Left periphery in discourse

Frame Units and discourse markers*

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In recent years a number of Romance-language scholars, have attempted to outline discourse models that identify units which contribute significantly to the information structure of discourse. One of these, known as the Basel model, is briefly presented in this paper. As far as we know, it is the only one to give an account of the structure of both oral and written texts. We will focus on the Frame Unit, an extra-predicative unit on the left periphery of the utterance with a scope that can extend beyond the single utterance. We will explore its role in text construction, observing the functions of some discourse markers when they occupy this unit. Finally, we will stress that the position of discourse markers is one of the main factors that must be taken into account in descriptive and cross-linguistic analyses of these elements.

0. Introduction

In this paper we will extend the concept of left periphery beyond the sentence to account for a discourse unit located to the left of the predicative nucleus. Our main interest is not intrasentential relations, i.e. syntax, but discourse organization, approached from a functional perspective. We will characterize this left periphery discourse unit, called the Frame Unit, paying special attention to its contribution to the information structure and to the textual functions it accomplishes within this

structure, and we will try to identify these functions with the help of a few connectives and other discourse markers that usually occupy this position.[1]

This research is based on three claims: 1) discourse functions are closely interrelated to the position discourse elements occupy in the utterance; 2) models of discourse units constitute a powerful theoretical tool to give an account of this interrelation, as far as they conceive of utterance positions in terms of units of the information structure; 3) the Basel model, which distinguishes three main Information Units in the utterance (Nucleus, Frame and Appendix), is a particularly suitable model to explain the relation between information structure and discourse functions. This has been already shown for a variety of linguistic phenomena (cf. Ferrari et al. 2008), but here we will focus on the so-called discourse markers or discourse particles, which are conceived of as a class of elements able to assume interactional, metadiscursive or cognitive functions in discourse. Our main hypothesis is that any discourse marker that is placed in the Frame Unit position changes its discourse function in one of two ways: (a) to ensure the connection of the Utterance with the preceding one by making the logical relation between them explicit, thus functioning as a discourse connective, or (b) to contribute to the overall organization of the text, thus working on a metadiscursive level.

In Section 1 we briefly present the Basel model, which serves as the theoretical frame for this study, bearing in mind the scholarly field of interest and the background in which it arose. In Section 2 we focus our attention on the Frame Unit, the discourse unit which occupies the left periphery of the utterance. Section 3 will explore how the discourse functions of some connectives change when these elements occupy the Frame Unit, and finally, in Section 4, some conclusions will be drawn about the need to take into consideration the position of discourse markers within the utterance as an important aspect of their description and cross-linguistic analysis.

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1.   This left periphery position is not coextensional with the sentence left periphery as it is described in Generative Grammar. As it will be shown in Section 2, on the one hand it hosts a variety of elements (mostly adverbial phrases and clauses offering circumstancial information). On the other hand, it is not the position to which argument elements are moved when they are fronted, inasmuch as these elements maintain a strong syntactic relation with the predicate. However, there is a key point of convergence with syntactic approaches in that it is also the position for left-dislocated elements (with clitic doubling) and "hanging topics" (Benincà, Salvi & Frison 1988, Ferrari 2003: 153, 178, Rodríguez Ramalle 2005, Zubizarreta 1999: 4220–4222, 4224), whether nominal elements syntactically unlinked to the predicative structure or introduced by a discourse marker such as *as far as x is concerned*, *regarding x*, etc. E.g. (i). *The books/*[Frame]*, I bought them in London*; (ii) *As I told you,/*[Frame1] *the books,/*[Frame2] *I bought them in London*; (iii) *Regarding your question,/*[Frame] *I will send you an email as soon as I have some information about it.*

1. Discourse units: The Basel Model

1.1 The information structure of discourse: From Functional Sentence Perspective to models of discourse units

Ever since the research conducted by the Prague School of Linguistics, discourse analysts have been aware of the fact that sentences and discourses are organized at a separate level beyond morphology, syntax and semantics. This organization, which reflects the communicative intention of the speaker or writer and the assumed knowledge of the reader or hearer, has been called the information structure of discourse (Lambrecht 1994).

The very first studies by the linguists of the Prague School, known as the *Functional Sentence Perspective* theory, were concerned exclusively with sentence information structure, where they distinguished two blocks of information, called Theme and Rheme (later renamed Topic and Comment) (Daneš (ed.) 1974).[2] Halliday (1967a,b) conceives of Theme and Rheme as designating two sentence positions: the Theme or Topic designates the sentence initial position, 'the point of departure', regardless of its syntactic function and of whether the information conveyed in it had been already mentioned or, in more general terms, was presupposed in the communicative situation. From a cognitive perspective, since the Theme is the most accessible position for the hearer, the speaker will normally place in it a set of linguistic elements conveying background or presupposed information to make it easier for the hearer to process the utterance. For its part, the Rheme or Comment position conveys the information the speaker presents as relevant about the Theme in a certain context and situation, usually in a predicative structure. Therefore, this level of Theme–Rheme or Topic–Comment organization should not only be carefully distinguished from the distribution of Given and New information[3] but also from that of the Focus–Presupposition level.

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2. It is no coincidence that this line of research developed to analyze Romance languages (mainly French since Weil's work) and Slavic languages (mainly Czech), because languages belonging to these families have more freedom to focus different sentence constituents by modifying the unmarked word order, whereas Germanic languages are forced to resort to prosodic prominence and marked syntactic structures (like cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences) as their principal focus mechanisms. However, not all Romance languages have the same freedom to alter the word order: while Spanish and Italian easily admit verb–subject orderings, French is forced to use cleft sentences like *J'ai ma voiture qui est en panne* to focus a constituent with subject function in unmarked word order, following the Principle of the Separation of Reference and Role (Lambrecht 1994: 184).

3. However, this distinction is not the most widespread theoretical position in handbooks and grammars, which mostly (with some exceptions, like Zubizarreta 1999: 4219) still identify Theme with given information (cf. RAE 2009: 2964–2967).

The main problem this theory had to face was that when a sentence contains several predicative structures, as occurs in most complex sentences, sentence structure becomes extremely complex at the Topic–Comment level, so dividing each sentence into only two information blocks was no longer sufficient to account for information structure. Also, it is difficult to transpose such a rigid scheme to the analysis of texts, where a number of utterances form a complex network of information which is being developed, completed and modified throughout the text.[4]

The limitations and shortcomings of the Prague theoretical approach led other linguists to propose new models to account for the complex informational organization of text.[5] Some authors came to the conclusion that discourse units need to be defined by analogy with other linguistic levels and their own already-defined units. In this regard, French linguistics has been an absolute pioneer. Here we will only refer to two models of discourse units proposed by two different research groups, although there are other proposals. The first was developed by Claire Blanche-Benveniste (1994) and her G.A.R.S. research group at the University of Aix-en-Provence. In Blanche-Benveniste's model the utterance is divided into three units: prefix, nucleus and suffix. The second of the two models was proposed by Eddy Roulet and his group at the University of Geneva (cf. Roulet et al. 2001). Their discourse units were modeled on taking the 'act', as defined in the speech act theory, as the basic unit. Both were designed for oral language and not for written texts,[6] but while Blanche-Beneviste's model takes the utterance as the basic unit of discourse, Roulet built his model for conversational interactions and devised a hierarchy of discourse units which contains both dialogic and monologic units.

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4. The first attempts to extend functional sentence perspective to text were the so-called schemes of thematic progression (cf. Combettes 1988, Bustos Gisbert 1996, 2000, Ferrari 1994, Bèlles 1991 for its application to French, Spanish, Italian and Catalan, respectively). However, these were too rigid to explain the informational relationships in texts as utterance concatenations in authentic texts did not fit easily into the different models proposed by Daneš. These schemes have been applied to the analysis of Spanish journalistic texts in Borreguero (2004, 2006) (contemporary texts) and Borreguero (2007), Borreguero & Octavio de Toledo (2004, 2006) (texts from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries). Similarly, Firbas' (1992) communicative dynamism proposal, which claimed that information relevance intensifies toward the end of the sentence, was too vague to delimit which part of the utterance was most dynamic.

5. In fact, Ferrari & De Cesare (2009, 2010) propose their model as a better account of Daneš' thematic progression.

6. We are well aware of the fact that using terms like 'spoken language', 'written texts' or 'oral language' is just a simplification of a reality that cannot be conceived of at all in terms of a dichotomic distinction. We subscribe to the *continuum* theory developed by Biber (1988) which means that we do not conceive of the distinction between written and spoken languages in terms of diamesic variation but in terms of conceptional variation, following Koch & Oesterreicher (1985).

Roulet's model has been adapted to the study of Spanish colloquial conversation by Antonio Briz and his research group Val.Es.Co. at the University of Valencia (Briz & Val.Es.Co. 2003; see also Cortés & Camacho 2005 for a different adaptation), while Blanche-Benveniste's system has been successfully applied to spoken Italian by Emanuela Cresti (2000) and her group at the University of Florence.

In our opinion Blanche-Benveniste's model offers the advantage of being equally valid for the analysis of spoken and written texts, as it considers the utterance the basic unit. In this paper we will not be concerned with spoken texts but will focus on the application of Blanche-Benveniste's model to written texts, as carried out by Angela Ferrari and her research group at the Universities of Lausanne and Basel.

1.2   The Basel Model

The point of departure of this model is not Blanche-Benveniste's model of discourse units itself but its application to spoken Italian, accomplished by Cresti (2000). Ferrari has extended and remodeled it to analyze Italian written texts (and also spoken ones), claiming that it is possible to construct a model of discourse organization beyond diamesic variation (Ferrari 2003: 10). This model is known as the Basel Model of discourse units. In the present paper we will consider some aspects of written texts that, in our opinion, can be better explained by this model than by others.

The Basel model is a complex theoretical model of discourse which distinguishes three textual organization dimensions of Utterances:[7] (a) the logical-argumentative dimension, which comprehends the logical relations between events (cause–effect, temporal succession, condition, opposition, motivation, etc.) and the way the propositions expressing these events are ordered to assume a precise argumentative function in the general structure of the text (Ferrari 2005c); (b) the thematic dimension or Topic–Comment structure, which accounts for the introduction and development of referents in the text; and (c) the polyphonic dimension, which, following Ducrot's theory of polyphony, is concerned with the way different 'voices' or points of view are interwoven in the text (Ferrari 2004: 20–25; 2005b: 20–30). The Basel model also accounts for a hierarchical organization of utterances in each of these dimensions which makes it possible to characterize different text types (Ferrari (ed.) 2005). Here we will not offer a general introduction to the model (cf. Ferrari 2003, 2004, 2005b; Ferrari et al. 2008) but will focus instead on the discourse units that belong to the internal organization of the Utterance.

