CANCELLATIVE DISCOURSE MARKERS: A CORE/PERIPHERY APPROACH[1]

David M. Bell

0. Introduction

Discourse markers, or what have also been referred to as "pragmatic connectives" (van Dijk 1979), "discourse particles" (Schourup 1985) and "discourse connectives," (Warner 1985; Blakemore 1987), are for the most part sentence initial words and phrases such as *but, therefore, anyway, so, after all*, etc., which are syntactically independent of the basic sentence structure, and which have a general core function which signals the relationship between some aspect of the prior discourse P and the current message Q.[2]

Several studies of discourse markers have attempted to classify markers into broad functional categories, notably Halliday and Hasan (1976), Quirk et. al. (1985)[3] and more recently Fraser (1990, 1996, 1997a,b). Despite the essentially exploratory nature of such classificatory work, these studies have had tremendous influence, especially in the fields of rhetoric and second language teaching (Crewe 1990). At the same time, these classificatory schemes have tended inadvertently to give rise to the view that (i) markers which are multi-functional are polysemous[4]; (ii) the broad semantic categories used by these writers are adequate descriptions of the work these markers do; and (iii) members of the same functional class are interchangeable and differ only stylistically.[5]

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[2] See Fraser (1997b) for an in-depth discussion of the definition of a discourse marker.

[3] Although neither Quirk et al. (1985) nor Halliday and Hasan (1976) use the term discourse markers, I take it as non-controversial that, for the most part, the lexical items they discuss may fairly be described as discourse markers. Whereas Quirk et al. and to a lesser extent Halliday and Hasan are more concerned with how markers function as sentence connectors, the notion of discourse marker is intended to capture how markers operate on the propositional, rhetorical and sequential structure of the discourse as a whole.

[4] Halliday (1985) may himself be guilty of contributing to this view (see below).

[5] In the field of second language teaching, students have been presented with the categorizations of Quirk et al. (1985) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) and encouraged to use these "linking words" in their writing with little regard as to the pedagogical viability of these classifications nor to the distinctions which determine the use of markers in the same functional category (see, for example, Peters 1985 and McCarthy and Carter 1994).

In this paper, I wish to counter these assumptions by taking a core/periphery approach with regard to one group of markers, hitherto known as "contrastives" - *but*, *however*, and *nevertheless*, etc. This approach acknowledges that markers may be multi-functional but insists that they have a core function or rather core pragmatic instruction (see below), and considers those instantiations outside the core to be peripheral. So, although *and* and *but* can both be described as functioning as "contrastives" in example (1), I argue that *and* may be described as a peripheral "contrastive" while *but* is a core "contrastive." That is to say that *and* can only function as a "contrastive" in a restricted linguistic environment whereas *but* functions as a contrastive in all linguistic environments in which it operates as a discourse marker.

(1)   Jack's a linguist, **and/but** he can't read.

A core/periphery approach also argues that the use of the term "contrastive" and the notion of contrast as a whole is an inadequate description of the work these markers do. I propose to use the term *cancellative*. Cancellative discourse markers signal that the relationship between discourse segments is one of cancellation. Cancellation refers to the way in which an aspect of information derivable from P is canceled in Q. So in (1) we may derive the assumption from P that Jack can read and it is this assumption which is canceled in Q.

And finally a core/periphery approach helps illuminate the subtle but critical differences which exist between markers which share the same functional group.

(2)   I wish I didn't have to work today. **Nevertheless/Still**, it's Friday tomorrow.

These differences, I argue, consist of combinations of semantic, syntactic and phonological properties which overlay the core pragmatic instruction. Here, these differences are once again illustrated with regard to cancellative discourse markers.

1. The classificatory systems of Quirk et al. (1985) and Halliday and Hasan (1976)

The classificatory systems of Quirk et al. (1985), hereafter QEA, which is a reworking of Greenbaum (1969), and Halliday and Hasan (1976), hereafter H&H, attempt to categorize markers into broad semantic categories which in turn are subcategorized.

