

# PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF STANDPOINT EXPRESSION MARKERS

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## **Abstract**

*Within the framework of the enunciative and cognition-based theories, this study aims at analyzing and comparing the various uses of the temporal adverbs "şimdi" (now) and "maintenant" (now), and imperative forms of the verbs "bakmak" (to look) and "écouter" (to listen) which acquire some pragmatic values. This study will demonstrate, with comparative point of view, how those discourse connectives are used to indicate personal points of view as well as the standpoints of interlocutors in spontaneous spoken language in Turkish and French, drawing on their syntactic and enunciative properties. Recording of some selected oral sentences will be the basis of analysis in this study.*

**Keywords:** *pragmatics, discourse analysis, connectives, coherence, French, Turkish, şimdi, maintenant*

## **1. Overview and Theoretical Framework**

Discourse connectives have been analyzed from several perspectives and from several different points of view and approaches, such as Coherence-based Approach; Relevance-Theoretic Approach; Cognition-based Approach. The one common point of the studies realized on discourse markers that stand out is the fact that they all affirm the double aspect representing their linguistic and interactional properties.

Considering the fact that they belong to different syntactic and lexical classes, discourse markers do not represent a homogenous aspect. Therefore, it is very difficult to put them together in even a syntactic or a semantic class. According to Schiffrin, the discourse markers have linguistic and interactional properties and they play a role in the construction of the discourse coherence. Indeed, there is panoply of syntactical items to which one refers using the term "discourse markers". The linguists that have an approach based on coherence

relations assert the fact that the connectives allow introducing a discourse unit by their deictic and contextual functions. From the functional viewpoint, "discourse coherence based approach", pragmatic and cognition based approaches converge on the fact that the discourse markers allow the speaker to guide the hearer in the interpretation of the utterances.

The standpoints of interlocutors can either be in agreement or in disagreement, and this convergence or divergence of their standpoints may be simply signaled by some syntactic devices like adverbs or modal expressions, or implicated in utterances in relation to a general context. Encoding discourse this way, some adverbs may, during spontaneous conversations, acquire pragmatic functions quite different from what one would expect given their lexical and semantic properties. They can be used also for conveying a personal standpoint, attitude or a particular emotional state. They are thus considered as pragmatic encoding markers rather than as elements, which have a semantic content (Moeschler, (1985:60). The cognitive point of view allows identifying, defining and arguing the pragmatic functions of these adverbs. Clerck explains the encoding role of pragmatic markers (PMs) by the fact that verbal interaction is strictly linked to the instantaneous cognitive process since it takes place in real time (2004:1781). Aijmer and A.M. Simon-Vanderbergen, who adopt that point of view, underline the rôle of the encoding of PMs in the construction of the context. Taking "context" as a cognitive phenomenon, they assert that it can be identified with a mental state: *"Context as a cognitive phenomenon can be identified with a mental state (what is known or believed) which the interlocutors bring on-line in the interaction. The negotiation of the meaning in the communication situation involves the continual updating of these assumptions, which may be explicit or only assumed, for example by challenging them or denying them. Pragmatics markers encode information that is necessary in order to constrain or guide the interpretation process"*, (2004:1781).

In verbal interaction, pragmatic encoding may imply not only the speaker's standpoint, but also his/her commitment and, most importantly, his/her intention. In this way, speakers sometimes consider what their interlocutors would or could think of their utterance. Morel and Danon-Boileau make a deepened analysis on certain markers of French based on the intonation which is a very important parameter, making reference to their pragmatic values under the title of "reglage" de la coénonciation" in their book entitled