The model distinguishes three levels of hierarchical organization: the Utterance or Communicative Unit, the Information Units and the Semantic Propositions. None of them admits of a straightforward definition and their delimitation is the result of a process of textual interpretation that takes morphosyntactic, semantic and pragmatic

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7.   We use capital letters to indicate that these are specific terms in this particular model and are used in a technically precise way.

criteria into account.[8] There are, however, some guidelines that can help with their identification.

The basic assumption is that the units are defined according to semantic and pragmatic criteria and therefore are not always explicit (Ferrari 2004: 10). In this paper we will not deal with the implicit units of the model (which are much more relevant in oral communication, where context plays a greater role in interpretation, helping the development of inferences and selecting the cognitively salient information), but only with the explicit ones. The Utterance or Communicative Unit[9] accomplishes a speech act[10] and maintains a logical-argumentative relationship with the co-text. From a cognitive point of view, it is able to transform the so-called discourse memory by introducing a new referent (entity or event) or to modify one that has already been introduced. As for the formal criteria, this unit is delimited by what are termed strong punctuation marks, it usually contains a connective which establishes a logical relation with the preceding Communicative Unit and an anaphoric element which refers to a previously introduced referent, although neither of these last two formal characteristics are exclusive to this level.

An Utterance can be divided into Information Units. Here again, the delimitation of these units is the result of a combination of syntactic structures, punctuation marks (mainly commas), lexical elements (like connectives, focus adverbs or modal adverbs) and contextual information (Ferrari 2004: 15; 2005b: 30–38). There are three main units: the Nucleus[11] (in Italian *nucleo*), the Appendix (It *appendice*) and the Frame (It *quadro*), recalling the three-unit articulation of nucleus, suffix and prefix in Blanche-Benveniste's approach. Here we will briefly present the first two and then focus on the third. The whole hierarchy can be represented in a simplified way, as in Table 1.

The Nucleus is the main Information Unit because it is the only necessary and sufficient unit in an Utterance, while the Frame and the Appendix Units are always optional and subordinated to it. Their presence allows the Utterance to be defined as complex, in opposition to the simple Utterance which is composed of the Nucleus alone (Ferrari 2005b: 33).

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8.   These difficulties to delimit discourse units are lessened in spoken language, where they can be distinguished acoustically by their prosodic contour (cf. Cresti 2000).

9.   Strictly speaking an Utterance is only the verbal expression of the Communicative Unit, but as we do not take the implicit component of this unit into account we will use Utterance and Communicative synonymously.

10.   The model to some extent includes Roulet's proposal to consider the speech act the basic unit of his model (cf. Roulet et al. 2001).

11.   The term Nucleus (Blanche-Benveniste's *noyau*) was adopted in Ferrari (2005b: 31), but only as a synonym of Rheme/Comment. Only in Ferrari et al. (2008) was it articulated in Theme/Topic and Rheme/Comment and clearly differentiated from the Frame and the Appendix. In previous versions of the model the main Units were Theme, Rheme and Appendix.

Table 1. The hierarchy of discourse units according to the Basel Model.

		Paragraph		
		Communicative Unit		
		Explicit → Utterance		Implicit
		Information Units		
Frame		Nucleus	Appendix[12]	
		Semantic Proposition		
	Topic	Comment		

The Nucleus defines the illocutionary act accomplished by the Utterance and its contribution to the composition of the text. The Frame Unit precedes the Nucleus and "indicates the general denotation domain of relevance" of the Nucleus (Ferrari & De Cesare 2010: 58), as we will see below.

(1) *En los últimos años,*/[Frame] *diversos autores han analizado los mecanismos sexistas de la gramática y los usos del lenguaje*/[Nucleus]

(Grijelmo, *La seducción de las palabras* (2001), CREA)[13]

'In recent years,/[Frame] various authors have analyzed the sexist mechanisms of grammar and uses of language/[Nucleus]'

Finally, the Appendix Unit has the function of completing the information given in the Nucleus, as in (2), or the Frame, as in (3), usually following them:

(2) *En una cueva de Sudáfrica*/[Frame] *se han encontrado unos restos de huesos quemados y cenizas de plantas calcinadas,*/[Nucleus] *seguramente hierbas y hojas.*/[Appendix]

(*El País*, 5/04/2012)

'In a cave in South Africa,/[Frame] there have been found remains of burnt bones and the ashes of burnt plants,/[Nucleus] probably grasses and leaves./[Appendix]'

(3) *Según el informe pericial,*/[Frame] *al que ha tenido acceso* La Vanguardia *y que forma parte del sumario Banesto,*/[Appendix] *"las facturaciones realizadas o soportadas por Valyser tienen extrañas características".*/[Nucleus]

(*La Vanguardia,* 30/06/1995, CREA)

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12. The Appendix can follow either the Nucleus, the Frame or another Appendix, but it also can be inserted within either of these units. Frame and Appendix Units can be Semantic Propositions with a Topic-Comment structure or can be filled by a single element, which can be a nominal phrase or a connective.

13. Following the notational conventions employed by the authors of the Basel Model, simple slashes are used to separate Information Units and double slashes to separate Utterances. The type of the Unit is indicated in superscript.

'According to the expert report/[Frame] to which *La Vanguardia* had access and which forms part of the Banesto indictment,/[Appendix] "the invoices issued or paid by Valyser possess strange features".'/[Nucleus]

However, the Appendix can also be inserted in another Information Unit, as in (4), where two Appendices are embedded in the Nucleus, precisely in the Topic of the Nucleus, which is therefore discontinuous (as it is indicated by Nucleus- and -Nucleus).

(4)   *Los paseos en casa de Rocío,*[Topic]/[Nucleus-] *de 31 años,*/[Appendix1] *y de Roberto,*[Topic]/[-Nucleus-] *de 32,*/[Appendix2] *no han vuelto a ser iguales.* [Comment]/[-Nucleus]

(*El País*, 5/04/2012)

'Strolls in the house of Rocío,[Topic]/[Nucleus-] aged 31 years,/[Appendix1] and Roberto,[Topic/-Nucleus-] aged 32,/[Appendix2] have never been the same again. [Comment]/[-Nucleus]'

The scope of the Appendix is always local. It can explain already given information, elaborate on some inferential meaning, add information that is relevant but not necessary, repeat an element that has already been presented or offer a subjective judgment about the information conveyed by the Nucleus or the Frame (Ferrari 2003: 40–45; 2004: 16). It is always a parenthetical unit, separated from the rest of the Utterance by weak punctuation marks (Ferrari 2003: 119–122).[14]

Any of the above Information Units can be expressed by a Semantic Proposition or by other elements. At the level of a Semantic Proposition, the main information structure is the well-known division into Topic and Comment.[15] In this way, the Basel model integrates the Prague model into a more complex conception of discourse organization and analyzes the thematic organization (which the Prague School of Linguistics viewed as the entire information structure of the sentence) as just one level in the model.

The Comment (still called Rheme in Ferrari 2003: 34–36; 2004: 15) defines the type of illocutionary act accomplished by the Utterance and is the textual element in which the logical relationships among Communicative Units are expressed. The Topic (or Theme or Semantic Theme in Ferrari 2003, 2004) delimits the validity of the

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14. Both the Appendix and the Frame can be reiterated in the same Utterance, i.e. a Nucleus can be preceded by two or more Frames and two or more Appendices can be embedded or can follow the Nucleus or the Frame depending on how complex the articulation of the information structure in the text is.

15. There are, however, some exceptions to this information structure: impersonal constructions, eventive (unaccusative) constructions and presentative constructions like *Hay un alumno que quiere hablar contigo* 'There is a student who would like to talk to you'. On the other hand, the mapping of the Topic–Comment structure onto the Information Unit can become highly complex (cf. Ferrari *et al.* 2008: 119–175).

Comment in so far as it denotes the entity to which the information contained in the Comment applies (Ferrari 2003: 36–40). Example (1), repeated below as (5), can be analyzed as follows:

(5)　*En los últimos años,/*$^{\text{Frame}}$ *diversos autores/*$_{\text{Topic}}$ *han analizado los mecanismos sexistas de la gramática y los usos del lenguaje./*$_{\text{Comment}}$*/*$^{\text{Nucleus}}$

　　　　　　　　　　(Grijelmo, *La seducción de las palabras* (2001), CREA)

　　　'In recent years,/$^{\text{Frame}}$ various authors/$_{\text{Topic}}$ have analyzed the sexist mechanisms of grammar and uses of language./$_{\text{Comment}}$/$^{\text{Nucleus}}$'

2.　The Frame Unit

As we have already mentioned, the Frame Unit is the Information Unit that precedes the Nucleus and therefore constitutes the left periphery of the Utterance. In the first versions of the Basel Model (Ferrari 2003, 2004), the Frame Unit was telescoped with the Theme. Nevertheless, Ferrari distinguished a Semantic Theme and an Information Theme. The Semantic Theme was characterized as having active cognitive status and a prominent syntactic position (subject in SVO languages) when expressed by a lexical form or by a non-clitic pronoun, while the Information Theme always constituted an independent Information Unit and expressed the sphere in which the Nucleus is relevant (Ferrari 2003: 164–168, 193–221). Both kinds of Theme share the cognitive salience of their referents and both reinforce textual cohesion because they usually contain some anaphoric element, but the Information Theme can never belong to the same Information Unit as the Comment, as is mainly the case for the Semantic Theme in written texts.

　　Zampese (2004: 92) introduced the term *quadro* 'frame' to rename the Information Theme.[16] It has been adopted in the Basel model since Ferrari (2005b: 31),

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16. However, the term *quadro* had been already used by Ferrari herself (2004: 23), without providing a real definition, when Topic and Frame had not yet been clearly distinguished (except by calling them respectively the Semantic Theme and the Information Theme). It was defined as a theme-type information which established the illocutionary, semantic-denotative and textual pertinence of the Rheme. So Frame and Nucleus seem initially to have been just new terms for Theme and Rheme, only designating new discourse Units from Ferrari et al. (2008) onwards, after substantial remodeling of the theoretical framework which distinguishes the level of Information Units from the level of Topic–Comment articulation.