 In QEA, many of the lexical items that are here considered as discourse markers are classified as "conjuncts." Conjuncts "express the speaker's assessment of the relation between two linguistic units" (1985: 440). Conjuncts are broken down into seven semantic classifications: *Listing, summative, appositional, resultive, inferential, contrastive*, and *transitional*. Contrastives are further subcategorized as *reformulatory*, *replacive, antithetic* and *concessive*. Reformulatory conjuncts replace what has been said by a different formulation and are often preceded by *or*; they include *rather*, *more precisely*, and *in other words* as in example (3). With replacive conjuncts an item is also withdrawn, not to be better expressed, but to be replaced by a more important one as in (4); replacives include *better, worse*, and *on the other hand*. Antithetic conjuncts suggest a "direct antithesis" (631) as in example (5); they include *on the contrary*, *in contrast*, and *on the other hand*.

And finally, concessive conjuncts signal that "one unit is seen as unexpected in the light of the other," (631) as in example (6); they include *anyway, however*, *nevertheless, still, though, on the other hand*, etc.

(3)   He invited several friends, or **better**, several people that he thought were friends. (REFORMULATORY)
(4)   He was opposed by his mother or, **rather** by both his parents. (REPLACIVE)
(5)   You promise to help me; **then** you let me down. (ANTITHETIC)
(6)   She didn't get the award after all. **Still**, her results were very good. (CONCESSIVE)

   H&H are interested in describing those linguistic features of text which give it "texture," or, in other words, those characteristics which allow text to be distinguished from a disconnected sequence of sentences. According to H&H, what they refer to as "conjunctions" or "conjunctive elements" operate indirectly as "cohesive devices" by creating semantic ties which specify "the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" (1976: 227). They signal four main semantic relations: *Additive, adversative, causal*, and *temporal. Adversative* is used as both a general class term and as a sub-group along with *contrastive, corrective* and *dismissive*. Correctives are similar to QEA's replaces; they are paraphrasable as 'not X but Y' as in (7). They include *instead, on the contrary*, and *at least*. Dismissives refer to previously mentioned circumstances which are then dismissed as irrelevant as in example (8); they include *in any case, anyway*, and *either case*. Contrastives, according to H&H, can be paraphrased as "to be set against" or "as against." *But* and *however* are included in this group along with *on the other hand*, *at the same time*, and, *and.* An adversative relationship is described as "contrary to expectations," or paraphrasable as "in spite of." This category includes *but, however, yet, still, nevertheless, though, only*, etc. H&H illustrate the distinction between contrastives and adversatives, (which appears to parallel QEA's distinction between antithetic and concessive), by comparing contrastive *however* ("as against") in example (9) with adversative *yet* ("in spite of") in example (10).

(7)   He showed no pleasure at hearing the news. **Instead** he looked even gloomier. (CORRECTIVE)
(8)   Your partner may support you or change to another suit. **In either case** you should respond. (DISMISSIVES)
(9)   She failed. **However**, she tried her best. (CONTRASTIVE)
(10)   She failed. **Yet**, she tried her best. (ADVERSATIVE)

   As can be seen from these taxonomies, there appear to be several different ways of classifying discourse markers. H&H argue that the variety in classificatory schemes is to be expected. They note that "there is no single, uniquely correct inventory of the types of conjunctive relation; different classifications are possible, each of which would highlight different aspects of the facts" (1976: 238). Indeed, Halliday (1985) offers an alternative though more schematic approach to classification. At the same time, H&H note with regard to their classification of conjuncts into additive, adversative, causal and temporal that: "A very simple overall framework like this does not eliminate the complexity of the facts; it relegates it to a later, or more 'delicate', stage of analysis" (1976: 239). This present

study may be considered to be part of this 'later, more delicate stage.' The question is whether, as H&H suggest, these different classificatory schemes ultimately illuminate or obfuscate the phenomenon.

With regard to illumination, the above studies do illustrate the range of meaning relationships which a marker may signal. A fundamental premise of these two studies is that certain markers are multi-functional, i.e., they can appear in more than one category. So QEA et al. describe *on the other hand* as "antithetic," "concessive" and "replacive" within their framework, while H&H similarly describe *on the other hand* as "contrastive," "adversative" and "corrective." But in terms of obfuscation, this kind of multi-functional categorization does fail to address the actual properties of each marker and how these properties interact with particular contexts in order to produce these different readings. For example, Halliday (1985) describes *but* as an "adversative" in (11a), a "replacive" in (11b), and a "concessive" in (11c).