“Grammaire de l’intonation”. They generally refer to the whole operation as “enunciative modulation” - a term used earlier by Culioli. This includes marking the distancing attitude of the speaker with regards to his/her own utterance and adapting his/her own speech to the other’s expectations, thereby developing the definition of the inter-subjective modality to influence others. Indeed, as is underlined by Morel and Boileau following Culioli, discourse markers (DMs) allow enunciators to modulate their utterances. Enunciators may add an evaluative aspect or an emotional aspect to their utterances or they may add certain elements expressing a probability or a judgement. They may also indicate explicitly or implicitly whether they establish a direct relation with their interlocutors. That capacity to imply the various points of view was also defined by the concept of “polyphony” used for the first time by Bachtine and picked up later by French linguist O. Ducrot. The polyphonic structure of the discourse in Ducrot which is based on the distinction between the “speaker” (locuteur) and the enunciator (énonciateur) gives information leading to possible interpretations of the utterance (Le dire et le dit 2004). Polyphony can very briefly be defined as the presence of points of view which contribute to the construction of the meaning of utterances. Vion explains this phenomenon within the framework of the concept of “modality” and affirms that it was studied after Bachtine, Bally and Ducrot under the names of “regard du locuteur”, (speaker’s point of view), “attitude”, and “double énonciation” (double enunciation) (2001:215). R.Vion defines, in addition, the absence of voice in the utterances as “effacement énonciatif”. The definition of the representations of points of view given by Nølke, quoted in the article of C. Norén entitled “Remarque sur la notion de point de vue” brings more precision: *“des unités sémantiques avec représentation au sens défini... pourvues d’un jugement. Les points de vue peuvent concerner des faits extralinguistiques ou linguistique, des états mentaux, etc...”* (The semantic units with representation of a defined meaning,...carrying a judgement. The points of view may concern extra-linguistic or linguistics facts, mental states...).

## 2. «Maintenant» and «Şimdi» as pragmatic markers expressing standpoint

Although there is an abundance of research that has been done in French as well as in English on various discourse markers, there isn't that much on the temporal adverb "maintenant" as a pragmatic marker. "Şimdi" in spoken Turkish and "maintenant" in spoken French is transformed into a pragmatic marker, not always by acquiring the same values, but by losing their temporal value completely or partially. Of course, as a temporal marker, it has been widely studied. In this chapter, the pragmatic functions of those markers will be studied within the framework of the emergence of the interlocutors' standpoints, according to the interactional situations, through to the examples of the corpus made up of the recordings of broadcasting debates etc.

In his excellent pragmatic analysis of "maintenant" within a cognition-based approach, De Saussure takes its temporal value as a criterion, asserting that its temporal value represents the cognitive present of the speaker. In this way he outlines the operation made by the use of "maintenant" as a double operation including a referential deictic operation and the awareness of a change operation by a subject of consciousness. He thus refers to the change of value of uses as "enrichissement pragmatique" and classifies the values into three categories according to three specific cases of use; -the simple temporal deictic, - the temporal deictic and a change according to the previous state of things, - the case where only change is understood, which thus are applied not according to time but according to discourse.

French "Maintenant" has an argumentative role equivalent to the "mais" (but) in certain of its uses. De Saussure resumes the examples of argumentative "maintenant" given by Nef (1978: 154-156) and develops his analysis:

- a. "Bien sûr tu es majeur. Maintenant, moi, je t'interdis de le faire".  
("Of course you are major. **But**, I prohibit you to do it").
- b. "Julie et Marcel se voient souvent ces temps-ci. **Maintenant** ça ne veut pas dire qu'ils sont ensemble. ("Julie and Marcel are seeing each other often these days. **But**, that does not mean that they are together).

De Saussure joins Nef, in a sense, asserting that "maintenant" signals a discursive connection between speech acts, announcing the suitable character of a contrastive relation between these acts while relating to the negation, or of a prepositional questioned element. That is done via an anaphoric function that relates back to the discursive deixis. But in addition, he asserts that in both

examples, the part which allows it to function as argumentative connector is pragmatically encoded.

The example below is about the criticism of the bet in vigour of a law which was created to make the education system more democratic. It's about the impossibility of application of law rather than the possibility. In the case of French, they can therefore sum up that "supporting" mark generally a stand compared by taking a new look at information given in the preceding context and this fact has an anaphoric value.

- c. Et **maintenant**, comment poursuivre cette démocratisation? (And the point is how to pursue this democratization?)

As we can note in this example "maintenant" allows opening new notional fields with a relation to a denial. It is also about assumed delivery discussed of information known before by the speakers, with involvement of the personal stance which can be considered as subjective. There is indeed a delivery being discussed of a judgment validated before, but less strong than what "but" of the French would have performed. "Maintenant" also marks here the subjectivity of the speaker as well as the divergence of point of view by implicating a relation of inter-subjectivity.