　　During the development of the model, the Frame has been also confused with another minor Unit, the Incipit, which is mostly present in spoken Utterances (Cresti 2000) and has been defined as the opening unit of the Utterance filled with non-denotative or purely functional content, including discourse markers and modal adverbs (Ferrari 2005b: 36–37, Zampese 2005). In this paper we will follow the description of this Unit as found in Ferrari et al. (2008: 99–105).

although a clear distinction between Theme and Frame was not developed until 2008. The terminological change was inspired by Charolles (cf. Charolles 1997), who had used the term *cadre* 'frame' to designate this discourse unit in his analysis of adverbs in French syntax (but see also the term *adverbios de marco* 'frame adverbs' in Kovacci 1999: 737). Charolles has studied the role of adverbs (mainly local and temporal) and prepositional phrases in this position as opening a localization frame (*cadre de localisation*) which usually extends their scope to successive utterances in a text. However, the Frame Unit and Charolle's *cadre* are by no means equivalent (cf. Zampese 2005: 180–181).

The punctuation and the semantic content are usually helpful cues for identifying the Frame Unit.[17] In reading, the Frame Unit is normally separated from the Nucleus by a pause even when there is no comma, as in (6):

(6)   <u>*A causa de estos trabajos*</u>/^{Frame} *ha habido que desalojar los espacios hasta ahora ocupados por esa colección* [...]   (*ABC*, 17/05/1996, CREA)
'<u>Because of this work</u>/^{Frame} the spaces hitherto occupied by this collection have had to be cleared [...].'

When the Frame Unit contains a Semantic Proposition with adverbial function, however, the comma is required. In this case it indicates a syntactic break between two adjacent constituents and marks an information boundary. The phonosyntactic weight of the constituent always plays an important role, but the author's intention to create a syntactic and informative hierarchy of constituents should not be underestimated (Ferrari 2003: 85–86, 88, 91–93, 130–132), as in (7):

(7)   <u>*Después de que sus casas fueron quemadas*</u>,/^{Frame} *se les obligó a transportar sus pertenencias unos 70 kilómetros, sin recibir apenas alimentación, hasta llegar a una base de la guerrilla.*   (*El País,* 01/08/1988, CREA)
'<u>After their houses were burnt</u>,/^{Frame} they were forced to transport their belongings around 70 kilometers, barely receiving any food, until they reached one of the guerrilla's bases.'

From a semantic point of view, the scope of the Frame Unit can be local, limited to a single Utterance, or textual. If it is local, the Frame Unit plays a central role in coherence, because the information conveyed by this unit determines the validity of the information conveyed by the Nucleus. This information (a) can refer to certain temporal and spatial conditions or other circumstances that restrict the Nucleus information, cf. (8) (also (1) above), (b) it can stipulate a certain perspective or point of view, cf. (9) and (10), and finally, (c) the Frame Unit can indicate the source of the information, as in (11) and (12):

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17.   On the role of punctuation in marking Information Units, cf. Ferrari (2003) and the articles by Cignetti and Lala in Ferrari (ed.) (2004).

(8)   *El solista interpretará un repertorio completo en el que se incluyen obras como Sevillana op. 29 de Turina, Cinco anécdotas de Segovia; Sonata-fantasía de Moreno Torroba; Capricho árabe, de Tárrega; Recuerdos de la Alhambra, también de Tárrega, Sequenza XI de Berio e Invocación y danza del maestro Rodrigo.*
      <u>*Tras el recital*</u>,/^Frame *las actuaciones en la Gavia continuarán el domingo 23 por la mañana* [...].   (*El Periódico mediterráneo,* 21/05/2004, CREA)
      'The soloist will play a complete repertory that includes works such as Turina's Sevillana Op. 29, Segovia's Five Anecdotes, Moreno Torroba's Sonata Fantasy, Tarrega's Arab Caprice, Memories of the Alhambra, also by Tarrega, Berio's Sequence No.11 and Rodrigo's Invocation and Dance.
      <u>After the concert</u>,/^Frame the performances at la Gavia will continue on the morning of Sunday 23 [...].'

(9)   *<u>Según la comisión</u>*,/^Frame *la Policía Municipal debe tener una presencia continua* [...].   (*El País*, 02/12/1988, CREA)
      '<u>According to the committee</u>,/^Frame the Municipal Police must maintain a permanent presence [...].'

(10) *<u>De acuerdo con la versión de Washington</u>*,/^Frame *dos de las víctimas mortales son civiles estadounidenses que tenían contratas con las tropas destacadas en Irak.*
                                          (*20 minutos*, 19/01/2004, CREA)
      '<u>According to Washington's version</u>,/^Frame two of those killed are American civilians who had contracts with the troops posted to Iraq.'

(11) *<u>Según palabras de Ghali</u>*,/^Frame *el crimen organizado provoca la "gangrena" del mundo financiero, corrompe a la clase política quebrando la credibilidad de las instituciones y mina la democracia.*   (*El Mundo*, 22/11/1994, CREA)
      '<u>In Ghali's words</u>,/^Frame organized crime causes the "gangrene" of the financial world, corrupts the political class, destroying the credibility of the institutions, and undermines democracy.'

(12) *<u>Según el informe de la OMS</u>*,/^Frame *no se alcanzará un avance significativo en la mejoría de la situación sanitaria mundial si no se suprimen las grandes causas de pobreza y subdesarrollo propias de estructuras socioeconómicas arcaicas.*
                                          (*El País,* 30/12/1980, CREA)
      '<u>According to the WHO report</u>,/^Frame no significant advance in improving the world health situation will be attained unless the major causes of poverty and underdevelopment that are typical of archaic socio-economic structures are eliminated.'

As we have seen, from a syntactic point of view a Frame Unit can be filled by a word (e.g. a pragmatic connective, as we will see below), a noun phrase or prepositional phrase (as in (8)–(12)) or a clause, as in (7).[18]

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18.   Cf. Zampese (2004) for a detailed study of the syntactic, semantic and information effects of a gerundial clause in Frame Units and Zampese (2005) for an analysis of Frame Units in accident and crime reports.

A Frame Unit with textual scope guarantees cohesion between text utterances and this can be done in two main ways. In some cases the information conveyed by the Frame Unit applies to a sequence of utterances,[19] as in (13), where the outline agreement mentioned in the Frame Unit contains all the information developed in the following two utterances.

(13)   *De acuerdo con el preacuerdo,*/Frame *el ejército reagrupará sus efectivos en siete corredores, dejando abiertos los espacios necesarios para que el Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, conservando sus armas y organización, concentre sus contingentes en esos mismos puntos en forma recíproca y proporcional. // El Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional asumirá el compromiso y la responsabilidad de mantener el orden y la seguridad pública en los espacios determinados, sin que ello presuponga que los zapatistas vayan a disponer de zonas francas.*   (*La Vanguardia*, 16/05/1995, CREA)
'In accordance with the outline agreement,/Frame the army shall regroup its troops into seven corridors, leaving open the necessary spaces for the Zapatista National Liberation Army, retaining its arms and organization, to concentrate its contingents reciprocally and proportionally at those same points. // The Zapatista National Liberation Army shall accept the commitment and responsibility of maintaining order and public safety in the set areas, which does not presuppose that the Zapatistas may have zones under their own control (*zonas francas*).'

In other cases, the Frame Unit makes the logical-argumentative relations between the preceding and following utterances explicit,[20] particularly when it is occupied by lexical items with a clear linking function, such as anaphoric elements or textual connectives. When the linking element contains anaphoric components, these help to build networks of reference to previous elements in the co-text, as in (14).

(14)   *Las bodegas de la gabarra aljibe "Cabo Prior" habían sido pintadas para poder albergar el agua, pero, al parecer, no se había esperado el tiempo necesario para que la pintura dejara de desprender el característico olor, según se refleja de las primeras investigaciones.//* *Por este motivo,*/Frame *el agua ha cogido sabor a pintura* [...]   (*La Vanguardia*, 17/04/1995, CREA)

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19.   This cohesive function has already been pointed out by Charolles (2009: 403): "Certains adverbiaux sont susceptibles, quand ils sont employés à l'initial de phrase, de jouer un rôle dans l'organisation du discours du fait qu'ils peuvent porter non seulement sur le contenu de leur phrase d'accueil mais aussi sur celui d'une ou plusieurs autres apparaissant dans la suite [...]" 'Certain adverbials, when employed at the beginning of the sentence, are able to play a role in the organization of discourse, because their scope is not restricted to the content of the sentence in which they are placed, but extends to the content of successive sentences [...]'.

20.   According to Charolles (2009: 407), these expressions are predestined, due to the place they occupy, to refer back to information activated in the preceding context.

'The holds of the water barge *Cabo Prior* had been painted so that they could hold the water but it seems that not enough time was allowed for the paint to stop giving off its characteristic odor, as the initial investigations reflect.// <u>For this reason,</u>/[Frame] the water has picked up a taste of paint [...]'

However, Frame Units can also include a cataphoric element when introducing new information or topicalized constituents which indicate what the following sequence of utterances will be about. In spoken language, the element either has no syntactic connection with the sentence (hanging topics) or will be a clitically doubled left-dislocated element as in (15):[21]

(15) *Y el hecho es que un* [sic] *corredor solo siempre le cuesta más trabajo abrir hueco. // Cuando se han juntado tres,*/[Frame1] *como es el caso de ahora mismo,*/[Appendix to Frame1] *pues*/[Frame2] *el hueco*/[Frame3] *lo pueden abrir un poquito más.*/[Nucleus]

(*Vuelta ciclista a España*, TVE1, 24/09/1995 (oral), CREA)

'And the fact is that [for] a single cyclist it is harder to open a gap. // When three are together,/ [Frame1] as it is happening right now,/ [Appendix to Frame1] so/[Frame] the gap/[Frame] they can open it a little more.'/[Nucleus]

In written language, the topicalized element it is likely to be preceded by specialized topic markers such as *concerning x*, *as far as x is concerned* or, in Spanish, *en cuanto a* (16), *por lo que concierne a*, *en relación a*, *con relación a*, which are less frequent in spoken texts but see *hablando de* in (17), etc.

