Ranger, Graham, *Discourse Markers: An Enunciative Approach*

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Graham Ranger’s 2018 book *Discourse Markers: an Enunciative Approach* is an original study of discourse markers, based on the Theory of Enunciative and Predicative Operations (TEPO). After a general introduction (Chapter 1), the author proposes a theoretical chapter (Chapter 2). Chapters 3 to 7 each focus on the case study of a specific discourse marker: *anyway* (chapter 3), *indeed* and *in fact* (chapter 4), *yet* and *still* (chapter 5), *like* (chapter 6) and *I think* (chapter 7). Chapter 8 presents a general conclusion. Each chapter can perfectly be read independently from the rest of the book, should the reader have, for instance, a specific interest in a given form. Footnotes and references are found at the end of each chapter, which facilitates the reading of the chapters independently from one another. The book is very easy to navigate thanks to the summaries and reformulations provided at the end of chapter sections and chapters.

The Theory of Enunciative and Predicative Operations (TEPO) or *Théorie des Opérations Prédicatives et Enonciatives* (TOPE) in French, is founded on the works of French Linguist Antoine Culioli (1990, 1999, 2000, 2018) and his students in the 1970s and 1980s, who propose a formal continuation of Emile Benveniste’s research programme in enunciation linguistics (see Benveniste 1974: 79-88 and Angermuller et al. 2014: 140-145 for an English translation). Although the TEPO is little known outside France, it is a widespread and influential linguistic approach in France, especially in the field of English Linguistics. Most linguistic curricula in English departments in France are largely founded on this theory. Despite its relative isolation in today’s international
linguistic research landscape, it relates in multiple ways to other major theories of
language, namely "Transformational Grammar, Generative Semantics, Functional
Systemic Linguistics, Cognitive Grammar or Construction Grammar", as noted by the
author in the preface.

This theory is rarely used outside France for at least two reasons. First, it was initially
formalized in French, and as the author notes, there are to this day relatively few
presentations of the theory in English, apart from Liddle's annotated translation of
Culioli's 1983-1984 postgraduate seminar, and two key articles in English published in
Culioli's 1990 French anthology *Pour une linguistique de l'énonciation*. Second, TEPO has,
like Cognitive Linguistics, long aimed to produce abstract formalizations of the
operations performed by given forms based on the qualitative analysis of their various
uses in context, and as such was not quite fitted to embrace the quantitative and/or
corpus turns that many linguistic approaches have recently taken. Graham Ranger's
book successfully addresses these challenges: by providing a clear and very well-
written presentation of Culioli's theory aimed at a large anglophone audience, and by
scaffolding abstract formalizations with corpus data, he manages to provide an original
account of the multifunctional and polycategorial nature of English discourse markers
while making the TEPO accessible to a large English-speaking audience.

Chapter 1 highlights the basic issues and points of contention related to the study of
discourse markers, namely because of their multifunctional and multicategorial nature.
The term *discourse marker* itself is not uncontroversial, and stands in competition with
many others, such as *pragmatic marker*. The author situates the TEPO as one among
many theories within a larger network of other linguistic approaches and theories and
explains that the TEPO is especially well suited for the formalization of discourse
phenomena, since it “eschews the traditional modular separation of domains between
syntax, semantics and pragmatics” (p. 10).

Chapter 2 provides a thorough, yet accessible introduction to and overview of the
Theory of Enunciative and Predicative Operations (TEPO), which aims to model the
relationship between linguistic forms and mental representations via a system of
metalinguistic representations (p. 24). The chapter exposes basic TEPO concepts such as
operations of determination, notions and situations in a very clear way, and places
them within the larger context of the history of linguistics as a discipline: for instance,
the concept of notion emerged from a dissatisfaction with compositional lexical
semantics (p. 27). The chapter also covers the key concept of schematic form (pp. 57-63)
and polyoperations such as the construction of notional domains, the branching path
model, and quantitative versus qualitative modes of determination. The author
convincingly shows how the TEPO addresses fundamental problems posed by
polysemy-based and monosemy-based approaches, by positing for each linguistic form
an abstract invariant (the schematic form) which can dynamically adapt to various
contextual parameters. The author then moves on to a theoretical account of discourse
markers within TEPO, referencing work by Paillard and De Vogüé among others. A very
interesting idea is to propose *discourse marking* rather than *discourse markers* when
referring to the grammatical category (p. 66) since by virtue of their multifunctionality
discourse markers can fulfil other functions. “Discourse Marking: an Enunciative
Approach” would also have been an excellent title for the book. Discourse marking is
defined as follows: “The grammatical category of discourse marking refers to an
operation of utterance regulation which indexically targets some operation or
operations constitutive of the event of utterance itself” (p. 66). Regulations can bear on operations of representation (e.g. typicality and hedges, limits on the class of occurrences, class/occurrence relationships like exemplification, extrapolation or reformulation), or on operations of reference assignment (spatio-temporal location; quantitative positioning (endorsement) or qualitative positioning (valuation); intersubjective positioning; location within the larger utterance context; pp. 68-70). A discourse marker can simultaneously operate on more than one parameter of regulation (p. 70). The author then compares his TEPO approach of discourse markers to Fraser’s (1996) and Schiffrin’s (1987, 2006) accounts (G. Ranger’s methodology is closer to Schiffrin’s, p. 71), and anticipates some possible objections. This excellent, convincing theoretical chapter, both precise and accessible, will definitely become a reference reading, for both academics and students of English linguistics.