The selected utterances of the corpus show that the temporal adverb "şimdi" of Turkish is frequently employed in spontaneous spoken Turkish and in certain uses, it loses completely or partially its temporal value (loss of deictic function) acquiring certain pragmatic functions. It is used generally where the alignment between the speaker and the listener is already established and the framework of discussion is defined. Syntactically, it is often used at the beginning of utterances, thus having the role of introducing a new utterance and, as in the two following utterances, allows opening new notional fields with a relation linked to a denial with a reorientation: c. "**Şimdi**, Ali Bey, ee grip konusunda hekimlerin sanki bilgisiz olduğu gibi bir izlenim doğmasın diye ben müdahale etmek durumundayım". (Now, to prevent anyone from getting the impression that the doctors know nothing about the influenza, I feel obliged to intervene).

- d. "**Şimdi bi kere** derneğin başkanı ben değilim, onu düzeltiyim. **Şimdi** göz ardı edilen bir nokta var, onun da altını çizmek isterim". (Initially, it is not me who is the head of the association, I correct that, now there is a point which one neglects, I would like also to underline it).

This kind of use seems to reinforce on the one hand the opening of a new notional field and on the other hand, it marks the divergence of points of view, as we can notice in those examples with "şimdi". The following examples are about information already known by the speakers, with the involvement of a personal view which can be considered as subjective. It is interesting to point out that, in spontaneous conversation, "şimdi" used with an enunciative value is often accompanied with a modal expression which is the imperative form of verb "bakmak" (to look), "bak".

- e. "Yok ya! **Şimdi** başbakan bizim cebimizdeki paranın arttığını mı söylüyor?" (Come on! Now, the prime minister thinks that we have more money in our pockets now!?)
- f. "**Şimdi** neden dünkü eylem düzenlendi, daha doğrusu eylem bir yana da ee doktorlar ee neden yakınıyor bu günlerde?" (Now, why were the demonstrations yesterday organized? More precisely, let us drop the demonstrations, what should we do about the complaints by doctors these days?)

The "question/answer" form, employed as a kind of "topicalisation" (Nacar-Logie:2001), is used in the utterances "d" and "e" (on a tone of humour), and illustrates the polyphonic character of those two utterances. This function of "focusing" seems to be identical to that of "now" in English as in this example given by Schiffrin:

*"That's one breath in history compared to...England over a thousand..uh...uh countries like uh Egypt, is almost six thousand years. Now what's two hundred against six thousand years?"*

She describes that function as follows: "Another declarative/interrogative switch marked by "now" occurs as the speaker ends a sequence of facts with a rhetorical question – a question whose answer has just been implicitly provided from the prior sequence" (2001:240). Finally the pragmatic functions of the use of "şimdi" may be summarized as marking a reorientation of the subject with a new perspective, announcing a divergence of point of view and subjectivity.

### 3. “Écoute” “and “Bak” as pragmatic markers expressing standpoint

Like the discourse markers of English, “listen” and “look”, “bak” (look) of Turkish and “écoute” of French acquire pragmatic values in spoken language, apart from their grammatical function as represented by the imperative form of the verbs. A. R. Somolinos, who made a thorough analysis of “écoute” and “écoutez” (listen), indicates also that they are characteristic of the spontaneous spoken French and their use does not correspond to the “imperatif” of the verb “écouter” (2003:72) which is also true for the Turkish discourse marker “bak”. She groups and analyses in two categories the values of the use of “écoute” as negotiating a disagreement and representing a behavior of disapprobation in which case it represents an utterance on its own. In the example given below by Somolinos, it is rather the negotiation originating in a disagreement.

- a. Tu as été maladroit, tu as voulu faire un mot d’esprit et tu l’as blessé, le garçon est blessé/ - **Écoute**, je ne savais pas qu’il était susceptible. (You have been clumsy, you wanted to make a witticism and hurt him, the boy is hurt / - Listen, I did not know that it was likely.

“Bak” (look) and “écoute” are used in the following examples, not to readjust nor to negotiate the discussed subject, but to mark a dissension as well as a co-enunciative disconnection with the anterior context, especially according to what the interlocutor said or think:

- b. Şimdi **bak**/ sen gazetecisin ama saçma sapan sorular soruyorsun! (Now look (listen), okay, you may be journalist, but you really ask idiotic questions!)
- c. “Şimdi **bak**// bir sürü memur atanmıştır Kapıkule’ye. Kim atadı?! (Look, many employees were appointed at Kapıkule, who do you think appointed them?!
- d. Papa, est-ce que je peux emprunter ta voiture ?/ -**Écoute**, cela fait trois fois que je te la prête cette semaine. (Papa, can I borrow your car? / - listen, that makes it three times that I have lent it to you this week).