(16) <u>*En cuanto a la biosfera,*</u>/[Frame] *algunos autores proponen que las extinciones –cuya envergadura es también muy variable– siguen leyes de potencia: las extinciones en masa, que según el registro fósil han sucedido tan sólo nueve veces, equivaldrían a los grandes seísmos, mientras que las pequeñas, que afectan a pocas especies en pocos grupos, serían el equivalente de los microseísmos.*

(*Pléyades* 07-09/2000, CREA)

'<u>As for the biosphere,</u>/[Frame] some authors suggest that extinctions – the extent of which is also very variable – follow power laws: mass extinctions, which according to the fossil record have only taken place nine times, would be equivalent to major earthquakes, while small ones, which affect few species in few groups, would be equivalent to microquakes.'

(17) E: *y* <u>*hablando de temas*</u>/[Frame] ((*¿tú sabes lo que habrá?*)) *¿eh? habrá de literatura o de lengua ¿no?*   (Corpus Val.Es.Co. 2002: 89, 213–214)

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21.   However, fronted foci never occupy the Frame position. They are to be considered the Topic of the Nucleus Unit, as this position is prosodically integrated (and consequently never admits to be graphically separated from the Nucleus by a comma). Cf. the difference between a fronted focus (i) and a left-dislocated element (ii): (i) *Un coche/compró Juan*/[Comment]/[Nucleus] 'A car/John bought/[Comment]'; (ii) *El coche,*/[Frame] Juan/[Topic] *lo compró la semana pasada*/[Comment]/[Nucleus] 'The car/[Frame] John/[Topic] bought it last week [Comment]/[Nucleus]'.

'E: and <u>talking about topics</u>/[Frame] ((do you know what there'll be?)) eh? there'll be literature or language ones, right?'

Therefore, the information function of the Frame Unit is to present the setting or perspective from which the nuclear, rhematic information is highlighted. When it has textual scope, it designates a sort of reference world which gives strong coherence to a succession of Utterances or indicates the logical and argumentative relations among these Utterances that are essential to the construction of the state of affairs presented in the text.

3.   Frame Units and discourse functions: The case of discourse connectives

As has often been pointed out, understanding the text structure entails examining the relationships between the different denotative meanings expressed by the semantic propositions and between the speaker, the hearer (and other contextual factors) and the content of the message. Discourse markers[22] play an important role as text markers that make these kinds of relations explicit and guide the hearer's text processing.

In recent years, discourse markers have been studied exhaustively in many languages, using many different approaches. Romance languages are no exception and Spanish discourse markers in particular have been described in functional, contrastive, historical and cognitive approaches in a very large number of works since the mid-1980s.[23] Our main concern in this paper is to study the interplay between the functions of discourse markers and their position in the Utterance, with particular attention to the Frame Unit.

3.1   Discourse markers and discourse functions

As we have mentioned above, the Frame Unit is an easily identifiable utterance position to which some functional properties can be attributed. Its peripheral position

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22.   We will use the term *discourse marker* because it is already in widespread use (Schiffrin 1987), although many other terms have been used to refer to this functional category of elements, such as *discourse particles* (Fischer (ed.) 2006) or *pragmatic markers* (Aijmer & Vandenbergen (eds) 2006). Most handbooks and introductions to this field devote considerable space to terminological questions (for Spanish cf. Portolés 1998, Loureda & Acín (eds) 2010), which have been and still are an issue, as no agreement has been reached. In any case, although *discourse connective* is sometimes used as a synonym for *discourse markers*, in this paper it is considered a special type of discourse marker which has the specific function of making logical-argumentative relations between sentences and utterances explicit and is more frequent in written texts (Portolés 1993, López Serena & Borreguero 2010).

23.   For a good up-to-date overview of research on Spanish discourse markers, cf. Loureda & Acín (eds) (2010).

guarantees it a wider scope than any other Information Unit and this implies, as we have seen before, that any element in the Frame Unit has the whole Utterance or even a sequence of Utterances as its scope. Our hypothesis claims that any discourse marker that is placed in this position changes its discourse function in one of two ways: (a) to ensure the connection of the Utterance with the preceding one by making the logical relation between them explicit, thus functioning as a discourse connective,[24] or (b) to contribute to the overall thematic organization of the text, thus working on a metadiscursive level. Before presenting some examples that, in our opinion, sustain this hypothesis, we would like to clarify what we understand by discourse function and present the classification of discourse functions that we assume for this study.[25]

Besides definitional and terminological problems (see fn. 22), one of the most problematic issues in the study of discourse markers is to establish how many functions these elements can play in discourse. Several proposals have been made for Romance languages (Bazzanella 2001 [1995], Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999, Pons Bordería 2000, Cuenca 2006 and Loureda & Acín (eds) 2010, among others), but our study is based on the classification proposed in López Serena and Borreguero (2010), which in our opinion allows for a better understanding of function shifts in discourse markers in their interplay with Informative Units.

We distinguish three main functions or macrofunctions:

1. The *interactive function* is related to the fact that a text is constituted as a relationship between two speakers. This function is particularly relevant in conversational interaction. On the speaker's side we can distinguish functions related to conversational control; on the hearer's, the functions can be divided into those that try to maintain contact with the speaker and those that constitute a reaction to what the speaker says, whether positive, negative or just a request for an explanation.

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24. One element (conjunction, adverb or adverbial phrase) can indicate the same logical relation at different linguistic levels: at the intrasentential level connecting two phrases, at the intersentential level connecting two clauses and at the discourse level (Mandelli 2004, Ferrari 2006). Here we will only deal with the latter.

25. Discourse markers have mainly been studied within two theoretical frameworks, which nowadays constitute two of the strongest and most comprehensive semantic theories: Argumentation Theory (Ducrot *et al.* 1980) and Relevance Theory (Blakemore 1987). Despite all their theoretical and methodological differences, both would agree in defining discourse markers as guides to the interpretation of the text, although the classic version of Argumentation Theory considers that they lead the argumentative flow of the discourse, whereas Relevance Theory prefers to describe them as mechanisms to guide inferences (Murillo 2010).

2. The *metadiscursive function* is related to the constitutive process of textuality itself and concerns every text element that makes the construction process of the text explicit: not only reformulation, order, information structuring, etc. but also the difficulties in linking information while planning the discourse.

3. The *cognitive function* is related to the textual semantic content, i.e. to the relation between the text, the world and the communicative situation. This function is concerned with every element that reflects and builds up the logical relations between different events in the world and the argumentative relations that try to lead the reader or hearer towards certain conclusions, be they explicit or implicit (and thus only accessible after an inferential process); it also concerns the relation between the speaker's attitude and the content expressed in the utterance, in particular it regards the speaker's degree of involvement with the truth of what is being said and the strategies to protect or threaten the hearer's face (linguistic politeness).

Table 2 synthesizes the main macrofunctions and functions assumed by discourse markers:

Table 2. Discourse marker functions (López Serena & Borreguero 2010).

Macrofunctions	Types of functions	Subtypes of functions (some examples)
Interactive function	Conversational control	Turn-taking, keeping the floor, leaving the floor, attracting the hearer's attention, controling reception, request for confirmation
	Conversational contact	Phatic function, emotional reaction
	Reaction	Collaborative answer, reactive answer, request for explanation
Metadiscursive function	Information structure	Delimitation of theme structure (topic change, digression, summing up), focalization, information distribution, addition of comment
	Linguistic formulation	Unplanned linking, reformulation
Cognitive function	Logical-argumentative connection	Argumentative co-orientation (addition, consequence, finality), argumentative counter-orientation (opposition, contrast, relevance minimization)
	Inferential connection	
	Modality	Mitigation, intensification

3.2   Frame units and discourse markers

Studies of the interplay between the functions of discourse markers and their position in the Utterance are not new, although they cannot be traced back more than ten years. However, their number is rapidly increasing due to the conviction that there is a strong connection between these two factors that is very helpful for the interpretation of discourse markers.[26] Just to mention the analysis carried out within the Basel model, descriptions of Italian and French connectives have been particularly numerous (Mandelli 2004, 2006, Ferrari 2005a, Ferrari & Ricci 2011 and many papers by De Cesare – see below). Regarding Roulet's discourse model, we find some interesting thoughts in Roulet *et al.* (2001) for French and in Briz & Pons (2010) for the adaptation of his model to Spanish.

Before giving some examples of Spanish discourse markers to support the Basel model's thesis that position in the Information Units, as defined in the model, is highly relevant for discourse functions, we would like to make it clear that we do not presuppose that position determines function because we do not believe that strict determination relationships rule language structure. We only suggest that a particular position favors the development of certain discourse functions, because different positions in the Utterance have different scopes and this difference in scope contributes to the acquisition and consolidation of certain functions.

Two characteristics of the Frame Unit that we have already mentioned explain why its position in the Utterance is especially suitable for discourse connectives: extension of its scope to the whole Utterance[27] and the possibility of creating a link with the preceding text (Ferrari et al. 2008: 372–378). Discourse connectives are a subtype of discourse markers which assume the function of marking the logical and argumentative relationships between the Utterances that form a paragraph or a text (cf. Ferrari 2003: 123). This is the case with the consecutive connectives that we find in (18) and (19):

(18)   *Los productos que se seleccionan son aquellos que se consideran representativos del consumo de las familias.// Por tanto,/*[Frame] *se excluyen aquellos que se destinan a inversión, como por ejemplo, la compra de una vivienda.*

(*El País*, 16/01/1998, CREA)

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26.   "L'existence d'une relation entre l'interprétation des marques discursives et leur distribution à l'intérieur du texte est désormais considérée comme un fait, une réalité dont tous ceux et celles qui s'occupent de l'organisation du discours finissent par faire – d'une manière ou d'une autre, de façon ponctuelle ou plus systématique – l'expérience." ['The existence of a relationship between the interpretation of discourse markers and their distribution within the text is now considered a fact, a reality that everyone who has to do with the organization of discourse eventually experiences, one way or another, whether from time to time or more systematically.'] (Ferrari & Ricci 2011: 41)

27.   The position of the connector at the beginning of the Utterance may be associated with an extension of its scope beyond the Utterance in which it stands and, if there is no indication to the contrary, this occurs by default (Ferrari & Ricci 2011: 39).

