

Dutch pragmatic markers in the left periphery

Ton van der Wouden and Ad Foolen

Meertens Instituut and Radboud Universiteit

“A large part of the management of interpersonal activities in conversation takes place in the initial and final parts of turns. Therefore, it is especially in the left and right periphery of utterances that the relevant linguistic means thrive.” (Schmid 2020, 36)

Abstract

This chapter explores the left periphery of Dutch utterances. Four positions hosting pragmatic markers (PMs) are distinguished: the first sentence position (P1), a position following P1 and two positions respectively preceding and following a left dislocated constituent. We hypothesize that there are correlations between these positions and pragmatic functions like discourse coherence, subjectivity and intersubjectivity. A short look is taken at asyndetic clusters of pragmatic markers in the left periphery, for which we also assume functional motivations for the linear ordering of PMs in the cluster. The goal of the chapter is primarily descriptive, inspired by functionally oriented frameworks, in particular Construction Grammar, Functional Discourse Grammar and Interactional Linguistics. The illustrative data are mainly taken from CGN, the corpus of spoken Dutch.

Keywords

Dutch, left periphery, pragmatic marker, pragmatic function, particle cluster

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will explore pragmatic markers in relation to the left periphery. As has been pointed out in the literature repeatedly, it is important to be clear about the unit(s) of which the left periphery is the periphery (cf. Rhee 2016, 270, Panov 2020, 28–29, Degand and Crible, this volume): intonation units, syntactic structures (clause, sentence) or interactional units (turn, utterance).

In the present chapter, we will focus on units which correspond to what is described as main clauses in traditional grammar, at the same time being aware of the fact that this is a simplification with regards to the intricacies of the relevant units. We will explore the occurrence of pragmatic markers (PMs) in the left periphery, in a similar way as we did for the right periphery in van der Wouden and Foolen (2015). As we will show in the next sections, the behavior of PMs gives reason to assume more positions in the left periphery than is assumed in the traditional description, which is strongly oriented toward written genres. Most of our data are taken from the Corpus of Spoken Dutch (CGN) (Oostdijk and Broeder

2003) but, where helpful, we also incorporate examples from other sources such as the internet and newspapers.¹

We take the Dutch tradition of grammatical description (e.g. Haeseryn et al. 1997) as a starting point (more on this below). We combine this structural analysis with a more functional analysis, asking whether structural positions can be related in a systematic way to pragmatic functions. At this point, more theory enters the picture. Our theoretical affinity is constructional in character. We share the view of Construction Grammar (CxG) that the language system consists of a structured network of form-meaning/function pairs. Words, idiomatic phrases, schematic constructions, etc. all participate in such a network. Moreover, CxG holds that different forms typically differ in meaning (non-synonymy) and that a ‘meaning’ or ‘function’ is typically flexible, to be modelled in a polysemic, prototypically structured network. In their constructional analysis of German modal particles, Alm et al. (2018) propose that linear positions and paradigmatic slots can be considered as “forms” in the same way as lexical elements and constructional schemas are forms. If positions are forms in a constructional sense, they should have (functional) meaning(s) as well. The question then is: how can we discover the meaning(s) of each of the positions? We hypothesize that the distribution of pragmatic markers over those positions may provide a guide to possible answers. In other words, if specific markers prefer or avoid certain positions, this can tell us something about the functional profile of that position. In addition to CxG, Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG, Dik 1997a, 1997b) and Interactional Linguistics (for example Auer and Lindström 2016) turned out to be helpful in our exploration of relations between positions and functions.

¹ We are aware of the existence of considerable differences in the use of particles in various varieties of Dutch but these are beyond the scope of this chapter. Here, we mainly deal with our own, northern versions of the language.

This chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2, we offer a short inventory of PMs that we found in the left periphery of Dutch main clauses. Sections 3 and 4 are the central parts of the chapter. In Section 3, we explore how these items are distributed over different positions in the left periphery, continuing in Section 4 with a focus on the function of these items and positions. In Section 5, we take a short look at the linear ordering in left peripheral clusters of PMs. Section 6 concludes this chapter.

2 An inventory of Dutch pragmatic markers

This short section is meant to give the reader a first feel for the variety of items that can be encountered as PMs in Dutch in the left and right periphery. As in other languages (e.g. Schiffrin 1987, 31), pragmatic markers belong to or are derived from word classes as varied as conjunctions (*and, but, or*), interjections (*oh*), adverbs (*now, then*), verbs (*come on*) and lexicalized phrases (*you know, I mean*). Apparently, linguistic items can “pragmatize” from a broad range of word classes. The following items are grouped according to their original part of speech status in traditional Dutch grammar.

- Coordinating conjunctions: *maar* ‘but’, *en* ‘and’, *of* ‘or’
- Subordinating conjunctions: *hoewel* ‘although’
- Adverbs: *dus* ‘so’, *toch* ‘yet’, *trouwens* ‘incidentally’, *kortom* ‘in summary’, *integendeel* ‘on the contrary’, *daarentegen* ‘on the other hand’, *evenwel* ‘however’
- Verbs:
 - in imperative form:
 - perception verbs *kijk* ‘look’, *hoor* ‘hear’

- verbs of communication *zeg* ‘say’, *luister* ‘listen’
- motion verbs *kom* ‘come’, *ga weg* ‘go away’, *wacht* ‘wait’
- in first person singular form, especially psych verbs (*ik*) *denk* ‘(I) think’, *denk ik* ‘I think’, *geloof ik* ‘I believe’
- in second person singular form *weet je* ‘know you (you know)’, *denk je* ‘think you (do you think)’
- in past participle form: *samengevat* ‘summarized’, *toegegeven* ‘admitted’
- Interjections: *hè* ‘o no’, ‘isn’t it’, *hé* (various functions, one of them being surprise), *ach* ‘I forgot’, ‘gosh’, *o* ‘I see’ ‘aha’, *oh* ‘oh’, *bah* ‘yuck’, *jee* ‘wow’ (< *jezus*), *man* (< *man* ‘man’), *joh* (< *jongen* ‘boy’), *goh* (< *god* ‘God’)
- Answering particles *ja* ‘yes’ and *nee* ‘no’

As this list shows, Dutch PMs are recruited from different parts of speech. However, prepositions and pronouns are lacking.

