The Marker is the Message
The Influence of Discourse Markers and Particles on Textual Meaning

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ABSTRACT

In two recent discourse workshops in the Philippines, I worked with speakers of eight northern dialects to discover their inventories of discourse markers and particles. We also worked to categorize these markers and to identify the function or role they had in influencing or determining the emergent meaning of the texts. Some of their functions were to maximize (emphasize, intensify), to minimize (mitigate, qualify), to refute (disprove, discredit) or to hedge (be tentative; Hartnett 2004). Many examples from Philippine languages will be provided.

This paper explores the phenomenon of the enormous functional load of discourse markers and particles. Discourse markers and particles, and some adverbials and interjections, often have a sphere of influence that is much larger than the immediate context of the verb they modify, or the clause in which they occur.

The issue of the "sphere of influence" of discourse particles may be examined in the light of a "semantic prosody" theory. The notion of "prosody" has a long history within the study of phonological phenomena, in particular, those that have a span greater than the segment or even the syllable. More recently, phonological prosody has been examined in relation to discourse structure. But whereas "most empirical work examining prosodic signaling of discourse structure has focused on the use of acoustic cues to identify boundaries of discourse units" (Mushin et al, 2003), we propose to show that discourse markers and particles can also be viewed as cues or signals of discourse structure, and analyzed with reference to position and function within the text. Analyzing from this perspective shows that the markers exert a disproportionate influence on the emergent meaning of the text. We will demonstrate the critical importance of the discourse markers and particles for linguistic discourse analysis, for translation, for interpretation, and for effective communication.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the phenomenon of the enormous functional load of discourse markers and particles. Discourse markers and particles, and some adverbials and interjections, often have a sphere of influence that is much larger than the immediate context of the verb they modify, or the clause in which they occur. Not only do they have a broad sphere of influence, but the degree of that influence is remarkable.

The issue of the "sphere of influence" of discourse markers and particles may be examined in the light of a "semantic prosody" theory. The notion of "prosody" has a long history within the study of phonological phenomena, in particular, those that have a span greater than the segment or even the syllable. More recently, phonological prosody has been examined in relation to discourse structure. But whereas "most empirical work examining prosodic signaling of discourse structure has focused on the use of acoustic cues to identify boundaries of discourse units" (Mushin et al, 2003), discourse markers and particles can also be viewed as cues or signals

of discourse structure, and analyzed with reference to position and function within the text. Analyzing from this perspective shows that the particles exert a disproportionate influence on the emergent meaning of the text.[1]

This paper will demonstrate the critical importance of the discourse markers and particles for linguistic discourse analysis, for translation, for interpretation, and for effective communication.

2. Definition of discourse markers and particles

There is a group of phenomena in language that function at the discourse level, more than at the morphological or syntactic level. One of the characteristics that set these apart from apparently similar phenomena, is the difficulty of analyzing them and describing them based on morphological or syntactic criteria, or for that matter even lexemic criteria.[2]

The question arises whether this is a single category of phenomena, or several categories with similar functions. There are many references in the literature to discourse particles, discourse markers/cues, cue phrases (Louwerse and Mitchell, 2003:202-3), pragmatic markers (Fleischman and Yaguello 2004), and interjections. Another term is sequence marking particles or phrases (Frank, 1999:26). The term 'coherence relations' (in Louwerse and Mitchell, 2003) seems to be used at times as a synonym for Discourse Marker, and at times as a generic term to include all these phenomena. A similar phenomenon is described as the global scope (versus local scope) of some adverbs or adverbial clauses (Givon, 1993:311-3).

Discourse markers are said to "…instruct discourse participants how to consider an upcoming utterance, providing a path toward the integration of different components of language use into one coherent discourse" (Louwerse and Mitchell, 2003:202).

Defining these phenomena requires that we describe their functions in discourse. And that is no simple matter, since like many linguistic features, and likely more than others, these features tend to have multiple simultaneous functions. One is to mark interactional boundaries. Another is to express attitudes and provide interpretive cues. These and others will be described below.