'The chosen products are those considered representative of household consumption. <u>Therefore</u>,/^{Frame} those assigned to investment are excluded, such as, for example, purchasing a home.'

(19) *La red Swift posibilita las transferencias electrónicas entre las grandes entidades bancarias y bursátiles, y soporta el flujo de dinero de las tarjetas de crédito, es decir el pago a distancia. También las policías utilizan sus propias redes telemáticas, al igual que algunos políticos y empresarios. Cuando hay que enviar un mensaje "top secret" se recurre a redes seguras, cuyo acceso no es público. <u>Por consiguiente</u>,/^{Frame} Telépolis funciona plenamente en el plano militar, financiero, empresarial y policial, así como en otros ámbitos de la sociedad de la información.*   (*El Mundo*, 27/12/1995, CREA)

'The Swift network enables electronic transfers to be made between the major bankers and brokers and supports the flow of money from credit cards, in other words, distance payments. Police forces also use their own data transmission networks, and so do some politicians and business people. When "top secret" messages have to be sent, secure networks without public access are resorted to. <u>Consequently</u>,/^{Frame} Telepolis is fully operative in military, financial, business and police circles, as well as in other spheres of the information society.'

What we find more interesting is that some discourse markers with a different discourse function can assume the logical-argumentative function and become connectives when they are moved to the Frame Unit.

3.2.1 *Sp* también *'also'*

Our first example is the focus adverb *también* 'also'. In the literature (Cuartero Sánchez 2002, Santos Río 2003, Sainz González 2006a,b) it is described as an adverb which gives a particular informative value to a phrasal constituent placed immediately before or after it.[28] Besides their focusing function,[29] which guides the interpretation process

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28. The focus of an adverb and the focus of an utterance do not always coincide. For example, in a sentence like Italian *Solo io ho visto che Laura era* ʟì 'Only I saw that Laura was ᴛʜᴇʀᴇ', *io* 'I' constitutes the focus of the focus adverb *solo* 'only', but the utterance-final position and the emphasis define *lì* as the main focus of the utterance (De Cesare 2004, 2008, 2010). We will not discuss here problems regarding the delimitation of the scope and the relation between the scope of the adverb and the focusing element; see König (1991) for a detailed study of the question.

29. Romance languages have four main linguistic mechanisms to signal the focus of the utterance: (a) position in the utterance: the focus elements occupy the final position of the utterance in an unmarked word order – information or presentational focus – but rearrangements of word order can have important effects on focusing (Contreras 1983, Villalba 2010); (b) syntactic structures, such as cleft and pseudocleft sentences, respond to the speaker's intention of focusing an element which is syntactically separated from the rest of the predicative structure (this is why

and signals which element in the information structure of the utterance is the most relevant, focus adverbs can be classified according to their semantic value.

Focus adverbs establish a contrast between their focus and another element, which can be present in the context or must be inferred by the hearer. This element, which has often been called the "alternative" (Portolés 2010 following Rooth), can be expressed in the co-text or can be implicit. Depending on the type of focus adverb, the alternative can be excluded or integrated, hence this feature distinguishes between restrictive adverbs like *only* and additive adverbs like *also*. The additive meaning of *también* can be seen in (20), where *Marte* 'Mars' is the focused element in contrast with another planet mentioned in the previous co-text, *Venus*. In this case, the contrast does not entail the exclusion of one of the elements, but Mars is added as a new element in the text. Venus and Mars are members of a paradigm, i.e. they belong to a set of elements which share some common properties (in this case, being planets in the solar system) and the focus adverb *también* selects an element of this paradigm. This is the reason why, following Nølke (1983), these adverbs have also been called 'paradigmatic adverbs' (*adverbes paradigmatisants*).

(20) [...] *entre los planetólogos predomina la idea de que el Venus primordial gozó, bajo el joven y mortecino Sol, de un clima moderado, con agua líquida estable, hace unos 4.000 millones de años, la fecha mágica en que la Vida surgió sobre la Tierra. La Vida pudo surgir, pero no mantenerse, en este planeta que parece liberar su energía a espasmos.* [...]
También Marte, un cuerpo ahora helado y seco, pudo albergar mares en los tiempos primordiales.   (*Pléyades,* nº 52 (2000), CREA)
'[...] the idea that predominates among planetologists is that under the weak young Sun of around 4000 million years ago, the magical date at which life appeared on Earth, Venus originally enjoyed a moderate climate with stable liquid water. Life could arise but not maintain itself on this planet, which seems to liberate its energy spasmodically. [...]
Mars too, now a dry, frozen body, could have had seas in those early days.'

Consequently, when the adverb *también* accompanies a lexical element or a phrasal constituent, regardless of the Information Unit it occupies, its main function is focusing. It thus accomplishes a metadiscursive function which consists primarily in marking an element as relevant or even as the most relevant in the utterance from the point of view of its information structure.

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these structures receive the name of *frasi scisse* or *oraciones escindidas* 'split sentences' in Italian and Spanish); (c) prosodic emphasis on the constituent in focus (Zubizarreta 1999: 4227–4232, 4239–4242); (d) focus adverbs (such as Sp *incluso, ni siquiera* '(not) even', *solo* 'only', etc., cf. Portolés 2010, Loureda et al. 2012), which are placed before or after a constituent (be it a word, a phrase or a whole sentence) which becomes the focus of the utterance.

However, the additive value of *también* has favored its uses as a logical-argumentative connective, linking two arguments which are co-oriented towards a conclusion, to employ the terms of Ducrot & Anscombre's Argumentation Theory (Ducrot & Anscombre 1983). Because of this, some authors have called these adverbs *conjunctive adverbs* (Kovacci 1999: 769). This function has developed particularly when the adverb precedes the verb and therefore extends its scope to the whole verbal phrase, as in (21):

(21)   *El entrenador granate ha declarado en numerosas ocasiones que sólo quiere jugadores que mejoren a los que tiene en la actualidad/*[Nucleus1] *y* *también* *ha dicho que a estas alturas de la competición es difícil encontrarlos./*[Nucleus2]

   (*La Voz de Galicia*, 13/12/2000, CREA)

   'The Pontevedra coach has declared on numerous occasions that he only wants players who will be an improvement on those he currently has/[Nucleus1] and has <u>also</u> said that at this stage in the competition it is difficult to find them.'/[Nucleus2]

From this preverbal position, which is not possible for other additive focus adverbs in other Romance languages[30], *también* has developed a function as textual connective. Its position in the utterance has acquired a significant role in the development of this new function. In fact, in order to broaden its scope to the whole utterance and even to a sequence of utterances, *también* has to occur alone in the Frame Unit (or 'saturate' it, to use a more frequent term in the Basel model). It should be noticed that in this position, the metadiscursive focusing function has completely disappeared and *también* only retains its additive semantic value,[31] as can be seen in (22) and (23):

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30.   The fact that Italian *anche*, which could be considered a good equivalent of *también* in many contexts, needs to be placed after the verb to accomplish the connective function between two sentences has prevented the Italian adverb from developing a similar function (De Cesare 2003: 335–336): *Sono profondamente convinto che il modo migliore di parlare di se stessi è parlare degli altri. Non solo: direi* <u>anche</u> *che quanto più siamo consapevoli degli altri tanto più significativo diventa il discorso su un sottaciuto e implicito percorso creativo* (*Corpus Athenaum*) 'I am profoundly convinced that the best way to speak of oneself is to speak of others. That is not all: I would <u>also</u> say that the more we are aware of others, the more significant the discourse grows on a concealed, implicit creative path.' For a contrastive study between *también* and *anche*, cf. also Lenarduzzi (1995), Sainz González (2006a) and Borreguero (2011). The situation of French *aussi* is more complex, because it assumes a textual function but with a consecutive meaning and often reverses the word order of the clause (cf. De Cesare & Borreguero in press).

31.   However, there is some disagreement among scholars about the textual function of *también* (cf. Borreguero 2011: 457–458; Santos 2003: 616).

(22) *Así pues, parece claro que ambos movimientos (ecologista y solidaridad interna-*
      cional) comparten en la "cabecera" de sus mensajes el valor solidaridad internacio-
      nal y un modelo de desarrollo compatible con el medio ambiente.// También,/Frame
      los dos movimientos mantienen en común una proximidad en sus orígenes [...].

         (Á. Calle Collado, *Ciudadanía y solidaridad. Las ONG de Solidaridad Inter-*
      nacional como Movimiento Social (2000), CREA)

      'It would seem clear, then, that both movements (environmentalist and inter-
      national solidarity), in the "heading" of their messages, share the value of in-
      ternational solidarity and a development model that is compatible with the
      environment.// <u>Also</u>,/Frame the two movements continue to share a closeness
      in their origins [...]'

(23) *Una vez estudiados los solares, se realizan Levantamientos Topográficos del ter-*
      reno, Estudios Geotécnicos, encargos de Proyecto y confección de Pliego de
      Condiciones, para, mediante Concurso Público, llevar a efecto la realización de
      las obras. Asímismo [sic], *se realizan todas aquellas Tareas de Mantenimiento,*
      para las viviendas propiedad de la E.M.V. y que están cedidas en arrendamien-
      to, y el Servicio Post-Venta, para la puesta a punto de las viviendas cuya entrega
      se dilata en el tiempo por motivos de realojamiento.// También,/Frame *se atien-*
      den todas las reclamaciones de los usuarios que preceden a la entrega de las
      mismas Ronda de Segovia II.   (*Efímero* 1999, CREA)

      'After studying the plots, topographic land surveys and geotechnical studies
      were carried out, plans were commissioned and the specifications drawn up
      so that, through public tender, the work could be put into effect. Furthermore,
      all the maintenance tasks were performed for the housing owned by the EMV
      that is leased out, and the post-sales service, to ready the housing where deliv-
      ery is delayed for rehousing reasons.// <u>Also</u>,/Frame all complaints by users prior
      to delivery of the same Ronda de Segovia II housing were attended to.'

With this function, *también* coincides in position and function with the more frequent
additive connective *además* (Cuartero Sánchez 2002: 200–206), which always appears
in a parethentical position and very often in a Frame Unit.