The diachronic processes possibly involved in such recruitments (pragmaticalization or rather grammaticalization, constructionalization or cooptation) are not our concern here. Degand and Fagard (2011) observed for French *alors* that the use of the item in the peripheral position for the new pragmatic function comes first diachronically, the bleaching comes second. When such processes apply to several items, a new functional class can develop. The question is, then, whether the distributional behavior of the new class of pragmatic operators is similar to or divergent from the distributional properties of the word classes they originate from. The answer to this question is relevant for the more general question of the extent to which PMs should be considered as a separate word class or as members of their original word class with functional specialization. It goes beyond the scope of this paper, however.

3 Positions for PMs in the left periphery

3.1 A first sketch of Dutch sentence structure

The identification of a specific linear position is as challenging as demarcating what we mean by “periphery”. Similar to the left periphery issue (see Section 1), alternative “levels” for defining positions have been proposed, varying from more discourse-oriented levels such as turns to more grammar-oriented entities such as sentences or clauses. Traugott (2014, 73), for example, takes the grammar-oriented perspective, as we will do. For English, Traugott assumes a propositional core and four peripheral positions, two to the left and two to the right. Focusing on the left periphery, Traugott observes that the position closest to the core can be occupied by modal adverbs like *surely*. Preceding this slot, a variety of items can be placed: interjections, address terms and connectives, resulting in utterances like *oh/and/sir, surely there isn't any danger of that?* However, as she points out in a footnote, the hypothesized order is less strict than it seems, as address terms can also be placed *after* the modal adverb, as in *surely, sir, you would not kill him?* Traugott does not raise the question whether differences in meaning are involved in such positional variation. However, for us, it is clear that an initial *sir* functions primarily as an attention getter, whereas a *sir* in second position features the polite overtones of the address term. In our chapter, we want to explore such possible correlations between positions and functions in more detail.

In comparison to the schema proposed by Traugott for English, the Dutch left periphery is somewhat more complicated. In order to explore this in more detail, we first have to sketch

the linear “skeleton” of Dutch sentence structure (cf. Haeseryn et al. 1997, Ch. 21).² Anchor points are provided by the finite and non-finite verbs. In declarative clauses, the finite verb takes the so called “verb second” position (abbreviated as V2). Non-finite verbs cluster at the end of the sentence, a fact that has been reason to characterize Dutch (and German) as SOV languages (cf. Koster 1975). The positions for V2 and Vfinal together constitute a verbal “bracket” which automatically defines three fields for placing other constituents: the prefield preceding V2, the middle field, and the postfield following the final verb cluster. In Functional Discourse Grammar (Dik 1997a, 420), the prefield is labelled P1 and we will use this shorthand here too. The skeleton of the Dutch clause then looks as (1).

(1) P1 – V2 – middle field – Vfinal – postfield

Whereas the middle field offers space for a wide range of constituents, P1 and the postfield are typically restricted to one constituent. The types of constituent that can occur in the postfield are structurally constrained (mostly prepositional phrases and dependent clauses), whereas P1 can host practically any functional part of the sentence. The subject has a certain preference to “go” to this position, as in (2), but temporal and local adverbials can be found here very regularly too, as in (3). In contrastive contexts, non-subject arguments, as in (4), and even parts of the final verb cluster, as in (5), can occupy the P1 position. In *wh*-questions, the *wh*-constituent is obligatorily in the first sentence position, as in (6), and in imperative and yes/no-sentences, P1 stays empty, so that the sentence starts with the V2 element, as in (7).

² See also

https://taalportaal.org/taalportaal/topic/link/syntax__Dutch__vp__V9_Word_order_introduction__V9_Word_order_introduction.xml

(2) **De koningin** | *wordt opgevolgd door haar zoon.*

the queen becomes succeeded through her son

‘The queen is succeeded by her son’

(3) **Morgen** | *ben ik de bruid.*

tomorrow am I the bride

‘I’ll be the bride tomorrow’

(4) **Daar** | *houd ik niet van.*

there hold I not of

‘I don’t like that’

(5) **Vergeten** | *kan ik je niet.*

forget can I you not

‘I can’t forget you’

(6) **Wie** | *heeft dat gedaan?*

who has that done

‘Who did that?’

(7) | *Houd je mond.*

keep your mouth

‘Shut up’

As V2 is such a clear anchor point, we will take this position as the right edge of the left periphery. All material to the left of it then belongs to the left periphery as we understand it. Besides being a clear anchor point, the decision to define the left periphery on the basis of V2 is also motivated by the fact that P1 can host elements which we consider as pragmatic markers. We will start our exploration of the left periphery at this P1-position and then ask in

successive steps whether, how and where pragmatic markers can occur in the left periphery before or after P1. This will result in a linear “map” that is somewhat more complex than the two positions Traugott determined for English.

3.2 Pragmatic markers in P1

The P1 constituents in (2) to (6) contribute to the propositional content. But PMs such as *inderdaad* ‘indeed’, *eigenlijk* ‘actually’, *evenwel* ‘however’, *dus* ‘so, thus’, *dan* ‘then’, *overigens* ‘furthermore’, etc. can occupy this position as well. In traditional part of speech terms (see Section 2), they are conjunctive adverbs, a subclass of the adverbs. Consider (8) and (9) for some examples.³

(8) *Inderdaad* | *heb ik me wel eens afgevraagd hoe dat zou voelen.*
indeed have I me PART PART asked how that would feel
‘Yes, I have asked myself how that would feel’

(9) *Overigens* | *ben ik van mening dat Carthago verwoest moet*
by.the.way am I of opinion that Carthago destroyed should
worden.
be
‘By the way, I am of the opinion that Carthago should be destroyed’

Just like propositional constituents, PMs that occur in P1 are not restricted to that position but can also be found in the middle field and sometimes in the postfield as well, as in (10) and (11).