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[1] The notion of emergent text-level meaning was discussed in Walrod 2006 (in press). Rhee (2004) asserts that "discourse is the locus of active meaning negotiation, in the course of which an array of potential meanings associated with a form is made available for possible conventionalization of context-induced reinterpretations." Harrison wrote "…certain elements of meaning can be 'emergent' in the sense that they need not be directly specified by any of the lexemes in a string, but arise as a result of the coactivation of two or more lexemes in a given context. They thus belong to the whole usage event, rather than any of its parts taken individually. The real issue here is one of *boundary phenomena*. To ask the question 'Where does this semantic element belong?' is to require clear boundaries between the semantic structures of separate lexemes. Many branches of science are now converging on the conclusion that boundaries rarely if ever occur in any natural systems and are rather an artifact imposed by the observer. Arguments over boundary phenomena have no place in a realistic cognitive model, and modernizing the argument using words like *schema* and *cognitive* does not automatically release the analyst from long-standing and limiting misconceptions" (Harrison 1997:107).

[2] An example of this difficulty to define is presented in Copeland's discussion of the Tarahumara particle 'pa', which had been described as an empty expletive particle without any identifiable meaning. However Copeland asserts that it has "a wide range of identifiable functions" and that it is one of the most frequently occurring forms in the language. He further states that "any attempt to construct a strictly formal grammar of Tarahumara syntax is preordained to failure," because of this particle, which tends to relax and override the syntax and strengthen the role of pragmatics in the construal (Copeland 1997:313-6).

3. Prosodic functions of discourse markers and particles

Wallace Chafe (1994:43) said "Writing systems have never developed ways of representing anything that even approaches the range of spoken prosodic phenomena, and in that sense, written language is seriously impoverished." Discussions of prosody usually refer to phonological features such as tone and intonation, that typically have a sphere of influence that extends beyond the phonological segment or syllable.

Damron, in an article about prosodic schemas, says, "The results of this study indicate that research in prosody can inform our knowledge of information structure in discourse as well as have implications for our knowledge of discourse processing." Exploring or identifying the exact roles of prosody in communication is still a challenge. Damron (2003:57) cites the following quotation:

> While it is clear that contextualization cues cannot be assigned context-independent stable meanings, it is also true that contextualization cues cannot be dismissed as merely conveying transitory non-referential expressive, emotive or attitudinal effects as some sociolinguists' as well as phonetician's studies of decontextualized prosodic and paralinguistic signs seem to suggest. (Gumperz 1996:383)

My point here is that Gumperz and Damron (and Mushin et al, 2003) have identified prosody as being very significant in the communication of meaning in discourse, notwithstanding the lesser importance attached to them by some sociolinguists and phoneticians. By the same token, great significance and very similar functions can be attributed to discourse markers and particles, and their importance cannot be adequately represented by assigning them to a syntactic category or providing a brief dictionary definition. In this discussion of discourse markers and particles, we will explore the notion that they could have prosodic functions that are relevant to text-level semantics and discourse-pragmatics.

Consider this example taken from a talk show on the radio, discussing a violent crime in the Vancouver area. A 72 year old man was stabbed several times during a robbery attempt. The commentator concluded,

(1)   "…This was six or eight months ago. The man is STILL recovering, unfortunately."

There is what seems to be an error, or at least an anomaly, in describing the old man's recovery process as unfortunate. The larger context of this particular example did not permit the interpretation that the speaker for some reason did not like the old man, and would have preferred that he would not recover. The speaker was clearly incensed about the commission of the crime, and sympathetic toward the old man.

In conversation, this sort of example occurs quite frequently. In the context of a conference of linguists, or in editing a written text, this anomaly could be described as problematic. It is not ungrammatical in the sense of a syntactic error. But it is anomalous at some semantic or pragmatic level.