This kind of use signals a new explanation with argumentation on one hand and, the stand as well as the divergence of points of view on the other hand in b. and c. In last two utterances, the use of “şimdi” reinforces the

announcement of a divergence of points of view and a new argument changing the assumed reality. In c. especially, it's about a debate on corruption by customs employees and the speaker's intention is to prove their relation to some institution of government. Thus, "bak" in this example signals the announcement of some unknown information. But in b., even if "bak" signals a disagreement, it does not announce an argument inevitably; on the contrary it signals the end of the discussion, implying that the speaker does not want to answer. In this case the role of the request for attention appears in a negative context. Role of making it possible focusing and maintaining the attention of interlocutor on what is going to be said seems to be pertinent in its whole uses in Turkish. In example d., in French, "écoute" announces in the same way the opposite point of view and implies the refusal of the speaker, and the same way there is an implication of refusal of waiting in the following example analyzed by Somolinos:

- e. Le docteur est occupé, vous allez devoir attendre/ *-Écoutez*, je suis pressé, je vais téléphoner pour prendre un autre rendez-vous. (The doctor is busy, you are going to have to wait / - listen, I am in a hurry, and I will phone to make another appointment).

While in the example taken from Morel and Danon-Boileau's corpus, "écoute" is used to attract the attention of the interlocutor for what is going to be said and it appears like an element representing a speech strategy in discourse:

- f. "**Écoute**", les seules fois où j'ai vécu des histoires d'amour, et j'en ai pas vécu beaucoup eh ben à chaque fois eh ben la fille avec qui j'étais eh ben elle aurait tout fait pour moi et moi j'aurais tout fait pour elle. (Listen, the only times when I had love stories, and I haven't had many, the girl with whom I was, well, she would have done everything for me and I would have done everything for her).

Seemly, in the following examples "bak" is typically used to draw and maintain the attention of the interlocutor.

- g. Arkadaşlar, **bakın**, şöyle bir şey var,... önümüzde bir seçim dönemi var biliyorsunuz// (My friends// listen/ there is this,... there is a period of elections in front of us, you know that...)
- h. "**Bak**" şimdi, ben bir sürü votka içtim, az buz değil bayağı içtim!" (Look, first of all,(it is not what you believe), I drank a lot of vodka, I even drank too much!



Somolinos affirms that the role of request for attention of “*écoute*” corresponds those which Blum-Kulka calls “attention-getters” attracting the hearer attention on the ensuing speech act (2003:72) Nevertheless it is difficult to isolate completely their pragmatic values from the semantic contents and the grammatical functions of the two markers, “*écoute*” and “*bak*”. Of course, the imperative form is not used as a performative act or precisely as a given order. Nevertheless, it is about a relation of adjacency between the semantic contents and the use of the verb. So in spoken language, the use of “*écoute*” is more justified. For the case of the Turkish marker “*bak*”, the justification of the existence of a such relation appears less obvious. But when we consider the deictic value of the verb “*bakmak*” (to look), even though in speech, it is not a matter of actually looking at concrete objects, the use refers anyway to the deixis and often implies the act to show the exposure of an unknown point or of an unknown argument beforehand.

#### 4. Conclusion

We have shown that the DMs “*şimdi*” and “*maintenant*” acquire different functions in spontaneous spoken Turkish and French, apart from their semantic properties in spoken language and by doing so they become PMs.

As many other DMs does, they imply the speaker’s point of view regarding what he is going to say or what is being said by his interlocutor(s). This is also important for co-constructing the meaning of an utterance whilst they signal how coherence is established between utterances and subjects in discourse.

As we have seen above, the analysis of those markers shows that the use of the PMs makes possible the presence of several voices, in other words several acts of enunciation in a given utterance. So, it comes down to a double function of PMs which allow the enunciators to connect their utterances together while implying their point of view in it. They may signal the fact that the validated information in the preceding context will be questioned. The pragmatic functions of the use of “*şimdi*” and “*maintenant*” may be summarized as marking a reorientation of the subject with a new perspective, announcing a divergence of point of view and subjectivity. So their condition of use is generally related to the negation. Their temporal deictic value is weakened in the both languages.

Concerning use of “bak” and “écoute”, they are also used, apart from their grammatical value. Their use represents generally a speech act strategy in discourse and signals a disagreement or disapprobation in both languages. But this analysis needs to be deepened with the comparison of the intonation curves of the utterances containing those markers. The intonation based analysis which will be able to confirm the results of this study will be the subject of our next study.

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