³ PART is used for (untranslatable) particle.

(10) *Meg Ryan | heeft | inderdaad weer trouwplannen |.*

Meg Ryan has indeed again marriage.plans

‘Yes, Meg Ryan is planning to marry again’

(11) *Dat | heb | ik zelf ook gedaan | overigens.*

that have I self also done by.the.way

‘I have done that myself as well, by the way’

It is noteworthy that some PMs of the adverb type do not occur in the first sentence position, for example *kortom* ‘summarizing’, *trouwens* ‘by the way’, *evenwel* ‘however’ and *echter* ‘however’.⁴ Apparently, the development of a pragmatic function can involve reduction of syntactic flexibility.

3.3 Post-P1 pragmatic markers

In English prose, one often encounters a contrastive conjunctive adverb after the first sentence constituent, as in *the women, however, ate a bit later*. This slot is open for a whole range of PMs, among which *I think*, as in *the baguettes, I think, were the best sellers of the day*.⁵ In written English, this type of PM is typically separated from the rest of the sentence by commas, suggesting parenthetical status. In Dutch and German, however, the Post-P1 position seems to be more strongly integrated in the sentence. In German grammar, this position is

⁴ In normative discussions, the use of *echter* in P1 position is marked as wrong by some, cf. for example <https://onzetaal.nl/nieuws-en-dossiers/weblog/de-jongste-taalfouten/P50>. A considerable number of speakers, however, do use *echter* in P1, as we have observed ourselves in student essays.

⁵ See <http://content.nroc.org/DevelopmentalEnglish/unit07/Foundations/parenthetical-expressions.html>

called *Nacherstposition* ‘after first position’ (e.g. Pasch et al. 2003, Breindl 2008, 2011).

German PMs are quite common in *Nacherstposition*, in various genres. In Dutch, the use of PMs in this position is restricted to formal genres like bible texts as in (12). The (German) example (13) was the reason for van der Wouden (2015) to call this position the “Barabbas position”.

(12) *In den beginne schiep God de hemel en de aarde.*

De aarde | nu | was woest en ledig. (Gen. 1, 1–2)

the earth now was unformed and void

‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void’ (KJV)

(13) *Da schriegen sie wieder allesamt und sprachen: Nicht diesen, sondern Barabbas!*

Barabbas | aber | war ein Mörder. (Joh. 18:40, Lutherbibel)

‘Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber’ (KJV)

The possibility of PMs in this position implies that we need another position in the linear schema of the Dutch sentence. Incorporating this, we can extend the schema in (1) to get (14).

(14) P1 – Post P1 – V2 – middle field – Vfinal – postfield

3.4 PMs to the right and left of left dislocated constituents

Dutch, like English and German, has the possibility to put one constituent, typically a referential expression, in the position to the left of P1, with a pronominal repetition of the

reference in the main clause. Such a construction is known in the literature as left dislocation (Lambrecht 2001). In an earlier version of Dik's Functional Grammar, the position of left dislocated elements was named P2 (cf. van der Auwera 1987), a label we will use here because of its shortness. In (15) to (18), a few (constructed) examples of this construction are given.

(15) *Die man | die | ken ik niet.*

that man, that know I not

'That man, I don't know him'

(16) *Die man | ik | zou hem wel kunnen vermoorden.*

that man I would him PART can kill

'That man, I could kill him'

A particle that can be found after left dislocated constituents is *hè*.

(17) *Die man | hè | die ken ik niet.*

that man PART that know I not

'That man, you know, I don't know him'

Another PM we found in this position is *ja*.

(18) *Oh | dat laatste stuk | ja | dat is mooi.*

oh that last piece yes that is beautiful

'yes, that last piece is beautiful'

To the left of P2, the left periphery is open for a wide range of particles, such as *oh* in (18) and *ja* in (19), and particle clusters, such as *oh nee* in (20) and *nee maar echt* in (21)).

(19) **Ja** | *Ivo* | *dat is wel een vriend van me.*

yes Ivo that is well a friend of me

‘Yes, Ivo is indeed a friend of mine’

(20) **Oh nee** | *niet Philip* | *nee* | *die is dan in Engeland.*

oh no not Philip no that is then in England

‘Oh no, not Philip. He is in England then’

(21) **Nee maar echt** | *met de racefiets* | *dat is hartstikke mooi*

no but really with the racing.bike that is heart.stabbing beautiful

man.

man

‘believe me, with the racing bike, that is extremely nice’

We can finalize our linear schema as follows:

(22) Pre-P2 – P2 – post-P2 – P1 – post-P1 – V2 - middle field – Vfinal – postfield

We thus distinguish four positions in the left periphery where PMs can be found: one to the left of P2 and one to the right, followed by P1 and Post-P1. If we assume that the proper clause starts with P1, then Pre-P2 and post-P2 represent extra-clausal positions. If there is no left dislocated constituent, the number of positions is reduced to three: the extra-clausal Pre-P1, P1 and Post-P1. As will be shown below, Pre-P1 can easily host sequences of PMs, leading to clusters (see in particular Section 5).

4 Functions of PMs in the left periphery

4.1 Functional classifications

In recent years, several proposals have been made with regard to the correlation between positions and pragmatic functions. An example of such a position-function correlation can be found in Alm et al.'s (2018) study on modal particles in German. They postulate a basic function for the paradigm of modal particles in German, which is positionally bound to the middle field, typically between thematic (“old”) and rhematic (“new”) information.

According to Alm et al. (2018, 16), “[t]he basic function of all mps [modal particles] ... consists in anchoring the current utterance in the argumentative situation, i.e. they signal that their host utterance should be interpreted in relation to a propositional aspect of the communicative situation that is proposed to be shared by the communication partners”. The specific way of this “anchoring” depends, in their view, on the modal particle chosen (*ja*, *doch*, *eben*, etc.). This model thus considers the functioning of modal particles in terms of a “merge” between the positional paradigmatic function and the specific contribution of each particle that can occupy this slot.