Consider the possibility that this example is judged anomalous as a result of our linguistic theory and analysis, which has categorized words like "unfortunately" as *adverbs*. If in fact our theory allowed for such words to function in a prosodic manner as "adprepositions", or something with an even broader sphere of influence, such as an "adschema" or "adepisode/adparagraph," then in that case there might not be any anomaly. "Unfortunately" would modify the whole criminal episode. And in fact, in conversation, this is the way that most people perform the interpretive act. Because of our inevitable bent to make sense of any linguistic communication, we treat texts and utterances holistically, and construe the meaning that the discourse context guides us toward. If we focus on situated linguistic communication

rather than decontextualized linguistic forms, then we can be comfortable with the notion of a prosodic function of some units in discourse. Toolan, a good spokesperson for integrational linguistics, requires such a focus in light of "the inevitable contextual embeddedness of language" (1996:3-6).

The common functions of discourse markers and phonological prosody have been observed by Chafe (1994) and others. Certain markers such as "in fact, rather, well, I mean, y'know, etc." may function as guides to help the text processor to follow the flow of information, by signaling many of the same kind of relations that are signaled by prosody and gesture in oral contexts (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos, 1999:93-5).

This paper recommends a similar concept with respect to Discourse Markers and Particles. They are like cues or roadsigns which guide our processes of text comprehension and interpretation. Some have referred such contextual cues as "constraints" (e.g. Katz and Ferreti 2003:23),[3] but I prefer to take a more positive perspective. Rather than restraining us from our presumed efforts to make a wrong interpretation, they are guiding us quite inexorably toward the correct or relevant interpretation (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). They are like discourse cowboys, herding us along the hermeneutical trail. They are like the cues on a musical score (staccato, pianissimo, fortissimo) guiding the performer's interpretation of the musical composition. In the metalanguage of textlinguistics and cognitive science, discourse markers and particles are those parts of speech which facilitate elaborative inference generation (O'Halloran 2003:136). In other words, they confirm or facilitate expectation-driven understanding, and generate still more expectations.

This function of discourse markers and particles, and the great functional load that they carry, is maximally significant in creating the emergent text-level meaning in communication or discourse. For that reason, I suggest that they be viewed as having a semantic-prosody function. The phenomenon of emergent text-level meaning tends to by a higher-order rule than the kind of semantics we describe in lexicography. DM's and DP's tend to overrule or trump the semantics of lexemes and propositions. In the example cited, the final sentence was "The man is still recovering, unfortunately." What appears to have a syntactic function of modifying the verb "recovering", or even "still recovering", is actually functioning as a discourse marker or modifier, referring to the whole sordid incident, --the crime and its aftermath.

4. Additional functions of discourse markers and particles

Blakemore (2002:4-5) suggests "that from a cognitive point of view, there is not a single class of discourse markers." She suggests that discourse is not a decontextualizable object that can be investigated apart from the human mind. In fact, for her the object of study "is not discourse, but the cognitive processes underlying successful linguistic communication, and the expressions which have been labeled as discourse markers must be analysed in terms of their input to those processes." This view permits analysis of markers from multiple perspectives.

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[3] Katz and Ferretti describe two competing perspectives, two groups of models used to explain language processing. There are "obligatory-first" models and "direct-access" models. A traditional version of an obligatory-first model would posit that people access a literal meaning first, and only if that fails to make sense in context, do they look for another meaning. They prefer direct access models, in which "...context can bias processing so that only the context-appropriate interpretations are drawn" (Katz and Ferretti, 2003:20). They favor a recent refinement of this approach, which they call "constraint-satisfaction models of language processing".

4.1. INTERACTIONAL

Marking transition points; conversational interaction cues; back channel responses. These DM's may signal the point where one speaker is concluding a remark, one speaker cueing another to respond, or another speaker seeking the floor, or simply affirming the person who has the floor (Hall, 1987:45-52). They may be very formulaic, and be functioning at a purely interactional level rather than having any function of communicating lexical semantic meaning.

(2)   yeah, mhm, right, fine, okay, well, so, see, oh I know

(3)   Ga'dang 'allay' (similar to man or mate, but can be used just to mark transition)

4.2. TEXTUAL

Marking or creating cohesion relations. Anyway, so, yeah, mhm, right, and so on; and so forth; yadda yadda (Louwerse and Mitchell 202). These are fairly neutral with respect to attitude and emphasis. They serve as linkages.