(24) *Los especialistas atribuyen parte del problema a que se recetan y se consumen*
      más antibióticos de los necesarios, hecho que acelera el proceso de selección de
      bacterias resistentes a los fármacos. <u>*Además*</u>,/Frame *los viajes internacionales e*
      intercontinentales contribuyen a la difusión de bacterias que, un siglo atrás, hu-
      bieran quedado confinadas a áreas limitadas.

                              (*La Vanguardia*, 10/03/1994, CREA)

      'The specialists attribute part of the problem to more antibiotics being
      prescribed and consumed than are necessary, which accelerates the drug-re-
      sistant bacteria selection process. <u>Moreover</u>,/Frame international and intercon-
      tinental travel contributes to spreading bacteria that, a century ago, would
      have remained confined to limited areas.'

3.2.2 *Sp* por cierto *'by the way, incidentally'*

Our next example regards the Spanish discourse marker *por cierto* 'by the way, incidentally', one of the most exhaustively studied in recent years (cf. Fuentes Rodríguez 1992, Acín Villa 2000, Reig Alamillo 2007, just to mention the synchronic analysis). To examine the polyfunctionality of this discourse marker we have followed Reig's analysis, which is based on three criteria:

a. the presence vs. absence of a break in the discourse thread, i.e., the presence or absence of a change in the discourse topic introduced by the discourse marker;
b. the temporary or definitive nature of such a break (in a temporary break, the speaker comes back to the main subject, while in a definitive break, the previous topic is abandoned),
c. the argumentative orientation of the information introduced by the discourse marker (co-oriented with or counter-oriented to the information presented in the co-text, or marked as highly relevant for the argumentation).

According to these criteria, we can assign four different functions to *por cierto*. It mainly performs metadiscursive functions. In particular, most of its uses can be subsumed under the sub-function of marking the structure of textual information. This function is accomplished in three different ways: (a) by focusing a sentence constituent; (b) by signaling a digression, which is the function prototypically assigned to *por cierto* in most studies; and (c) by marking a change in the discourse topic. In conversational texts it can also acquire an interactive function, i.e. the politeness function of mitigation, to tone down an utterance's possible offensive effects or threats to the hearer's face.[32] This function is closely tied to some of its metadiscursive functions, as we will see below.

Table 3. Criteria for classifying the discourse functions of *por cierto*.

	Metadiscursive functions			Interactive function
	Focus	Digression	Change in discourse topic	Mitigation
Break in discourse thread	–	+	+	+
Temporary break in discourse thread	–	+	–	±
Co-orientated information	+	+	–	–
Relevant information	+	–	+	–

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32. In spoken texts, *por cierto* can also assume the interactive function of turn-taking, but we will not deal with this function here as we are only concerned with its functions in written texts.

We will now try to show the strict correspondence between each of the three metadiscursive functions and the discourse unit in which the discourse marker appears.

The focusing function introduces information which is argumentatively co-orientated with previous segments and does not entail a break in the discourse thread. *Por cierto* has a focusing function only when it appears in a Nucleus, as in (25) and (26), where its parethentical contour is marked by commas.

(25)   *En aquellas inolvidables Cortes (1977–1978), en las que, además de Rodríguez Ibarra, también estaba – entre otros muchos – Xavier Arzalluz, se llegó al a-cuerdo de la provincia como circunscripción a condición de que los territorios históricos –fundamentalmente Euskadi y Cataluña– no reivindicaran el derecho a su autodeterminación. // Y Arzalluz, <u>por cierto</u>, votó en contra de una pro-puesta del también diputado vasco Letamendía que pretendía incluir la autode-terminación de Euzkadi//*[Núcleo].   (*La Voz de Galicia,* 15/01/2004, CREA)
'In that unforgettable Parliament (1977–1978), which included not only Rodríguez Ibarra but also – among many others – Xavier Arzalluz, agreement was reached to make the province the electoral district on condition that the 'historic territories' – essentially the Basque Country and Catalonia – did not claim the right to self-determination. //Arzalluz, <u>incidentally</u>, voted against a proposal by the fellow Basque member of parliament Letamendia to include self-determination for the Basque Country//[Nucleus].

(26)   *El Bundesbank, que nunca ha visto con buenos ojos ni la desaparición del mar-co ni la de su poderío como el banco central que marca la pauta económica de la UE, ha sido el principal inspirador y el portavoz más firme de los argumentos alemanes que veladamente traducían dudas sobre la conveniencia de llevar a-delante el proyecto de unión monetaria.*
Obviamente, ello nunca se expresó de forma clara y explícita. Se hizo mediante un debate que ha desgranado múltiples reparos y "peros". El primero de ellos por orden cronológico fue el de considerar que la unión monetaria debía ir precedi-da de la unión política.// Este, <u>por cierto</u>, es un argumento que defienden mu-chos economistas de prestigio/[Núcleo].   (*La Vanguardia,* 16/11/1995)
'The Bundesbank, which had never looked kindly on either the disappear-ance of the Deutschmark or that of its power as the central bank that lays down the economic rules for the EU, has been the main inspirer and the firm-est mouthpiece of the German arguments that have covertly transmitted doubts about the advisability of pushing forward with the monetary union project.
Evidently, this was never expressed clearly and explicitly. It was done through a debate that has dealt out multiple reservations and "buts". The first of these in chronological order was to consider that monetary union should be pre-ceded by political union.// This, <u>incidentally</u>, is an argument that many pres-tigious economists defend/[Nucleus].'

In both examples the element focused by *por cierto* refers back to one of the elements introduced in a previous Utterance in the paragraph, which is signaled as being the most significant. In this context, *por cierto* could be replaced by any other additive focus adverb like *incluso* or *encima*. As we can see in the examples below, it usually occupies the position between the Topic and the Comment. Its position after the Topic enables it to focus this element. Therefore, *por cierto* is one of the not so frequent elements in Spanish that allow backward focalization.

Turning to the digressive function, we note that it is only accomplished when *por cierto* appears in an Appendix Unit. All the information contained in the Appendix Unit implies a temporary break with the main topic of discourse: it introduces content which is not relevant for the progression of the Utterance information because no element in the subsequent Utterances refers back to the content of the Appendix Unit. For example, in (27) the main topic is the difference between the way that small football teams like Valladolid and big teams like Real Madrid act in bringing in new players and coaches. The Appendix Unit comments that Kresic, the former coach of the Valladolid team, has a good chance of attracting desirable suitors (*novias*, literally 'girlfriends'), i.e. new opportunities in other teams. The disruption is only temporary, as the second utterance of the paragraph makes clear: "But little more has been heard" refers to the three candidates to replace Kresic, not to the new job opportunities for him.

> (27) *La diferencia está en la desigual forma de trabajar que tienen las directivas de uno y otro equipo. Hay quien disfruta dando nombres cada semana, pero creo que, en general, así perdemos todos: profesionales de la información, aficionados y lo más importante, el propio club, que ve cómo la operación se le encarece enormemente.*
> *En Valladolid tan sólo ha sonado el nombre de algún entrenador (Gregorio Manzano del Toledo, Fernando Vázquez del Oviedo o el argentino Capitano) como posibles sustitutos de Sergio Kresic, / a quien, <u>por cierto</u>, no le van a faltar atractivas novias*/[Appendix]. *Pero poco más se ha oído.*
>
> <div align="right">(El Norte de Castilla, 24/05/1999, CREA)</div>
>
> 'The difference lies in the different ways the managers of the two teams work. Some people enjoy mentioning names every week, but I think that, in general, that way we all lose: journalists, fans and most importantly the club itself, which finds the operation becoming enormously more expensive.
> At Valladolid only the names of some coaches have been ringing bells (Gregorio Manzano del Toledo, Fernando Vázquez del Oviedo or the Argentine Capitano) as possible replacements for Sergio Kresic, /who, <u>incidentally</u>, will not be short of attractive suitors/[Appendix]. But little more has been heard.'

Inside this Unit, *por cierto* has a great degree of positional freedom as it can occupy the initial position (28), the final position (29) or an intermediate position, as we have seen in (27).

(28) *Los serbios se han mostrado dispuestos al diálogo, /por cierto con gran rapidez,/* ^{Appendix} *cuando han visto que la alternativa era el subterráneo apoyo aliado a Croacia y acciones contundentes de la OTAN contra su artillería.*

(*La Vanguardia*, 02/09/1995, CREA)

'The Serbians showed themselves willing to talk, /very fast, <u>incidentally</u>,/^{Appendix} when they saw that the alternative was underground support allied with Croatia and robust action by NATO against their artillery.'

(29) *Los derbis barceloneses ya no son lo que eran. Desde que el Barça le echó una mano al Espanyol, tras el caso Matesa, o sea Vilá Reyes, y le compró a Marcial, /un gran negocio futbolístico <u>por cierto</u>,/* ^{Appendix} *las rivalidades son menos.*

(*La Razón*, 20/12/2001, CREA)

'Local derbies in Barcelona are not what they used to be. Since Barça lent Espanyol a hand after the Matesa case, in other words Vilá Reyes, and bought Marcial off them /a really good football deal <u>incidentally</u>,/^{Appendix} the rivalries have lessened.'

In all cases, the prosodic contour marks the discourse marker as a parenthetical unit, although this parenthetical character is not always marked by commas in written discourse.

Finally, the only way for this discourse marker to perform the function of marking a radical change in the discourse topic – that is to say, introducing content which constitutes a definitive break with what has been said before rather than just a temporary one – is to occupy the Frame Unit. The fact that elements in the Frame Unit can extend their scope over several Utterances favors this kind of interpretation as long as the discourse marker indicates that the following sequence in the utterance is developing a new subject. This contrasts with the occurrences of *por cierto* commented on above, where its scope was always limited to the discourse unit in which it was embedded.

(30) *Pocas veces se han escuchado palabras tan dramáticas de un presidente. Dramáticas en sustancia, no en retórica. Dichas por un hombre que por su edad y condición está lejos de toda especulación política. Por eso mismo fue elegido para el interinato posterior a la caída de Carlos Andrés Pérez. Y con esa misma independencia habla al dejarle el mando al Dr. Rafael Caldera, quien tendrá que conducir esta angustiada República en los años que vendrán.*
<u>Por cierto</u>/^{Frame} la crisis no es un fenómeno ajeno a la historia venezolana, una historia tan desmesurada como su naturaleza, la que dejó de boca abierta a los conquistadores españoles cuando venían desde las sequedades castellanas o las pobrezas extremas y se encontraban con ríos ciclópeos, playas paradisíacas, fértiles llanos y verdes montañas [...]. (*El Mundo,* 11/02/1994, CREA)

'Seldom have such dramatic words been heard from a president. Dramatic in substance, not rhetoric. Said by a man who owing to his age and status is removed from any political speculation. That was why he was chosen as interim president after the fall of Carlos Andrés Pérez. And he spoke with the same independence when handing over to Dr. Rafael Caldera, who will have to lead this anguished Republic in the coming years.