With regard to the left and right periphery, the positions for PMs are rather clear (see Section 3) but the question of the relevant pragmatic functions is more controversial. Crible (2017), for example, lists no less than 30 functions for discourse markers in the left and right periphery. She groups the functions into four “domains”: ideational, rhetorical, sequential, interpersonal. Such groupings are typically based on a differentiation of the indexical aspect at which the function is primarily oriented. Three such aspects play a central role in the

literature: the text (discourse), the speaker and the hearer, cf. Brinton (1996, 268–272), who distinguishes the textual, subjective and interactive function. Traugott (2012, 2014) uses the labels “intersubjective” instead of “interactive”. We will follow Traugott in this and thus distinguish with her between the textual, subjective and intersubjective functions of PMs. In the following, we focus on the subjective and intersubjective functions.

Subjective markers express an attitude of the speaker (cf. Du Bois 2007 for “stance particles” as an alternative label for this group). Expressive interjections are a prototypical case in point but epistemic adverbs like *natuurlijk* ‘of course’ and *misschien* ‘maybe’ could be listed here as well. *Zo* ‘so’ in pre-P1 position, as in (23), expresses surprise or admiration.

(23) *Zo* | *dat had ik niet gedacht.*

so that had I not thought

‘Wow, I didn’t expect that’

Zo can also function as an uptake marker or as a starter after a non-verbal activity of the speaker, as in (24).

(24) *Zo* | *nu eerst een Bavaria.*

So now first a Bavaria

‘And now it is time for a Bavaria beer’

Intersubjective markers have to do with the speaker-hearer relation. With a particle like *inderdaad* ‘indeed’, the speaker shows agreement with the hearer, so it qualifies as an intersubjective particle. The verbal particles *hoor* ‘hear’, *kom* ‘come’, *zeg* ‘say’, *luister* ‘listen’, *kijk* ‘look’, *wacht* ‘wait’ originated as imperative forms, which explains why they

appeal to the hearer (cf. De Vriendt 1994). We can thus classify them as intersubjective markers as well. *Kom* and *luister* occur Pre-P1, *hoor* in the right periphery and *zeg* can be found left and right, albeit with different functions. In the left periphery, *zeg* asks for the attention of the hearer, thus functioning intersubjectively, but rightward *zeg* is more subjective-intersubjective, appealing to the hearer to share or at least accept the attitude of the speaker, similar to rightward *hoor* (cf. Kirsner and van Heuven 1996).

This illustration of Traugott's list shows that there is some correlation between the part of speech classification of PMs and their pragmatic function, although the correlation is not absolute. But ultimately, it is the position and preceding context that play the main role in effectuating the functional interpretation of a PM, as argued by Alm et al. (2018) and Rühlemann and Gries (2020).

Beeching and Detges (2014) adopt Traugott's functional tripartition to discuss the question whether peripheries can be correlated with functions. They propose and discuss what they call the *Functional Asymmetry Hypothesis*. According to this hypothesis, linguistic items in the left periphery fulfill other functions than those in the right periphery. Their Table 1.4 (Beeching and Detges 2014, 11) lists the functions that are typically fulfilled by PMs in each of the peripheries. Linking the upcoming information with the preceding text and discourse (Traugott's textual function) is in the left periphery list, together with the "subjective" function, whereas the right periphery items are rather forward looking and modalizing (Traugott's intersubjective function). Beeching and Detges's (2014, 18) final conclusion, however, is somewhat different and less strict: "[T]he hypothesis that the left periphery is mainly concerned with discourse-structuring and the right periphery with modalising (stance, subjective and intersubjective) qualities cannot be upheld in a 'strong' and exclusive way".⁶

⁶ The fact that "subjective" is listed under left periphery in Table 1.4 and under right periphery in this concluding note indicates that at least this function can be fulfilled by PMs in both peripheries.

At the same time, they see reason to keep up the belief “that some kind of asymmetry between left and right periphery does exist; in most cases it is shown that this asymmetry is a matter of frequency” (Beeching and Detges 2014, 19). Working in an interactionally linguistic approach, Auer and Lindström (2016) also find evidence for assuming asymmetry, stressing the intersubjective relevance of the right periphery.

All in all, the literature provides sufficient reason to keep on looking for possible correlations between peripheries and functions or, in our case, specific positions in the left periphery and functions, although we should not expect a perfect mapping. With this in mind, we will go through the positions distinguished for the Dutch left periphery in Section 3 once again, now from a primarily functional perspective.

4.2 PMs in P1 vs. Pre-P1

Dik (1997b, 382–383) devotes an interesting discussion to *natuurlijk* ‘naturally, of course’ in P1 and P2 (the intraclausal and the extraclausal position in the terminology of his later FDG framework), as in (25) and (26).

(25) | *Natuurlijk* heeft Jan gisteren een fiets gekocht.

of.course has John yesterday a bicycle bought

‘Of course John bought a bicycle yesterday.’

(26) *Natuurlijk* | Jan heeft gisteren een fiets gekocht.

of.course John has yesterday a bicycle bought

‘Of course, John bought a bicycle yesterday.’

The sentence with *natuurlijk* in the intraclausal P1-position in (25) is paraphrased by Dik as ‘of course John bought a bicycle yesterday, how could it be otherwise’, whereas the paraphrase for the extraclausal variant in (26) is ‘O.K., I very well know and admit that John bought a bicycle yesterday, but ...’. According to this interpretation, the intraclausal use has a subjective function, as the speaker expresses his attitude with regard to the reported event, whereas the extraclausal use of *natuurlijk* has an intersubjective function: the speaker admits that the event is the case, probably in reaction to a foregoing claim by the hearer. A natural follow up of (26) would be a contrastive statement by the same speaker, introduced by *maar* ‘but’.