One of our students recently recounted the marriage proposal she received. It took her so much by surprise that she needed to excuse herself for a while. At that point in the narration, there was the closure of the episode leading up to that moment, then a brief interlude, and then the resumption of conversation. The sentence ending the one episode, and the following sentence beginning the next, started with 'but anyway' and 'so anyway' respectively.

(4)   But anyway, I was just so floored that I kind of had to get out of the situation.
       So anyway, I went to the bathroom and came back and was like, "Yeah, that would be
       okay. We could look at rings."

Some DM's do a little more than just establish a link. For example English 'anyway' may also indicate that 'in spite of whatever negative factors we have just observed, we will now move on to a brighter or more positive concept'. Similarly in Ga'dang 'kadde' functions as a discourse cue meaning 'setting that aside, or accepting that as the reality, let's move on to something better…' It can have this function in monologue, as well as at a turn-taking boundary.

4.3. CONTEXTUAL AND PRAGMATIC

Discourse markers serve as cues to interpretation (text processing). They may be signals of attitudes and emotions (Walrod 2004).

Awesome; cool; all right; marvelous; great; rather; quite; extraordinary; incredible; absolutely; totally; exactly; definitely; certainly; and perfect.

Marking literal or figurative: proverbially speaking, in a manner of speaking, literally speaking (Katz and Ferretti, 2003). Ga'dang terms marking text as other than literal are: 'gangngariyan' (for example), and 'amparig' (parable). However, these should be viewed as discourse markers or cues of a particular type, rather than as evidence for a robust distinction between literal and figurative language (Toolan 1996, and Walrod 2006). Both Ricouer (1976) and Gibbs (1994) suggest that a single strategy of meaning construal is at work, not a separate strategy for metaphorical versus literal language.

4.4. TEXT-LEVEL SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS, LOGICAL RELATIONS

These signal relations between sentences or even paragraphs or larger chunks of texts: therefore, moreover, consequently, on the other hand (called sequence marking particles or phrases in Frank, 1999:26); nevertheless; to summarize; after all's said and done; at the end of the day.

Ga'dang examples include the following: kunnantu (therefore), kunnamantu (therefore emphatic), massiki tan nu kunnenoy (even though); total (in summary); gafu se kunnenoy (because of that); gafu se iyawira (because of these).

4.5. DISCOURSE THEMATIC FUNCTIONS (RAISING OR LOWERING)
4.5.1. Maximize/confirm

absolutely, totally, definitely, exactly, precisely, sweet, right on. Another way of maximizing thematicity of a statement or evaluation is to use a discourse marker which signals 'this is the clincher' or 'this should be beyond questioning', such as 'to sum up…'; 'after all's said and done…' or 'at the end of the day…'

(5) Ga'dang: "total" (to sum up); "gafu so kunnenoy" (because of that) "gafu se iyawira" (because of these)

4.5.2. Minimize/undermine/refute:

Whatever. Yeah right! No way. Not. Hmph. Eeh! Big deal. As if!

A special case is 'you think?' which tends to maximize the likelihood but minimize the significance of a statement or observation. It refutes an implicit claim to the significance or relevance of a statement. This is nearly synonymous with 'that's a no brainer', or 'duh'.

4.5.3. Hedge (express uncertainty).

According to Hartnett, linguists have identified many types of hedging, which have been described as "appraisal, epistemic status, evaluation, evidentiality, intensity, modality, qualification, stance, or vagueness" at least some of which can be achieved through using "downgraders, downtoners, indirectness, mitigation, tentativeness, and understatement" (Hartnett, 2004:355). Some examples of these sorts of things would be words or phrases like: frequently, possibly, sometimes, tentatively, reportedly, apparently, it appears that, it is assumed, and many modals such as should, could, would, may, or might.