(11)   a   They're pretty, **but** I can't grow them.
       b   Don't drown them, **but** give them just enough
       c   I can't grow them, **but** I keep trying

The suggestion given by such an analysis is that either that *but* is polysemous and can therefore signal different relationships between P and Q or that *but* is somewhat semantically undefined and can therefore signal different meaning relationships according to the particular context. According to H&H, it is the latter conclusion which they wish to endorse. They suggest that it is not the conjunctive element which creates the sequential relationship but "it is the underlying semantic relation...that actually has the cohesive power [and] that we are often prepared to recognize the presence of a relation of this kind even when it is not expressed overtly at all" (1976: 229). However, because H&H, and QEA, are more concerned with broad classification rather than specifying the contextual requirements which allow the same marker to signal different sequential relationships, the impression that has been left is that that markers which appear in more than one than category are polysemous. Schiffrin (1986) similarly argues that H&H's categorization of *and* as both an "additive" and an "adversative," specifically a "contrastive," suggests "what sounds like a multiple-meaning view of *and*" (46).

2. A core/periphery approach

Such problems of classification are resolvable, I believe, if a core/periphery approach is taken. Here, I take the view that markers have a core function or rather pragmatic core instruction, and that the interpretation of a marker in any one instantiation results from an interaction between its core instruction, the semantic, syntactic and phonological properties of the individual marker, and the context in which the marker appears. I take those instantiations outside of the core instruction to be peripheral. The aim therefore is to discover the core instruction of each marker, that is to say the class of markers which it principally belongs to, and the conditions which may allow it to signal relationships beyond its core instruction rather than to map the potential meaning relationships it can signal, although the latter may be a precondition of the former.

Several writers have already suggested that discourse markers have core meanings. Schourup (1985) has attempted to describe the core meanings as opposed to the "local purpose" they may be put to. Schiffrin (1987) notes that the core meanings of markers "do not fluctuate from use to use; rather, what changes is the discourse slot in which they appear" (318). And Fraser (1988) argues that "...a discourse marker permits a wide range of interpretations, all of which arguably emerge from a core sense. Starting with this core meaning, the specific interpretation .... in a given instance is the result of enriching this general signal in light of the details of the particular discourse context" (23). In this light, Fraser (1990) examines the discourse marker so and suggests that it has a core pragmatic meaning: "The speaker takes the message following to have a consequential relationship to the prior material" (394) In a given instantiation of so, the task of the hearer is to calculate its specific consequential meaning by filling out its more general core meaning based on the details of the particular discourse context. Fraser takes this process to be analogous to what occurs when, for example, speakers interpret good in "a good meal" as opposed to "a good movie" or "a good boy" (1990: 394).

The view that discourse markers have core meanings has its antecedents in the long-lasting debate as to the meaning of conjunctions. Many writers, including Grice (1975), Kempson (1975), Posner (1980), and Carston (1993) suggest that the conjunction *and* has a core or minimal semantic meaning similar to the logical connector '&,' which is enriched by inferences about speaker meaning derived from principles of pragmatic interpretation. Posner has described those who take this view of *and*, as well as other conjunctions, as "meaning-minimalists." Meaning-minimalists emphasize the pragmatic principles governing the use of conjunctions and minimalize the semantic aspects of conjunctions in general. Those who take the opposite view, or "meaning-maximalists," Lakoff (1971), Bar-Lev and Palacas (1980), Gunter (1984), Traugott (1986), reverse this process. They see conjunctions as already semantically rich and the derivation of speaker meaning more as a process of deletion of those semantic features which are incompatible with the context of the utterance. The meaning-maximalist view suggests that *and* is not semantically vacuous but has specific meanings that contribute to coordinate constructions, and that logical *and* is derived from one of these meanings (see Schiffrin 1986).

It might at first view seem that my core/periphery model supports the minimalist view but in many ways such an approach seeks more to reconcile these two positions. First, the meaning minimalist position has tended to concentrate on the role of *and* as a logical connector of propositions on the sentence level. When *and* is examined in the larger discourse context the notion of *and* as a logical connector may cease to be meaningful (see Schiffrin 1986 and Sweetser 1990).

Second, although the meaning minimalist/maximalist discussion, for the most part, has focused on the use of *and*, it would be wrong to consider conjunctions, let alone discourse markers, as forming a homogeneous grammatical group. In reality, conjunctions, and indeed grammatical items in general, do not easily fit into clear-cut categories. QEA (1985) use the notion of gradience to distinguish between *and, or, but, yet, so, nor, however* and *therefore* by comparing and contrasting these items on a gradient scale according to categories of coordination and subordination. Only items at the ends of the scale can be said to clearly belong to one category or another; *yet, so*, *nor, however* and *therefore* fall into intermediate positions on the scale. Similarly, conjunctions are more than likely to have degrees of semantic vacuity rather than patterning completely after *and*.