If this coupling of position and function holds, it should hold for other PMs in Dutch as well. *Alleen* ‘only’ is a particle that, like *natuurlijk*, can occur in both positions, as the examples (27) and (28) from the internet show.

(27) A *Denk je dat hij het echt van plan was? In die kofferbak kruipen en het deksel achter zich dichtdoen?*

‘Do you think that this was really his intention? To hide in the trunk and close the lid behind him?’

B *Ja. Alleen denk ik niet dat hij er zelf iets mee te maken had.* (from a novel)

do had

‘Yes. The only thing is that I don’t think he was involved’

(28) A *De Rotterdamse VVD vindt dus wel dat er problemen zijn met integratie?*

‘So the Rotterdam VVD agrees that there are integration problems?’

B *De problemen met integratie zijn er en dat hoeven wij niet te ontkennen.*

‘The integration problems are real, we don’t have to deny that.’

Alleen | *ik denk dat we het moeten oplossen met praktische*
only I think that we it must solve with practical
methoden.

methods

‘But I think we have to choose practical solutions’

In both examples, the preceding question is answered in a positive way, in the first example with only *ja* ‘yes’, in the second with a longer confirmation. In the first example, the statement introduced by P1 *alleen* ‘only’ is a restriction on the initial agreement. The second example comes from an interview with a politician. After conceding that there are problems, the politician comes up with his own view, which is opposed to what others think. *Alleen* in P1 continues the perspective of the speaker, only adding a nuance, whereas extra-clausal *alleen* introduces an independent speech act (cf. also König 2017 who discusses *only John is very mean* vs. *only, John is very mean*).

At times, it can be observed that two different forms with closely related meanings specialize in one of the two functions (and positions). A case in point is the pair *integendeel* ‘on the contrary’ and *daarentegen* ‘on the other hand’. *Daarentegen* is used intraclausally to point out a contrast between two statements,⁷ whereas extraclausal *integendeel* introduces a rejection, i.e. an independent speech act. Position and function seem to match here very well, in a similar way as we have observed for *alleen* and *natuurlijk*.

Likewise, *trouwens* ‘by the way’ in the left periphery is used extraclausally (to the left of P1), *eigenlijk* ‘actually’ is intraclausal (in P1). This distribution seems to fit their function: *trouwens* functions on the textual-discourse level, as it is a digressive marker (cf. Fiorentini

⁷ Cf. <https://www.taaltelefoon.be/integendeel-daarentegen>.

and Sansò 2019), whereas *eigenlijk* ‘actually’ in P1 indicates that the speaker comes to a more specific insight upon rethinking the case; it is, in Traugott’s classification, subjective. *Kortom* ‘summarizing’ clearly has a textual function and is indeed comparable to *trouwens* in its distributional behavior, as it is a Pre-P1 marker, indicating that what follows has the function of a summary in relation to the preceding discourse. Note that all these PMs can also occur in the middle field. In further research, it should be clarified whether this shift in position involves (maybe subtle) functional shifts.

How about coordinating conjunctions like *and*, *but* etc. and their Dutch counterparts *en*, *maar* etc.? As has been pointed out many times in the literature on PMs, conjunctions can be used in different “levels” or “domains” (cf. Schiffrin 1987, 25, Sweetser 1990, Ch. 4). Here we follow Dik (1997b), who distinguishes between their use as what he calls “connectors” and their use as “coordinators”. In the latter function, they link propositional content, whereas, in the connector function, they are to be considered in the same slot paradigmatically as *nevertheless* in *It was a very difficult examination. Nevertheless, he passed it with distinction*. This is schematized as: Preceding Clause(s), Connector, New Clause, “where the Connector has the primary roles of linking the New Clause to the Preceding Clause(s) while at the same time specifying a semantic/pragmatic relation between the two” (Dik 1997b, 440). Conjunctions preceding a question or imperative function even more unambiguously as connectors.

Interestingly, *en* ‘and’ in its connector function has developed a special use in the context of a following question, typically accompanied by a short break between *en* and the question, indicated by a comma in (29):

- (29) *En, heb je nog iets gevonden?*
and have you still anything found?

‘And, did you find anything?’

Here, *en* ‘and’ indicates that the question is prompted by earlier interaction or discourse and that the speaker is strongly interested in the answer, a combination of the textual and subjective function. The short break can be interpreted as an extra sign of interest. *Maar* and *of* can also be used before a question but without such a comma intonation. The context of a following question apparently suffices for interpreting them as connectors. Another interesting use of *en* as a connector is one in which it is followed by a dependent clause starting with *of* (*en* combined with insubordination), typically after a preceding question, as in (30). The answer introduced by *en of* is always emphatic: ‘No doubt about the truth of the answer’ (the adverbial *nou* enhances the emphasis).⁸

- | | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| (30) A: | <i>Vond je het leuk?</i> | B: | <i>nou en of ik het leuk vond!</i> |
| | found you it nice? | | now and if I it nice found |
| | ‘Did you like it?’ | | ‘You bet I did!’ |

When PMs have an interjectional basis (not adverbial, not conjunctive), their only possible position in the left periphery is extra-clausal, as in (31) to (33), i.e. they never occur at P1.

- (31) *Ja | dat kan.*
yes that can
‘yes, that is possible’

- (32) *Oh | da’s heel lang geleden al hè?*

⁸ Note that *nou en of* has developed into a fixed expression that can be used all by itself. It has found its way into the large *Van Dale* dictionary, where it is described as *sterke bevestiging* ‘strong confirmation’.

oh that.is very long ago already is.it.not

‘oh that is already very long ago isn’t it?’

(33) *Ja nee | dat is goed.*

yes no that is good

‘yes that is fine’

Whereas *ja* functions as a positive but at the same time rather neutral uptake, *oh* is an uptake that is also subjective, it expresses some surprise. We consider *ja nee* as an idiomatic combination (see Section 5 on clustering), suggesting that there is a moment of reflection on the part of the speaker, implying an emphatic confirmation (‘even on considering a possible negation, I say yes’).

