'know or y'know what; OE hwæt pa is comparable to ModE so in its implicational sense; ME anon is comparable to ModE now; and ME gan is perhaps comparable to ModE colloquial forms such as up and, take and, and go and. Gelamp pæt in Old English is continued as it bifel that in Middle English, as it came to pass that in Early Modern English, and as it happened that in Modern English oral narrative. However, it is replaced, in written narrative, by preposed when-clauses beginning in Middle English. Only the I gesse parentheticals seem to have persisted unchanged throughout the subsequent history of English, with only minor changes in the inventory of suppositional verbs used.

In conclusion, it seems clear that, despite the lack of oral discourse, we can speak confidently about pragmatic markers in earlier periods of the language. Taxonomically, both the pragmatic markers of Modern English and the mystery features of Old and Middle English have mixed characteristics, though they are all generally marginal in word class membership. The various textual and interpersonal functions of the mystery features point even more decisively to their equivalency with modern pragmatic markers. Moreover, the diachronic development of mystery features seems analogous to the synchronic development of pragmatic markers, with a semantic appropriateness between original and derived form and with pragmatic meanings derivable from propositional meanings, often by means of conversational implicature. Finally, both the synchronic and diachronic developments are describable as processes of grammaticalization exhibiting, above all, syntactic fixation and decategorialization.

Appendix: Studies of the 'mystery features' of Old and Middle English OLD ENGLISH

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(and) þa '(and) then' (Enkvist 1972, 1986, 1994; Enkvist and Wårvik 1987; Foster 1975; Taejin 1992; Turville-Petre 1974; Wårvik 1990a, 1990b, 1994)

hwæt (þa) 'what (then)' (Brinton 1990a, in press)

þa {gelamp, gewearð, getimode, getidde, gesælde, wæs} þæt 'then it happened that'
(Brinton 1993, in press)

her 'here' (Clemoes 1985; Fries 1993)

nu 'now' (Fries 1993)

sona, þærrihte 'immediately, at once' (Wårvik 1994)
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word order (Hopper 1979, 1992)
    imperfective and ingressive aspectual forms (Richardson 1991a, 1994)
MIDDLE ENGLISH
    pan 'then' (Wårvik in press)
    this (Novelli 1957)
    but (Donaldson 1981)
    anon 'at once' (Brinton in press)
    do (Wright 1989, 1991)
    for the nones 'for the occasion' (Lumiansky 1951)
    then (it) {bifel, fel, happed} that 'then it happened that' (Brinton in press)
    I {gesse, trow, wene, woot, undertake, know} 'I think', it {seemeth, thinketh} me 'it
       seems to me' (Brinton in press; Robertson 1933)
    God (it) woot 'God knows' (Brinton in press)
    trusteth me wel 'trust me well' (Brinton in press)
    gan/con 'began' (Aertsen 1991; Brinton 1990b, in press; Richardson 1991a)
    as it is told, that y of told, etc. (Wittig 1978)
    ye knowen, thou woost, etc. 'you know' (Brinton in press)
    wel (Finell 1989)
    preposed whan-clauses (Brinton in press)
    the historical present (Benson 1961; Richardson 1991a, 1991b; Zimmerman
    perfect aspect (Richardson 1991a; Zimmerman 1973)
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Notes

- 1. There is a large and growing literature on pragmatic markers in Modern English (for a summary, see Brinton in press, Chapter 2). Book-length studies include Erman (1987), Goldberg (1980), Schourup (1985), Schiffrin (1987), and Stenström (1994).
- 2. 'For over twenty years the study of discourse has been almost exclusively concerned with synchronic analysis and ... since we can no longer resort to the excuse that discourse studies are young and immature, we might find it necessary very soon to turn our minds to *diachronic* studies of discourse as well' (Calvo 1992:26).
- 3. For convenience, constructions such as (1a) will be referred to as 'gelamp-constructions', those such as (2c) as 'bifel-constructions', and those such as (2h and 2i) as 'I gesse parentheticals'.
- 4. The distinction between pivotal and backbone is made by Jones and Jones (1979).
- 5. The structure and function of gelamp-/bifel-constructions offer further evidence that foregrounding and backgrounding are not a binary distinction. For instance, while the that-clause of these constructions depicts temporal events in iconic order, and hence presumably foregrounded, the clause itself is syntactically backgrounded and often atypical of foregrounding in respect to both verbal aspect and subject type (see further Brinton in press).
- 6. One diachronic study of pragmatic markers is Finell (1989) on well in English, and Abraham (1991) on doch, eben, halt, and ja in German. See also the comments of Traugott on well and right (1982:251, 252, 255) and on let's and let alone (in press).
- 7. See Brinton (in press, Chapter 2) for a review of the literature on grammaticalization; see also Bybee et al. (1994), Heine et al. (1991), Hopper and Traugott (1993), and Traugott and Heine (1991).
- 8. The one exception is ME God woot, which is found in the reduced form Goddot(h).
- 9. The mystery features also do not seem to undergo condensation, or loss of scope, since in their pragmatic functions they relate not to individual words or clauses but to larger stretches of discourse.

- 10. An exception to the loss of syntactic variability is the increased positional freedom of *I gesse* parentheticals, which come to occur in a number of different sentential slots.
- 11. This development need not, as the mystery features amply illustrate, be a unilinear development from propositional through textual to interpersonal meaning, but the different pragmatic meaning may develop quite independently from different propositional meanings of the same word (see Brinton in press, on the development of hwæt and anon especially). This view accords with Traugott's (in press) sense of their being 'correlated diachronic continua' of development.

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