Third, the meaning minimalist-maximalist distinction tends to favor a synchronic view. Taking a diachronic view suggests that conjunctions are derived from semantically rich lexical items and may still be in the process of shedding their semantic origins. Traugott (1986) has shown how *and* and *but* are derived from their original spatio-temporal meaning; while Koenig (1988) has described the various semantically rich sources from which concessive connectives are derived. And despite Fraser's (1990) caution that an over-reliance on the semantic roots of a marker may conceal its synchronic pragmatic meaning, it is nevertheless true that many conjunctions and discourse markers may still retain residual meanings left over from their semantic origins, which may emerge in appropriate contexts. For example, the discourse marker still has, in the appropriate context, the ability to convey mitigation, a meaning derived from its original form of temporal adverb *still,* which indicates the continuance of a previous condition (see later discussion).

A core/periphery approach acknowledges that conjunctions, or more appropriately discourse markers, operate with minimal semantic meaning but makes a distinction between pragmatic instruction and semantic meaning. The pragmatic instruction of a discourse marker signals how discourse segments are to be related. At the same time, I argue that markers may also have residual or latent semantic meanings which allow them to both be distinguished from other markers which share the same core instruction and which, in certain cases, allow markers to do extra duty as peripheral members of clusters of markers with a different core instruction.

My choice of the term instruction is an attempt to understand what a discourse markers signals as a procedural instruction as to how the hearer analyst is to relate the discourse segments P and Q. The instruction may be said to be pragmatic in that it does not in itself provide a series of precise steps in order to arrive at a given result but may require a series of inferences derived from the discourse context to arrive at a specific interpretation.[6] Furthermore, I take the core instruction to be descriptive of a class of markers rather than an individual marker. In this sense, I differ from writers like Fraser (1990) who suggest that each marker has a core sense. Core sense in my scheme is synonymous with core instruction which characterizes the group the marker belongs to as a whole. What distinguishes markers of the same class are the individual semantic, syntactic and phonological properties which overlay the core pragmatic instruction and which interact with context to account for both the individual interpretation of a marker and for those instantiations which beyond the core instruction, what I have called peripheral.

Let me illustrate this approach first with regard to *and, on the other hand*, and *instead*, markers which have been classified as multi-functional. For the time being, I will use the term "adversative" to refer to the group of markers which I will later refer to as cancellatives

2.1. *And*

Several writers have suggested that *and* can function as an "adversative," yet, for the most part, little has been said about the kinds of environments which allow such an interpretation to emerge.

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[6] See Blakemore (1987) for a description of how this process may be understood to operate.

(12)   Moishe married a Gentile - and him a nice Jewish boy! (Lakoff 1972)

(13)   'Dear, dear! How queer everything is today! **And** yesterday things went on just as usual.(H&H 1976)

(14)   Harry has counted me out. **And**, I even hadn't had a chance! (van Dijk 1979)

(15) a See this is what every country does
       b But we lost
       c and we were serious
       d and we tried to win
       e **And** we lost (Schiffrin 1986)

(16)   He's a linguist **and** he can't read. (Carston 1993)

At first glance, it might appear that the contrasted semantic items "Today"/"yesterday" and "queer"/"as usual" in (13) and "lost"/"win" in (15) allow for the "adversative" reading of *and*. But semantic opposition, to use Lakoff's term (1971), cannot in itself account for adversity or else *and* and *but* could be considered ultimately interchangeable, which is clearly not the case. Furthermore, semantic opposition is not present in examples (14) and (16). What is more to the point is that these are all examples of oral discourse and depend on intonational clues in Q for the adversative interpretation to emerge. These intonational clues, together with commentary markers such as "Dear, dear!" in (13), suggest speaker surprise that P and Q can coexist. The use of *and* here as an "adversative" may be considered as an abbreviated form of *and yet* where *yet* encodes surprise.

Clearly then, *and* operates as an "adversative" under highly circumscribed conditions and for this reason I prefer to call it a peripheral cancellative. Examples like those above together with the wider discourse function of *and* as a marker of continuation also suggest that any description of the core instruction of *and* will need to go beyond truth- functional notions of *and* as equivalent to logical '&' (Schiffrin 1986; Sweetser 1990).