Now that we have looked at the functional possibilities of P1 and Pre-P1 positions, it is time to turn to the other positions we distinguished in Section 3.

4.3 PMs after P1 constituents

Both Breindl (2008, 2011) and van der Wouden (2015) observe (for German and Dutch, respectively) that the Post-P1 position is paradigmatically restricted to a subset of the conjunctive adverbs. According to Breindl (2008, 2011), German PMs in this position have to do with different types of topic management. For Dutch, the functional scope seems to be even more restricted: Van der Wouden (2015, 560) argues that the construction with a PM in this position specifically marks a shifted discourse topic, that is, a topic that is unexpected in the ongoing discourse.

The occurrence of particles in this specific position raises a problem for traditional syntax, which assumes that V2 implies only one preceding position within the clause (the

number 2 in ‘V2’ indicates exactly this). The one-position restriction could be upheld by attributing parenthetical status to the PM following P1, thus taking it out of the regular linear order. As the use of this position is typical for written language, intonational data which could help decide the issue, are not available, although intuitively, pronouncing such texts does not require comma intonation. Another option is to consider PMs in this position as strongly linked to the constituent in P1, similar to a reversed focus particle (*even Peter, Peter even*), so that they can be seen as one constituent. A third option would be to accept that the one-constituent rule only holds for constituents contributing to propositional content. We leave the choice between these options for another occasion.

4.4 PMs after left dislocated constituents

In FDG, a dislocated constituent is called Theme. Dik (1997b, 389) argues that Themes fulfill an independent function: “[A] constituent with Theme function specifies an ensemble of entities with respect to which the following clause is going to present some relevant information.” The Theme can thus be seen as an independent speech act. In a similar vein, Portner (2004) states that such constituents involve separate performatives, as in (34).

- (34) a. *Maria, I like her very much.*
b. At-issue: I assert that I like Mary very much.
c. Not-at-issue: I hereby request that you activate your mental representation of Mary.

The left dislocated constituent thus performs a not-at-issue speech act. Looking at PMs that can follow such left dislocated constituents, we found *hè* and *weet je (wel)* ‘you know’ as typical cases, as in (35) and (36).

(35) *Die man hè, die ken ik niet.*

that man PART that know I not

‘That man, you know, I don’t know him’

(36) *Die snelle weet je wel die heeft het tempo er goed
inzitten.*⁹

that fast know you well that has the speed there good sit.in

‘that fast one, you know, he has the right pace’

In English, a comparable example would be (37)

(37) *That man that we saw yesterday, right, I don’t know him*

Besides this use after a left dislocated constituent, *hè* can be found utterance-finally, as in (38).

(38) *Voor degenen die werken is dat natuurlijk wel hartstikke mooi*

for those that work is that of.course PART very beautiful

⁹ As a reviewer remarked, *weet je wel* can also be interpreted as a vague noun, equivalent to *what’s his name*. In both cases, the speaker appeals to the hearer’s knowledge to jointly establish the intended referent. We have the impression, however, that *weet je wel* as a noun would be used with a different intonation contour than *weet je wel* as a PM. We leave this as a suggestion for further research.

| *hè*?

PART

‘For those working that is of course very attractive, isn’t it?’

This final use has an intersubjective dimension, in the sense that the speaker indicates that she assumes that the hearer will share her opinion (Kirsner and van Heuven 1996). At the same time, a turn-transferring function is involved. If we compare this use of *hè* with the one after a left dislocated constituent, we see similarities and differences. Both instances of *hè* are intersubjective: the knowledge of the hearer in relation to that of the speaker is addressed with the intention of seeking alignment. But the utterance-final position automatically involves the additional turn-transferring function, so that we cannot claim that the use of *hè* in these two positions is functionally equivalent.

To complicate things even more, Dutch has a Pre-P1 *hè* which can clearly be distinguished from the two uses of this particle just discussed. Initial *hè* is subjective-expressive, most of the time expressing a negative feeling (irritation, disappointment), as in (39).

(39) **Hè** | *wat is dat nou weer?*

PART what is that PART again?

‘Huh? What was that?’

We can thus observe position-specific functional specialization of the “same” particle. This observation is in line with the general perspective we try to develop in this chapter, namely that the placing of “free” PMs in specific positions is not arbitrary. It makes a difference

whether *hè* occurs initially, as in (39), after a left-dislocated constituent, as in (35), or at the end of an utterance, as in (38).

A functional differentiation can also be found for *zeg*, the imperative form of the Dutch verb *zeggen* ‘to say’. Initial *zeg* is used to attract the attention of the hearer, in (41) mentioned by name immediately following *zeg*, or at least signaling that one is about to tell something.

(40) **Zeg** *Jean-Paul* | *waar was je naartoe?*
say Jean-Paul where was you to
‘Hey Jean-Paul where have you been?’

In contrast, final use of *zeg* expresses intersubjective involvement, in the case of (41) more specifically “empathy”.

(41) *Wat vervelend voor je, zeg!*
what annoying for you say
‘How annoying for you! Really!’

Expressing empathy is clearly an intersubjective function. As an attention getter, initial *zeg* functions on the level of interaction management. Both functions are hearer-directed but on different functional levels.

4.5 A short functional look at PMs in the middle field

Adverbs can move freely across the fields of the Dutch sentence, in particular conjunctive ones, as (42) to (45) show.

(42) *Inderdaad* | heb ik me wel eens afgevraagd hoe dat zou voelen.

indeed have I me PART PART asked how that would feel

‘Yes, I have asked myself how that would feel’

(43) *Meg Ryan* | heeft | *inderdaad* weer trouwplannen |.