<u>By the way</u>/Frame the crisis is not an alien phenomenon in the history of Venezuela, a history as exaggerated as its landscape, which astounded the conquistadores when they came from the dry lands of Castile or the extreme poverty and encountered gigantic rivers, heavenly beaches, fertile plains and green mountains [...].'

(31)   *Bofill es un tipo tan brillante que nunca deja a nadie indiferente, y eso que en Italia no saben que fue consuegro de Isabel Preysler. Bofill ha hecho rascacielos en Chicago, viviendas en Montpellier, jardines en París, ciudades en China, fábricas en Kuwait. Ha escrito libros. Ha rodado películas. Ha seducido a mujeres extraordinarias y ha sido una estrella de la gauche caviar y del glamour europeo contemporáneo. Pero en España, Cataluña aparte, sólo será el tipo cuyo hijo se casó con la hija de Julio Iglesias y la Preysler. Igual que Norman Foster se ha quedado en el marido de Elena Ochoa. <u>Por cierto</u>/Frame que[33], en los tiempos de la boda de Chábeli con Bofilín, circulaba por los mentideros rosas –o verdes– un desiderátum infinitamente morboso: que el seductor arquitecto le tirase los tejos a la dama de porcelana. O al revés. Que estallase un affaire, que cuajase un feeling, que surgiera un romance. Que echasen un polvo.*

(*El Mundo*, 15/12/1996, CREA)

'Bofill is such a brilliant character that he leaves nobody indifferent, even though the Italians do not know that he and Isabel Preysler were related through their children's marriage. Bofill has designed skyscrapers in Chicago, housing in Montpellier, gardens in Paris, cities in China and factories in Kuwait. He has written books. He has made films. He has seduced extraordinary women and has been a star of the caviar left and contemporary European glamour. In Spain, though, apart from Catalonia, he is just the guy whose son married the daughter of Julio Iglesias and Isabel Preysler. Just as Norman Foster is only the husband of Elena Ochoa. <u>By the way</u>,/Frame at the time when Chabeli married Bofill junior a titillating piece of wishful thinking was doing the rounds of the gossip – or gutter – press: that the seductive architect was glad-eyeing the porcelain lady. Or the other way round. That a liaison erupted, a feeling gelled, a romance arose. That they had it off.'

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33.   This *que* 'that' is not part of the Frame Unit because it is not prosodically integrated in it. It appears in oral discourse as a maker of reported speech, e.g. the author of the text is just referring information taking from an oral source.

It is only when *por cierto* introduces information that breaks the discourse thread that it also acquires the interactive function of mitigation. Any change in discourse plan can be a potential threat to the hearer, who is looking for relevant information on the subject. The use of the discourse marker, which is grammaticalized from the verbal construction V (*tener*, *dar*, etc.) + *por cierto* 'have for sure' and contains a noun which indicates the truthfulness of the information, has a conceptual meaning which seems to be opposed to its procedural meaning of introducing a digression or a change of discourse topic, so the mitigation intention would seem to have been present at the very beginning of the grammaticalization process.

4. Some thoughts on discourse markers and text information structure in contrastive studies

In this section we would like to emphasize the importance of taking discourse units into account when studying discourse markers, not only for their functional description but also in contrastive analysis. We will illustrate this through two lexical elements from two closely related languages (Italian and Spanish) which can be said to have the same discourse functions. We have chosen Spanish *entonces* and Italian *allora* 'then' as a straightforward example of our thesis because they are very good equivalents on all levels (intrasentential, intersentential and textual) but, as we will show, some important differences between them cannot be explained without a model of discourse units. As we have shown elsewhere (Bazzanella & Borreguero 2011, Borreguero & López Serena 2011), if we take the changes in the conceptual and procedural meaning of these elements, the kind of semantic relation they express and their scope and structural level of action into account we can list at least the following functions for both:

1. Sp *entonces* and It *allora* can have adverbial function with intrasentential scope, indicating a temporal setting for a verbal action that does not take place in the present. While the conceptual meaning is this temporal reference, the procedural meaning of the adverbs is their phoric reference to past or future, i.e., to a point in time which precedes or follows the time of the action. In (32), for instance, *entonces* refers to the moment at which the client receives the letter with the acknowledgment of receipt. Based on this phoric component, other semantic values and discourse functions can develop.

   (32) *Para ofrecer telefonía local, el operador deberá comunicar a sus clientes en una carta con acuse de recibo que van a darle el nuevo servicio. El receptor tendrá <u>entonces</u> quince días para rechazar la oferta si lo estima oportuno.*
      (*La Voz de Galicia*, 13/10/2000, CREA)
      'In order to offer local telephone services, the company must tell its clients in a letter sent by recorded delivery with proof of receipt that it will be providing the new service to them. The recipient will <u>then</u> have a fortnight in which to reject the offer if he or she so wishes.'

(33) *Diciamo che è stato, in una versione silenziosa ma non defilata, il costante compagno di "statura" del Presidente: a 19 anni, era già stato condannato a dieci anni di prigione da un tribunale di Vichy, era evaso, dopo pochi mesi, dalla prigione militare di Beirut (il Libano era, <u>allora</u>, protettorato francese), e da lì aveva raggiunto le forze navali della Francia Libera.*   (CORIS_Stampa_Periodici)
'Let us say that in a silent but not defiladed version, he has been the constant companion in 'stature' of the President: when he was 19 years old he had already been sentenced to ten years in prison by a Vichy court, had escaped after a few months from the Beirut military prison (Lebanon was a French protectorate <u>then</u>) and from there had reached the Free French naval forces.'

2. Sp *entonces* and It *allora* can also function as intersentential connectives. To acquire this function, the core temporal meaning undergoes a process of desemantization and instead of referring mainly to external time, the phoric component refers to the preceding discourse. This semantic change turns the adverbs into intersentential connectives that express the logical relationship of consequence. *Entonces* and *allora* introduce the consequence of either (a) having achieved the condition or (b) the state of affairs that is presented as the cause. Its anaphoric meaning refers to the condition or the cause in order to create a strong link with the consequence.

The complex semantic change that takes place in the connective can be seen in (34), where *entonces* retains its temporal reference to the external situation, described by *cuando todo esto esté en marcha y funcione* 'when all this is up and running', but the temporal clause also has a strong conditional meaning (it could, in fact, be replaced by *si todo esto está en marcha y funciona* 'if all this is up and running'). As a result, the phoric reference goes back to the condition and precedes the consequence (*multe* 'impose fines') when the condition is achieved. The change of position in the sentence, preceding the verb – and in most cases occupying the initial position in the clause –, is another sign of the changed discourse function that has been set in motion.

(34) *Señor Soria, si usted quiere arreglar el problema realmente y lo que le motiva no es sólo el ansia recaudatoria, preocúpese de crear un transporte público eficiente, cree grandes áreas de aparcamiento gratuito, mentalice y eduque a los ciudadanos y cuando todo esto esté en marcha y funcione, <u>entonces</u> multe. Pero así no, señor alcalde, así no.*   (*Canarias*, 29/11/2000, CREA)
'Mr. Soria, if you really want to fix the problem and are not moved only by the desire to raise money, address yourself to creating efficient public transport, create large areas of free parking, educate citizens and make them aware and when all this is up and running, <u>then</u> impose fines. But not like this, Mr. Mayor, not like this.'

Less ambiguous examples of *entonces/allora* to introduce the consequence of achieving the condition are found in (35) and (36):

(35) *Patxi Buenetxea, responsable de una empresa de piensos ubicada en Itziar, se-*
ñala que de momento no le afecta el cierre de la Gi-638. "Hacemos el reparto
cada quince días y precisamente el correspondiente a la zona de Mutriku lo he-
mos hecho esta semana. Sin embargo, si el problema dura más de quince días,
<u>*entonces*</u> *sí nos afectará".*   (*Diario Vasco*, 11/01/2001, CREA)
'Patxi Buenetxea, manager of an animal feed company in Itziar, said that for
the moment the closure of the Gi-638 does not affect him. "We deliver once a
fortnight and it so happens that we did the Mutriku area this week. However,
if the problem continues for over a fortnight <u>then</u> it will certainly affect us".

(36) *Il successo non si misura solo dai soldi che produce. Io sono assistente sociale, a*
stipendio fisso. Ma mi capita di ottenere permessi di soggiorno per stranieri
clandestini o di trovar loro lavoro. Anch'io in quei casi torno a casa eccitata e
felice. E lui mi guarda come se fossi un po' matta. Ma se si fa l'amore per festeg-
giare il suo fatturato, <u>*allora*</u> *bisogna farlo anche perché io, di tanto in tanto, ri-*
esco a sconfiggere la burocrazia.   (CORIS_Stampa_Periodici)
'Success is not measured only by the money it produces. I'm a social worker,
on a fixed salary. But I happen to obtain work permits for illegal immigrants
or find them work. In these cases I too return home excited and happy. And
he looks at me as though I were a bit crazy. But if we make love to celebrate his
sales, <u>then</u> we also need to do it because from time to time I manage to beat
the bureaucracy.'

3. In a third type of occurrences, Sp *entonces* and It *allora* can be analyzed as dis-
course connectives, with the function of introducing the consequence or the
conclusion reached as a result of a situation presented or described in the pre-
ceding discourse rather than in the same clause or utterance. From a semantic
point of view, the process of desemantization of the temporal component is a
necessary step to developing this function, although some temporal reference
can still be detected in (37). Regarding its position in the utterance, the connec-
tive usually occupies the Frame Unit and its scope extends to the whole utterance,
which is linked to the preceding ones, so it performs a connective function at
the discourse level.

