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The peripheral-specific meanings of epistemic-evidential complement-taking predicates in English

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Epistemic and evidential *complement-taking predicates* (CTPs) are constructions that may be used in various positions in an utterance. The following examples exemplify their use in initial (1), medial (2) and final positions (3) relative to the proposition they modify:

(1) *I suppose* this is the complete choice.
(2) I myself would never *I think* expect a verbal statement worked out at a first meeting.
(3) He's working for a PhD here *I think*.

The main objective of the present study is to find out if CTPs are also able to indicate peripheral-specific meanings. The idea of peripheral-specific meanings is a relatively new development in linguistic research, despite the long history of the phenomenon itself (Traugott, 2012; Degand, 2014). This is most likely due to the relative infrequency of discourse markers at right periphery compared to the left periphery in English (Traugott, 2013). The phenomenon entails that discourse markers are associated with different meanings relative to the position they occupy in an utterance. According to this view, the left periphery is typically associated with speaker-oriented, subjective meanings, while the right periphery attracts addressee-oriented, intersubjective meanings. We adopt Traugott's (2010) definitions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, in that the former refers to the speaker's awareness of his/her own attitudes and viewpoints, while in case of the latter, the awareness is directed at the addressee's self-image. Although medial positions do not constitute clause periphery, the study will also try to uncover whether medial positions behave more similarly to the left or right periphery.

The data come from the London-Lund Corpus of spoken British English (Svartvik & Quirk, 1980), and more specifically, from face-to-face spontaneous dialogues between educated adults. This allows us to study interaction in its most natural form where parenthetical CTPs are most likely to occur. Another advantage of the corpus is its close and detailed prosodic annotation, since prosody has been shown to be an important indicator of the semantic-pragmatic features of CTPs (Dehé & Wichmann, 2010). The parameters to be explored include positional, prosodic and functional factors that are believed to either confirm or refute the existence of peripheral-specific meanings of CTPs. Couched in the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 1995), the constructions are viewed as part of a larger constructional family whose members are synonymous with regards to their association with epistemic-evidential meanings. The methods chosen for the study are both qualitative and quantitative in order to be able to give a comprehensive overview of the use of these constructions in context.

Our initial results indicate that when it comes to CTPs then the general tendencies associated with peripheral-specific meanings can only be observed to a certain degree. Instead, CTPs seem to display intersubjectivity in all positions in the utterance, although these functions exemplify intersubjectivity differently. While the left periphery often acts as a site for expressions related to face-saving and politeness, the prosodic cues of CTPs at the right periphery imply that these constructions regularly facilitate turn-taking on the part of the addressee. Also, although synonymous in their use as epistemic-evidential markers, the functions of these constructions are shown to be dependent on the type of predicate chosen,

with more frequent constructions being the most salient representatives of the tendencies noted above.

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