Meg Ryan has indeed again marriage.plans

‘Yes, Meg Ryan is planning to marry again’

(44) *Overigens* | ben ik van mening dat Carthago verwoest moet

furthermore am I of opinion that Carthago destroyed should
worden.

be

‘Furthermore, I am of the opinion that Carthago should be destroyed’

(45) *Dat* | heb | ik zelf ook gedaan | *overigens*.

that have I self also done furthermore

‘I have done that myself as well, by the way’

However, if we assume that the position-function alignment holds generally, we should expect functional differences. On this point, it is worthwhile to take a short look at some results from Evers-Vermeul’s (2010) study on the Dutch conjunctive adverb *dus* ‘so, thus’, a flexible item that can occur pre-P1, in P1, in the middle field and in the right periphery. Evers-Vermeul restricted her study to the difference between occurrence of *dus* in P1 and in the middle field. Her data show that there is no absolute functional difference but she did find a tendency that the use of *dus* in P1 involves an inferential link to the preceding sentence, whereas *dus* in the middle field tends to indicate that the information in the present sentence belongs to already shared knowledge of writer and reader. In other words, the use of *dus* in

the first sentence position typically involves a textual function, whereas the position in the middle field evokes an intersubjective interpretation. This observation is in harmony with the fact that modal particles, a paradigm of adverbs that is restricted to the middle field, also function, in a specific way, on the intersubjective level. In Dutch particle research, *dus* in the middle field has not been listed as belonging to the paradigm of modal particles, with the argument that *dus* can appear in P1 without a noticeable meaning change, whereas prototypical modal particles clearly change meaning when moved to P1. But if there is indeed a tendency to shift function in the sense of Evers-Vermeul, we see no objection to accepting middle field *dus* as a member of the paradigm of modal particles.

Can we generalize the finding of Evers-Vermeul to other conjunctive adverbs? A statistical *and* interpretative analysis of a corpus would be required to find this out, something which we recommend as a topic for further research.

5 PM clustering in the left periphery

Pragmatic markers can come in asyndetic clusters (cf. Cuenca and Crible 2019 for English, among others). With regard to the left periphery of Dutch clauses, we observed that such clusters only occur at the very beginning of clauses, that is, in P2 but not in P1 or post-P1. Such clusters can be found most often in clauses at turn beginnings. Before we take a look at a few examples, we review some publications on PM clustering, in particular with regard to the question whether there are constraints on the internal order in such clusters and whether this order is functionally motivated.

PM clustering is quite a striking phenomenon in the case of modal particle clusters in German and Dutch, which was addressed, among others, by Thurmair (1991) and De Vriendt

et al. (1991), respectively. According to De Vriendt et al. (1991), the order of modal particles in a cluster can be understood on the basis of the semantics of the adverbs they are derived from. For example, if the adverb has a deictic meaning, like *nu* ‘now’ and *dan* ‘then’, they tend to be at the left end of the cluster, whereas quantifying adverbs like *eens* ‘once’ and *even* ‘a moment’ are found at the right end of clusters.

Thurmair (1991, 31) discusses two types of explanations; her data provide support for both of them. One explanatory perspective is based on the parts of speech from which the particle is recruited (in most cases, the “original” function is preserved as well): “[P]articles that are also conjunctions (*aber, denn, doch*) always occur right at the beginning of a combination, while particles that are also adverbs (*einfach, schon, mal*) are at the end, and those that are focus particles as well (*auch, nur, bloß*) are relatively near the end. Modal particles that are also sentence adverbs (*wohl, eigentlich, vielleicht*) are situated in the middle.” Her other explanatory rule is more function-based: “[T]he more specific a particle is, the further to the right it will stand in a particle combination.” (Thurmair 1991, 31) Specificity has to do here with different pragmatic functions like relating to the previous turn or indicating the illocutionary force. For example, according to Thurmair (1991, 31), hearer-directedness and final position correlate: “[T]hose modal particles by which the coparticipant in the interaction is particularly influenced in one way or another in her/his linguistic or non-linguistic actions occur in final position.” More recently, Müller (2018) analyzed the clusters *ja doch, doch auch* and *halt eben* and argued that these orderings are functionally motivated as well. The marked reversed orders she observes in her corpus occur in special contexts.

Turning now to clusters in the left and right periphery, we discuss a recent proposal by Haselow (2019), who proposed a functionally oriented *Discourse Marking Sequencing Hypothesis* for the sequential order of pragmatic markers in initial and final clusters of English PMs. This model again does not assume strict positions but rather a linear continuum

where the left and right ends of the clusters attract different functions. Haselow distinguishes three functions, namely Interaction, Discourse-organization, and Interpretation.

Interaction has to do with turn-taking: uptake (at turn beginning) and yielding the floor (at turn end). *Discourse-organization* is comparable to “textual” in Traugott’s classification: linking the present utterance to what preceded in the discourse. This linking can pertain to different levels: propositional, speech act, turn and bigger units of discourse (text fragments, for example). *Interpretation* has to do with the cognitive domain, the knowledge of speaker and hearer. Haselow mentions *I think* and *you know* as examples here, which would be functionally distinguished in Traugott’s classification as subjective versus intersubjective, respectively.

In sum, Haselow makes a finer distinction on the linking side than Traugott: instead of “textual”, he distinguishes “interaction” and “discourse-organization”. This distinction probably has to do with the fact that Haselow looked at conversation, where turn-taking is a special function that is lacking in written text, a type of language use that Traugott primarily dealt with. On the other side of the spectrum, Haselow seems to combine “subjective” and “intersubjective” into “interpretation”.

In his corpus, Haselow finds the following functional ordering tendencies (see Haselow 2019, 14, Figure 3):

- (46) Turn beginning: ←Interaction – Discourse-organization→ – Interpretation→
Turn ending: ←Discourse-organization – ←Interpretation – Interaction→

The arrows indicate the direction of functioning. It is noteworthy that the order of functions differs in the left and right peripheral clusters and their primary direction of functioning (indicated by the arrows) differs as well. At turn beginnings, interactional markers are

oriented to the turn change that just took place, whereas the discourse-organizing elements pertain to the upcoming turn or utterance and indicate how it fits the preceding discourse. The interpretational markers focus on the information of the upcoming turn or utterance itself and indicate how it relates to the subjective state (knowledge, feelings) of the interactants. At turn ending, discourse-organizing markers come first, according to the model. They indicate, “post hoc”, how the utterance just produced should be linked to the foregoing discourse (final *then*, for example, or Dutch *dan* ‘then’ in questions). Such markers are followed by interpretational ones, which again relate to the utterance just produced but not to the preceding discourse. Finally, interactional markers look forward, as they give indications regarding the follow-up turn.