A function that is somewhat similar in that it expresses some doubt about some proposition(s) is Skepticism/cynicism: Whatever; yeah, right! Think so? Oh yeah? And Ga'dang "adasi", and perhaps some uses of Tagalog "talaga". This is nor not exactly hedging, in that the speaker is confident that the matter should be called into question, whereas with hedging, the speaker lacks confidence about the factuality of the matter.

4.5.4. Mark as mainline/thematic

In the Peebles text (about a marriage proposal), like was used 60 times in 109 sentences, Most instances were in main-eventline sentences. It rarely occurred in background or collateral or author comment sentences. At some significant points in the discourse (e.g. an inciting incident or trigger), 'like' was used up to 3 times per sentence.

(6) Example: "And we had a totally great time and reconnected and everything and when I'd left, like, unbeknownst to me, like, he was, like, really sure he wanted to get married, but we hadn't talked about it at all or anything; I was still transitioning from Africa."

This English discourse marker may be one of a set of very similar markers in different languages: English "like"; French "genre"; New Zealand or Britain "sort of"; Ga'dang "kanu". There may be a universal at work here, a slight disclaimer as to the exact accuracy or exact reliability of the information! Fleischman and Yaguello (2004:131), who observed the similarity

between 'like' and 'genre', call it a mismatch as compared to the ideal; a loose fit; it's a sort of hedge. We don't want to be held strictly accountable! Our confidence regarding the information is not unqualified. Yet the frequency of the distribution of all of these, in the four languages, suggests that they perform other functions, quite possibly as markers of the mainline of the discourse.

Other markers possibly marking mainline are see; y'know what I'm saying; that's what I'm talkin' about.[4] But these ones do not seem to share that feature of 'speaker's inferiority complex'! They seem to express strong confidence in the value and reliability of the statement(s).

'Anyway' and 'so' have also been observed to mark a return to the mainline of a text, following some background information.

4.6. NORMATIVE FUNCTIONS

Hall's work on Subanon (1987) describes the social functions of back channel responses, promoting group solidarity. Louwerse and Mitchell (2003) have observed similar functions, described as acknowledgment tokens.

Functions which are more explicitly normative include evaluations and implied prescriptions (good or bad, right or wrong, should or must). For pity's sake; for goodness sake. In Ga'dang 'gampade' simply means 'however', but 'gampamatde' (however tsk tsk) includes a negative evaluation.

Another normative function is argumentation: to affirm or refute. Right on; excellent; yeah; awesome; great; no way; not; no chance; fat chance; slim chance; that's a negative.

4.7. MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS

Lamb's neurocognitive model of linguistics posits elaborated neural networks and multiple simultaneous functions in language. He suggests that texts do not convey meaning, but humans create or construe meaning based on the neural activations resulting from processing a text. Also Katz and Ferretti indicate that multiple cues are processed simultaneously and provide "immediate probabilistic support for competing interpretations in parallel over time" (2003:21). Even if we do not accept that the mind is sifting through several possible options, the important point is the simultaneity and immediacy of the process. Louwerse and Mitchell (2003:201) assert that discourse markers can operate at different levels in the communication, and "one discourse marker could serve multiple functions".

The discourse particle "kanu" in northern Philippine languages is frequently a part of a quotative formula, and is often translated "reportedly", and said to function as a disclaimer of responsibility, or a signal of fictional material. But it is quite certainly more than that. It is not necessary to disclaim responsibility more than 50 times in a text of 73 sentences (Walrod , 1979:43). There is no risk of serious consequences for failing to recount the canonical version of the monkey and turtle story. The distribution of the particle was seen to be related to marking the main event line of the story. It occurred in every main event sentence, except in climactic sections, where a principal of Maximum Deletion would override the mainline marking function.

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[4] Lamb (1999:32) describes these as sentential lexemes. He posits lexemes at word, phrase, clause, sentence, and discourse levels.

5. Distribution of markers and particles in discourse

Discourse markers are distributed in particular positions. Markers such as "like" and "y'know what I'm sayin" tend to occur in almost every sentence in some types of discourse, and have typical slots such as just before the verb, introducing a quotation, or between clauses.