(37) *Hace un año, cuando la noticia de la desaparición de Julio Fuentes conmovió los*
cimientos de EL MUNDO, esta reportera creyó morir. Tenía la certeza de que
había sido asesinado, pero por más llamadas que realizó a Afganistán nadie
pudo confirmar su suerte.
A la impotencia de permanecer a miles de kilómetros de su cadáver sin posibili-
dad de volar en el acto a Asia Central se sumó la falsa convicción de muchos
colegas que, confusos, se aferraban a una esperanza entre mil. Esta periodista
sólo llegó a tiempo de recuperar sus restos en Peshawar, tres días después del
asesinato.

Entonces,/^Frame *esta reportera se impuso una meta precisa: regresar al lugar exacto donde le mataron, recoger su testigo, terminar el viaje que tres disparos mortales le impidieron concluir y finalizar su trabajo en Kabul.*

(*El Mundo*, 20/11/2002, CREA)

'A year ago, when the news of Julio Fuentes' disappearance shook EL MUNDO to its foundations, this reporter thought she would die. I was sure he had been killed but however many phone calls I made to Afghanistan, nobody could confirm what had happened to him.

Added to the impotence of being thousands of kilometers away from his body and with no chance of flying straight out to Central Asia was the false conviction of many colleagues who, in their confusion, clung to a one in a thousand hope. This journalist only arrived in time to recover his remains in Peshawar, three days after he was killed.

So/^Frame this reporter set herself a precise goal: to return to the exact place where they had killed him, pick up the baton, end the journey that three mortal shots had prevented him from completing and finish his work in Kabul.'

(38) *L'11 per cento, infine, visto il successo del modello Raz Degan, immagina che barba e baffi dall'aspetto incolto aumentino il sex appeal. Sono i risultati di una ricerca apparsa sulla rivista americana New Woman. Ma, a dispetto dell'opinione maschile, la maggior parte delle donne preferisce un viso liscio e ben rasato. Allora,*/^Frame *è tempo di indirizzare meglio le proprie fatiche di bellezza e sacrificare la contestata barba.*   (CORIS_Stampa_Periodici)

'Lastly, 11% imagine, in view of the success of the model Raz Degan, that an unkempt moustache and beard increase their sex appeal. Those are the results of a study published in the American magazine *New Woman*. However, in spite of what men think, most women prefer a smooth, well-shaved face. So/^Frame it's time to direct one's beauty efforts better and sacrifice the disputed beard.'

However, even if the Frame Unit is the most frequent position it is by no means the only possible one. Discourse connectives with consecutive or conclusive semantic value can also occur in an Appendix embedded in the Nucleus, as in (39):

(39) *Carlo Carli, direttore del laboratorio di marketing dell'università di Parma, non ha dubbi: comprimere i corsi di marketing all'interno delle facoltà di economia impedisce una formazione mirata. Carli, allora, con altri 25 tra docenti universitari e manager di grandi aziende, ha costituito un gruppo di lavoro e ha sfornato una proposta per la creazione di una facoltà di marketing.*

(CORIS_Stampa_Periodici)

'Carlo Carli, head of the marketing laboratory at the University of Parma, is in no doubt: shortening the marketing courses in economics faculties prevents targeted training. So Carli, with another 25 university lecturers and managers

of big businesses, has set up a working group and produced a proposal to set up a marketing faculty.'

In spoken discourse, moreover, the situation which is presented as a cause or that triggers the conclusion is often implicit and has to be inferred. This is the case in (41), which reproduces an interview in a health food shop: just from the information regarding the current demand for soy in the interviewee's first turn, the interviewer comes to the conclusion that natural products are better for shattered nerves.

(40)   – *A medida que la gente va teniendo más información reclaman de nosotros más productos. Ahora mismo por ejemplo, hay una gran demanda entre mujeres de los derivados de la soja y las isoflavonas* [...] *Están los nervios destrozados los 365 días del año. Nosotros notamos que en primavera nos piden más cosas para las alergias, en verano más para adelgazar, y ahora en otoño más para los resfriados, pero para el tema de los nervios nos piden todo el año. No hay descanso.*
– *Entonces*,/Frame *mejor calmar los nervios con productos naturales.*

(*El Norte de Castilla*, 18/11/2002, CREA)

'– As people get more information they ask us for more products. Right now, for example, there is a lot of demand among women for soy derivatives and isoflavones. [...] Nerves are shot 365 days a year. We find that in spring people ask us for more things against allergies, in summer more for slimming and now in autumn more for colds, but for the question of nerves they ask for them throughout the year. There's no let-up.
– Then/Frame better to calm the nerves with natural products.'

4.   Finally, Sp *entonces* and It *allora* occur as discourse markers with functions other than logical connection. In this case, not only has the desemantization process come to an end but the reference to non-current time has been replaced by a reference to the moment at which the discourse is produced. This new semantic change allows *entonces* and *allora* to acquire metadiscursive and interactional functions. We will not deal here with the metadiscursive functions, such as focusing or the delimitation of topics in conversation, e.g. by introducing a new topic or closing one (cf. Borreguero & López Serena 2011: 189–192). One of the most important interactional functions is turn-taking, also illustrated in (40) above,[34] although *entonces* and *allora* can also accomplish other interactional functions like holding or yielding the floor.

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34. The same discourse marker can assume different functions in the three macrofunctions we have distinguished, so there is no contradiction in assigning a cognitive function of consecutive or conclusive connection and an interactional function of turn-taking to the same lexical element (López Serena & Borreguero 2010, Borreguero & López Serena 2011, Borreguero 2011).

If we were to consider only the semantic values and the textual functions, we could be led to think that *allora* and *entonces* are perfectly equivalent in all contexts and uses. This is not the case, however. There are at least two uses of *allora* in spoken Italian which have no correspondence with *entonces*.[35]

a. In the first case, *allora*, while keeping its consecutive or conclusive function as a discourse connective, occurs alone in an Appendix following the Nucleus and occupies the final position in the Utterance. This is a very infrequent position for *entonces* – in fact, we have found no occurrence in the CREA corpus, not even among the transcripts of spoken language. In Italian, *allora* assumes a clear inferential function in this position and signals that the speaker has come to a certain conclusion from the textual information provided by the interlocutor, as in (41).

(41) B: § *sì / è molto bella /* [*io*]
      A: [*la*] *conosci?*
      B: *sì /* [*un=*]
      A: [*ah!*]
      B: = *po' //* [*sì*]
      A.   [*cono*]*sci un po' del mio paese / allora*!?/[Appendix] §
          (Corpus A.Ma.Dis., 1º Segovia 6, 166–171)
      'B: § yes / she's very beautiful / [I]
      A: [do] you know her?
      B: yes / [a=]
      A: [ah!]
      B: = bit // [yes]
      A: [do you] know a bit about my country / then!?/[Appendix] §'

b. In the second case, *allora* not only occupies the Frame Unit but occurs in the opening utterances of the interaction. In this absolute initial position, the only Spanish discourse markers that can occur are *bueno* or *bien*, because – like *allora* – they have reached the last stage in the grammaticalization process (Pons & Estellés in press).

(42) A: [*piacere*] / *prego / si sieda ///* *allora*/[Frame] *mi dica mi dica un pò di lei / ha letto l'annuncio no? /*[*che ho messo sul giornale immagino*]
                          (Corpus A.Ma.Dis, 3.º Segovia 5)[36]
      'A: [nice to meet you] / please / sit down /// so/[Frame] tell me a bit about yourself / you've read the ad, haven't you? / [that I put in the paper I imagine]'

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35. For other divergences when *allora* constitutes a holophrastic Utterance, cf. Bazzanella & Borreguero (2011: 30–31).

36. Slashes in this example indicate pauses and not Information Units or Utterance boundaries.

(43)　*Lo abbiamo chiesto a chi del progetto è l'anima, Claudio Caprara, responsabile del palinsesto, il quale, in questi giorni di inizio agosto, sta lavorando alacramente fra Roma e Bologna.*
　　　– *Allora*,/Frame *la fionda è pronta per affrontare il gigante? o si tratta d'altro?*
　　　– *Si tratta d'altro.* (NUNC-it)
　　　'We asked the soul of the project, Claudio Caprara, the man in charge of the program, who during these early days of August is working flat out between Rome and Bologna.
　　　– So/Frame, do you have your sling ready to face the giant? Or is it something else?
　　　– It's something else.'

Consequently, discourse units and the position of discourse markers inside the units (on their own or with the elements within their scope) not only provide a basis for lexicographic studies but should also be an integral part of any accurate contrastive analysis if a clear picture of the shared and divergent uses of apparently equivalent discourse markers in different languages is to emerge.

5.　Conclusions

Text linguistics has been well aware of the need to take the textual information structure into account in order to explain a great variety of linguistic aspects related to the communicative function of languages. However, the analysis of the functions of different elements in the information structure of text has to face up several problems: (1) firstly, notwithstanding the many efforts to describe, define and delimit concepts and units on this level of textual organization, they remained vague and inaccurate; (2) secondly, there is no clear-cut correspondence between utterance position and textual effects; moreover, other aspects like text type or written/spoken production can have a direct influence on textual function; and (3) finally, the variety of syntactic, prosodic and other linguistic devices that signal the information structure within texts interact in complex ways, cf. utterances with double focus, deaccentuation of completive focus, focus structures like cleft sentences used as thematic progression devices, etc.

　　Notwithstanding all these difficulties, models of discourse units are among the proposals that offer a functional explanation of the information organization of texts. To establish the discourse units, these models require syntactic, semantic, prosodic and punctuation aspects to be taken into account. Each discourse unit is assigned different information values and the units are hierarchically organized to explain the complex network of information in texts.

　　We have tried to show that when considering discourse markers in a broad sense (including every element that can assume a connective, interactional or metadiscursive function in a text), models of discourse units are extremely useful for offering a

complete and accurate description of the polyfunctionality of these markers in both single-language and contrastive studies. Most of these models have been designed to give an account of conversational texts, where traditional syntactic units are likely to be of little help in analyzing the structure of the utterance. At the same time, these models are not limited to spoken language and turn out to be extremely useful for describing written texts, as linguists working with the Basel model have been showing for the past ten years. In this paper we hope to have offered additional evidence of the usefulness of the Basel model for describing spoken and written texts by showing how important the left periphery can be for studying language organization once the limits of the syntactic structure are exceeded.

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