For each specific marker studied in chapters 3 to 7, a schematic form is proposed, i.e. an abstract formalization of the basic linguistic operation performed by the marker across contexts, which is both abstract enough and specific enough to encompass all the functions or meanings of a given marker, and which is tried against attested occurrences in language use based on corpus data, mostly from the British National Corpus. The concept of schematic form is defined as “an abstract, operational blueprint for meaning associated with a linguistic marker and parametered in context to generate situated values. The schematic form enables the linguist to describe linguistic items not in terms of some core or prototypical meaning but rather in terms of the specific latitudes of variation that characterises each” (p. 306).

Chapter 3 is entitled “Anyway: Configuration by Target Domain”. In the general construction \( p \text{ anyway} q \), the author posits that anyway operates a triangular relationship between two representations \( p \) and \( q \) in a sequential relationship, and a third indeterminate representation noted \( p^* \). The various contextually situated uses of anyway depend upon the nature of the terms related and the nature of the relation, so as to produce concessive, additive, corrective, resumptive, topic-changing, conclusion or closure meanings. (p. 129-130).

Chapter 4 is entitled “Indeed and in fact: the Role of Subjective Positioning”. With these two markers related to the expression of factuality, the author takes into account variation between British and American English uses, as well as constructional frames found in corpus data, thereby embracing an approach that is crucial in Cognitive Linguistics as well today. “The lexical properties of deed and fact appear closely related to the operational profile of the two discourse markers. (…) The two markers qualify a representation as deed or fact, locate it relative to a preceding representation and locate both representations relative to the enunciative source” (p.171). While indeed identifies a representation \( q \) and its associated subjective position with a preceding representation \( p \), in fact differentiates \( q \) from \( p \). The configuration of specific values of each marker can be modelled in terms of variations on subjective positionings (p. 171).

Chapter 5 is entitled “Yet and still: a Transcategorial Approach to Discourse Phenomena”. The author reviews various accounts of these markers, among which Hirtle’s (1977) Guillaumean approach, and the proposed schematic forms provide integrated accounts of aspectuo-modal, quantifying (spatial) and argumentative values, which are often treated apart. The study of yet and still shows how the “TEPO allows a transcategorial approach, linking discourse marking values with other categorial values via the common operational blueprint of the schematic form. (…) The key
difference between the two is that yet imposes discontinuity between anticipated and validated representations while still imposes continuity between representations” (p. 221). Three types of discourse-marking (argumentative) values are identified: concessive yet, concessive still and conclusive still.

Chapter 6 is entitled “Discourse Marker Uses of like: from the Occurrence to the Type”. The chapter provides detailed analyses of prepositional like expressing similarity and exemplarity, discourse-marking functions including argumentative like, metarepresentational like, and the quotative be like. In all its uses, like locates a representation relative to another on the grounds of a shared property that is consensually defined for both speaker and cospeaker. “A speaker who uses like necessarily implies his or her cospeaker in the construction of meaning, since like relies upon the participation of the cospeaker in the reconstruction of the common property P” (p. 264). Like preconstructs the link between the representation and the common property as something obvious for any speaker: it implies that speaker and cospeaker share the same codes and belong in the same (linguistic) community. The author notes that although the TEPO is not a sociolinguistic theory, the key use of like in constructing sociolinguistic identities is rooted in its schematic form implying shared, consensual knowledge (pp. 265-266).

Chapter 7 is entitled “I think: Further Variations in Subjective Endorsement”. The proposed schematic form for I think integrates different contextually situated values (deliberative, tentative, approximative, shielding, focusing, etc.) as specific configurations of the fundamental operation marked by I think, namely “the localisation of a relationship between a state of affairs (i.e. a representation in a given situation) relative to the speaker, and a relationship of disconnection between the speaker and other speakers or sources with respect to the representation in question” (p.283). As the author explains, “the configuration of different values depends largely on the specification of these other sources” (p. 298).

Chapter 8 proposes a general conclusion that sums up the book’s project and findings. The conclusion dwells again on the necessary distinction between the category of discourse marking and the forms than can function as discourse markers, reminding the reader that they can include many more forms than the traditionally studied ones: “discourse markers may provide entrenched examples of discourse marking, but they are certainly not the only manifestation of a phenomenon which is present in all areas of linguistic activity, including prosody and lexical or syntactic choices” (p. 308). This conception of discourse marking as an open category than can include a large variety of forms sounds extremely accurate, and is also relevant for co-speech gestural phenomena, since schematic forms can be identified for some recurrent gestures.

Both ambitious in scope and modest in tone, Graham Ranger’s study is clear, concise, rich and original. His stance as an academic researcher is very inspiring: his enthusiasm for linguistic enquiry and formalization is palpable and communicative, as are his generosity and pleasure in sharing the intellectual tools offered by the TEPO theory with a larger, English-speaking audience. The book strikes the reader as a model of academic writing based on a remarkable balance between didactic, analytical and writing skills.

Overall this book shows the multiple theoretical resonances and overlaps between TEPO and Cognitive Grammar, Frame Semantics, Construction Grammar, Cognitive accounts of Viewpoint, among other subfields of cognitive linguistics. It will hence be
of major interest to cognitive linguists as well as linguistics scholars investigating discourse-marking phenomena, and will play a key role in the international dissemination of French Linguist Culioli’s powerful theory.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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