Really significant points in discourse are often signaled by clusters of markers or particles. These can be episode boundaries, or signals of discourse peak.

(7)   And so, anyway, he came back…

(8)   But, um, anyway, yeah, and then we just sat together…

(9)   E   gampade wara pay o   Buton (Ga'dang)
      And however exist just pm Buton
      Free: "and however, as for Buton…"

6. Representative lists of discourse markers in northern Philippine languages

Several particles in Ibaloi were said to contribute in some way to intensification:

(10) a. pay (again, more, still, yet, also)
      b. siya (intensification)
      c. ga (please)
      d. ngarod (then, signal strong agreement)
      e. noman (intensify agreement or disagreement)
      f. met (intensifier)
      g. aya (intensify, confirmation or inquiry)

The following particles were identified in Finallig (Barlig) (provided by Veronica Pinos-an)

(11) a. Koma (strong command, said in anger, insistence, impatience)
      b. Urum (hopefully, maybe)
      c. Mampay (must, ought to)
      d. Mukun (if it should happen, hypothetically)
      e. Nakkoran (good grief; like Tagalog 'naku')
      f. Payat (really, assuredly)
      g. Challu (emphatic; intensification)
      h. Kayman (indeed; like Ilocano 'piman')
      i. Pay (politeness, please)
      j. Umpay (affirmation, yes really; like Ilocano 'wen anya')
      k. Ustu (right, correct; like Ilocano 'kusto')
      l. Kuncha (yes indeed, certain, emphatic)
      m. Ku-un, ku-uncha (maybe, uncertain)
      n. Kiakiangay (natural, normal; Ilocano 'gagangay')
      o. Kay, kay ya, ayu kay ya (emphatic to persuade someone of something unusual)
          Example Ayu kay ya omagkiangka, 'Come on, you jump.'
      p. Kun, lawa, kun lawa (just, only, emphatic)
      q. Kalinaat (suddenly)
      r. Hiyachi at (at that very moment)
      s. Siguradu (surely)

    t. Tit-iwa (truly)
    u. Uray (even if)
    v. Uray mu hiyasa (even if it is like that)
    w. Winnu (or, perhaps)

Several particles in Ga'dang (G), Ilocano (I) Central Bontoc (B), and English ( ).[5]

(12) a. G. ara lud, ara kepay; I. manen, met; B. akhes (go ahead, keep on going)
    b. G. malan; I. dagus, met la; B. kannay (immediately, promptly)
    c. G. pelang; I. laeng; B. yangkhay (just, only)
    d. G. nad; I. kuma; B. koma, paachi, maachi (hopefully; should; prescription)
    e. G. nafulot; I. onay, onayen; B. chadlos (totally, excessively)
    f. G. makkiyad; I. agingga; B. sok-ed, sok-ed ona (until, only then)
    g. G. kepay; I. agtultuloy; B. kayet (keep it up, keep on)
    h. G. on se; I. ngamin; B. man (yes because, intensifying; could indicate reproof)
    i. G. tantaro nu; I. amangan; B. eleg (might, could be imminent, a warning)
    j. G. kad; I. kadi; B. ngen (possibly? Rhetorical question marker)
    k. G. lang, lamang; I. lang; B. la, lang (just, only, mitigates or minimizes)
    l. G. ma kanu da; kappelud; I. apay ngata; B. pay kayet (how come? Again/more? That's pushing the limit.)
    m. G. ay on karug; I. gayam; B. tegwa (by the way, now that I think of it or realize it)
    n. G. lud; I. ngarud; B. ampay, mampay (really, emphatic)
    o. G. antu lud; I. isongarud; B. ngalud, galud (therefore, that is the case) tends to follow a proposition.
    p. G. kunnantu; I. kasta ngarud; B. ngalud, galud (therefore, since it's like that) tends to precede a proposition.
    q. G. gampade; I. gayam; B. pet (however, but yet, contraexpectation and surprise)
    r. G. mat (in fact)
    s. G. gampamatde (however in fact; extreme contraexpectation, pejorative)
    t. G. bakkan pelang inoy, nu ammena lud (not only that, but rather really…). Possible Bontoc equivalent: achi mampay (to greatly intensify)
    u. G. massiki tan nu kunnenoy; I. uray nu kasta (even though that is the case)
    v. G. kadde; I. uray man (anyway, in spite of that)
    w. G. kunnangke; I. kasla gamin (like; an exemplar of…)