2.2. *On the other hand*

On the other hand has been described as a "replacive" (17), a "contrastive" (18) and an "adversative" (19).

(17) One way to go is to fly into Pisa. **On the other hand**, you could fly into Rome, see something of Rome and then get the train up to Florence.

(18) A legume has a high requirement for phosphorus and potassium, although it will usually provide its own nitrogen. A grass, **on the other hand**, has both a large requirement for nitrogen and a smaller but still significant requirement for phosphorus and potassium.

(19) I can recall receiving this news with mixed emotions. I was certainly happy not to be going. **On the other hand**, having been told that I had passed the physical and mental tests, I wondered what had made me "morally" unfit for service in my country's defense.

In each of these examples, *on the other hand* signals that Q is to be understood as one polarity with P as the other, and as such reflects the correlative form "on the one hand...on

the other hand." However, in the absence of *on the one hand* other devices must be used to either anticipate the polarity of the relationship between P and Q in P or establish this polarity retrospectively in Q. So in (17), "one way" suggests that there is another or alternative way, and in (19) the mention of "mixed emotions" suggests we are to hear about something good and something bad. In (18), however, polarity is established retrospectively by using *on the other hand* as a focus marker (similar to the use of *however* in this sentence) by highlighting the previous phrase "a grass" and requiring the hearer-analyst to search P for its polarity, namely, "a legume."

What allows *on the other hand* to signal "adversity" in (19) is that the illocutionary force of the text is one of evaluation and the polarity of P and Q are understood as conflicting arguments in this evaluation. Although *but* is interchangeable with *on the other hand* in (19), substituting *but* in examples (17) and (18) (syntactic privileges allowing) alters the intended reading of the text. So again only in certain restricted environments can *on the other hand* be said to function as an "adversative."

2.3. *Instead*

The use of *instead* as a discourse marker is clearly very much determined by its original use as a prepositional phrase *in stead of x* or *in x' s stead*. Therefore, *instead* signals that an element x in P is replaced by an element y in Q, hence its categorization as a "replacive." There are four conditions on the use of *instead* as a discourse marker: (i) P establishes the absence or lack of fulfillment of an expected or desired state or event or non-x, while Q describes the state or event which is actualized or would be actualized in the absence of x ; (ii) the element x in P should be readily identifiable; (iii) x and y should be of a similar value such that y can replace x; and (iv) *instead* should be paraphrasable as *instead of x*. Consider how the following examples fulfill these four criteria. Examples (20), (21), and (22) are taken from newspaper reports of the 1992 Presidential election campaign while example (23) is introspected.

(20) No one will ever again accuse Bill Clinton of being perfect, although it seems the only thing he hasn't been accused of. **Instead**, it's turned out he's like us.

(21) Gone are the rambling question-and-answer sessions Clinton held with New Hampshire voters after each speech and the late night visits to the doughnut shops and half-empty restaurants in search of hands to shake. **Instead**, Mr. Clinton has spent the last two days engaging in classic Super Tuesday strategy.

(22) ... the President had hoped to be coasting through a relatively smooth primary season. **Instead**, the Bush campaign has been forced to confront Mr. Buchanan.

(23) This is Al's responsibility. **Instead**, it's always me that has to do it.

These examples illustrate the many ways by which the absence of x may be explicitly and implicitly signaled in P. In (20) the absence of x is established by the use of negation: "No one will ever again accuse Bill Clinton of being perfect," while in (21) absence is signaled semantically by the use of "gone". In examples (22) and (23) non-fulfillment of x is implicated: In (22) the combination of the structure "hope to x " and the past perfect tense conventionally implicates non-fulfillment of x, while in (23) the absence of x, i.e. Al is not

taking responsibility, is contextually implicated. These examples also exhibit the other three conditions on the use of *instead*. So in (20), for example, x is identifiable explicitly in P as "being perfect" and y is "like us," and   x is substitutable by y such that it can be paraphrased as "Instead of being perfect, Bill Clinton is like us." And this identification of the elements x and y and their paraphrasing by the use of *instead* of is also transparent in the other examples.

If we try to substitute *but* for *instead* in the above examples we find that but may only appropriately substitute for *instead* in examples (22) and (23), but not in examples in (20) and (21). So *instead* may be interchangeable with *but* when the absence of y in P is implicated rather than explicitly stated and when there exists in Q an element y which can replace x. Again *instead* may be said to operate as an "adversative" similar to but only in restricted environments.