When we compare Haselow’s functional list with Traugott’s textual, subjective and intersubjective functions, we see a possibility to integrate them. Whereas Haselow’s list is more fine-grained at the textual-conversational side, Traugott’s is more detailed with regard to the “cognitive” functions. If we combine the two (indicated by T and H in 47), and restrict ourselves to the (extraclausal) left periphery, we would hypothesize the following functional order:

- (47) Interaction (H) – Textual (T)/ discourse organization (H) – subjective-intersubjective (T)/interpretation (H)

Let us now take a look at a few Dutch examples to test this hypothesis. First, consider the cluster *ja maar helaas* ‘yes but alas’, as in (48) and (49).

- (48) *Ja maar helaas | dat gaat ook niet.*
yes but alas that goes also not

‘Yes, but unfortunately, that doesn’t work either’

(49) **Ja, maar helaas** | *voor hem levert het vaak niks op.*

yes but alas for him delivers that often nothing up

‘Yes, but unfortunately, that doesn’t bring him any profit’

Here, *ja* does the interactional uptake, *maar* indicates that what is following is meant as an objection against the preceding contribution (textual function) and *helaas*, finally, adds a subjective attitude directed at what follows.

Searching for *ja maar helaas* leads to lots of examples where *ja maar* is in the prefield and *helaas* in P1.

(50) **Ja, maar | helaas** | *is dat een langdurige geschiedenis.*

Yes but alas is that a long history

‘Yeah, but that is a long history, alas’

In a strict sense, these cases do not count as a cluster but the linear succession is in accordance with the schema in (47). The examples in (51) and (52), however, complicate things.

(51) **Ja | goed | maar** | *uh je kunt ermee wandelen dus.*

yes good but uh you can therewith walk so

‘yeah well so you can walk with it’

(52) **Ja | goed | maar** | *ik heb toch wel goeie berichten.*

yes good but I have yet well good messages

‘yes but I still have good news’

The contrast between *ja maar helaas* in (48) and (49) and *ja goed maar* in (51) and (52) shows that we might have to distinguish two subjective functions: one having to do with evaluation of something said in the previous turn (*goed*) and a second one having to do with the speaker's own contribution (*helaas*). The evaluative *goed* in this example could be bracketed with *ja*, together constituting a qualified uptake.¹⁰ A similar view fits *oh ja* in (53) and (54), which is again a subjective uptake.

(53) **Oh ja nee** | *dat had je niet verteld.*

oh yes no that had you not told

'oh by the way you haven't told me that'

(54) **Oh ja leuk leuk leuk.**

oh yes nice nice nice

'oh yeah very nice'

In the first example, the uptake is followed by *nee* 'no', which is textual, directly related to the preceding discourse – in this case, *ja nee* is not a unit, as it is in (33) – whereas, in (54), the repeated *leuk* 'nice' fills the subjective slot.¹¹

The example in (55) starts with idiomatic *ja nee* 'yes no', after which the speaker indicates with subjective *goed* 'good' that he has been able to take a position, a positive one in this case.

¹⁰ Cuenca and Crible (2019) provide a useful proposal for a list of criteria that may help to decide whether asyndetic sequences of discourse markers function independently (they call this situation "juxtaposition") or not ("combination" in their terminology).

¹¹ Alternatively, the repeated *leuk* can be seen as elliptical propositional content, *ik vind het leuk* 'I find it nice'.

(55) *Ja nee goed | dat was ook de eerste keer.*

yes no good that was also the first time

‘yes well ok that was the first time too’

We realize that our discussion of these few examples is just impressionistic. But for the moment, they may suffice to illustrate that earlier attempts to find order in left peripheral clusters may be on the right track but need further (cross-linguistic) study.

6 Discussion and conclusion

This chapter intended to offer the complement of the sketch we have previously given for pragmatic markers in the right periphery of Dutch main clauses (van der Wouden and Foolen 2015). Our primary goals were to localize the positions where PMs in the Dutch left periphery can be found and to determine how the PMs available in Dutch are distributed over these positions and which pragmatic functions they fulfill. Here, we summarize our findings and end with a few suggestions for further research.

In order to find the functional contribution of PMs, one should always take the specific structure of the language under study into the picture, as we have done in the present chapter. The verbal bracket is a central structural feature of Dutch, which we therefore have taken as a point of departure for exploring the positions that are relevant for PMs in the Dutch left periphery. We distinguished four of these in Dutch, which shows that the left periphery of Dutch main clauses has considerably more structure than is traditionally taken for granted. Some positions are reserved for PMs, other positions can be taken either by a PM or an

element that contributes to propositional content. Dutch P1, the position immediately preceding the finite verb, serves both types of elements.

Positions contribute their own functional meaning. In an instantiated utterance, the meaning of a position merges with the meaning of the element that occupies that position.

Distributional constraints can be understood as cases where the meaning of the position and the element occupying the position are incompatible, i.e. where their combination does not lead to an interpretable result.

It will be clear that our exploration requires further research. First of all, a more systematic corpus study is required to check the regularities we have found on the basis of a relatively small number of examples. Secondly, the question we raised in the introduction regarding the distributional divergence between original word class and the use as a pragmatic marker needs further study. The same holds for the issue of multifunctionality, in the sense that PMs can fulfill several functions simultaneously (see also Wiese and Labrenz, this volume).

PMs in the middle field have been touched upon here only marginally. We have briefly referred to modal particles, which constitute a prominent group of PMs in the Dutch middle field. Studying the positional and functional interaction of modal particles with other PMs in the middle field is a task for future research which would, as the intermediate panel between the left and right ones, complete the triptych of pragmatic markers in Dutch sentences.

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