There are some fascinating combinations of discourse markers possible in Ga'dang:

(13) a. -in (completive suffix, often functioning in discourse marking role, emphasis)
    b. -ke; ke na (just, still, to the contrary i.e. you're lying) (Ilocano: met; ket)
    c. lang (only)
    d. man (again, more)
    e. -ingke (just really; superlative)
    f. –ingkelamang (anything; whatever)

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[5] Examples were provided by Walrod (Ga'dang) and by Esther Joy Cailin (Ga'dang and Ilocano). Central Bontoc examples were provided by Daphne Marie Falag-ey and Myrlin S. Parting.

g. -imman (completive/emphatic again) e.g. "He did it *again*! (incredible! /pejorative)
h. gakkurug (truly); gakkuruwingke (truly truly!)
i. ma'lud (mat + lud) (in fact really) "Inangwana ma'lud" (it's his fault; he did it) (cf. Ilocano "isuna man gamin" or "isu ngamin" and Ifugao "hiya man tuwali")

The following stand-alone particles may constitute a class of interjections:

(14) a. attuy (wow) (Ilocano: apo)
b. iruy (surprise, mildly scandalized, plus mild pejorative: "you showoff/flirt")
c. innuy, nnuy (you can't be serious)
d. sah! (You ain't all that!)
e. antom, ntom (yeah, right!)

These supercharged particles are significant because they have such a dramatic effect, and also because the notions of semantic prosody and phonological prosody are both represented in each of them. Each has a particular phonological prosody associated with it, as an integral part of the linguistic unit.

There is also a unique discourse marker in Ga'dang, 'allay' which is like 'man, mate, buddy'. This is as ubiquitous in Ga'dang conversation as 'like' in English or 'genre' in French. But it is used primarily by men, usually when talking to other men. Women do use it, but it has a somewhat comical effect in that case. There are many phonological variants of 'allay', to express different moods or attitudes. One in particular, 'alle-e' with length and heavy laryngealization, expresses strong emotional reaction of being offended or scandalized.

7. CONCLUSION
7.1. Functional load and effectiveness of DM's and DP's

Skilful use of DM's and DP's enables the speaker or writer to manipulate the strength and influence of the contextual cues, and communicate effectively and persuasively.

Emergent text-level meaning. We are bombarded with information in communication. Toolan (1996:3) refers to this as the inevitable contextual embeddedness of language.
--textual (semantic content of the text/utterance);
--contextual (all the pragmatic markers discussed above, as well as situational context);
--cognitive (our cognitive grids, past experience, shared knowledge in the speech community);
--social (the ongoing dialogue of the community, which modifies and augments our knowledge);
--normative (value systems underlying all communication) (Walrod 1988).

All these factors can be subsumed under the heading of Context of Situation (Malinowski 1935), leading to a Total Communication Model. Discourse markers are the cues that are very effective in keeping people on the right track in communication. Thus, ambiguity is a rarity. The practice of studying ambiguities in the classroom tends to be an artifact of the linguist or the academy. In actual situated linguistic communication, context of situation (all of the above) herds us down the salient and relevant hermeneutical trail. Where ambiguity does exist, it is usually negotiated and resolved quite immediately.

Communication bereft of the appropriate discourse markers will be insipid, boring, and ineffective. Written communication uses fewer discourse markers and particles than oral communication, but finding the optimal distribution of DM's and DP's in written texts was found to be extremely important by mother-tongue translators in the northern Philippines. It is especially critical when writing or translating narrative or normative texts.

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