In relation to *but,* therefore, and, *on the other hand* and *instead* may be said to be peripheral "adversatives," that is to say that they only *appear* to signal "adversity" in particular environments. Indeed, I will argue that they appear to signal "adversity" when in fact they continue to signal their own core instruction. In other words, although the resulting meaning may be the same, the instructions are different. So the core instruction of *and* is still "additive" in these so-called "adversative" examples, *on the other hand* still "contrastive" and *instead* still "replacive." So, although *but* is interchangeable with *and*, *on the other hand* and *instead* in the above examples, the actual instruction *but* signals for relating P and Q is essentially different. It is one of cancellation.

3. Cancellation

In this section, I will argue against the use of the terms "contrastive" and "adversative" to describe the work that markers like *but*, *nevertheless*, *however*, etc., do and the traditional dichotomous view of but as signaling either "contrast" or "denial of expectations." I argue for a unified approach based on the claim that a better description of what these markers signal is that of cancellation.

3.1. *Contrast*

As we have seen, studies of discourse markers use the term contrastive in two basic ways. First, contrastive is used to capture the complete set of markers which are deemed to signal contrast. However, for the most part, what constitutes contrast is left undefined. QEA do suggest that "Contrastive conjuncts...present either contrastive words or contrastive matter in relation to what has preceded" (1985: 638), but what constitutes "contrastive words" and "contrastive matter" is left undefined. Similarly Fraser (1997a) in his discussion of contrastive discourse markers acknowledges that he offers no precise definition of what qualifies as a "contrastive" discourse marker. So the notion of "contrast" is never really defined as a property in itself but in terms of a series of sub-class features, i.e. adversative, replacive, concessive, and antithetic, etc. Of course, there are notions of contrast in linguistics which are clearly defined. Longacre (1983), for example, defines intra and inter-sentential contrast as requiring at least two opposed pairs of lexical items. These

pairings may involve negation, antonyms or different subjects, and may or may not include the use of so-called "contrastive" discourse markers. However, such a precise formal definition is clearly too narrow for the kinds of discourse sequencing which these approaches are trying to capture in the notion of "contrast."

The second basic way that "contrastive" is used is as a sub-class term to distinguish between those markers which H&H paraphrase as "set against" (contrastives) from those which they paraphrase as "despite" (adversatives). And this basic dichotomy is maintained in one way or another in most studies of "contrastive" markers. QEA distinguish between conjuncts which signal a "direct antithesis" and those which signal that "one unit is seen as unexpected in the light of the other" (639). Likewise, Fraser (1988) distinguishes between markers which signal a "sharp contrast" and those which "signal a sharp but unexpected contrast" (30). And, indeed, the distinction seems to be even far more rooted. Jesperson (1940), for example, distinguishes between "simple contrast" or coexistence and "contradiction" or unexpectedness.

While I acknowledge that there is a group of markers which would best be described as contrastives - *in contrast, on the other hand* - I argue against the view that markers like *but* and *however* may be understood as signaling either "contrast" or "denial of expectations;" a distinction most cogently articulated by Lakoff (1971). Lakoff argues that "contrast" *but* or what she calls "semantic opposition," conjoins pairs of antonymic lexical items as in (24), whereas "denial of expectations" *but* as in (25) signals that Q denies an expectation or presupposition derived from P, namely that John is good at basketball.

(24)   John is tall **but** Bill is short.
(25)   John is tall **but** he's no good at basketball.

However, as writers like Abraham (1979), Blakemore (1987) and Foolen (1991) have argued, the notion of contrast *but* is really an artifact of the use of decontextualized examples. When examples like (24) above are contextualized as in (26) they become understandable as "denial of expectations."

(26)   A: Your sons are both tall, aren't they?
       B: Well, John is tall **but** Bill is short

Furthermore, as Blakemore (1987) has argued, if there were such a notion as "contrast" *but* then (27)B1 and (27)B2 should be understood in the same way.

(27)   A   My parents vote Democrat.
       B1   Mine vote Republican
       B2   **But** mine vote Republican

However, the *but* in (27)B2 appears to be denying an assumption that A's parents' voting preference is non-problematic.

3.2. *Denial of expectations*

Yet at the same time, the notion of "denial of expectations" is also never fully explained. Little is said about how an expectation is derived and whose expectation it is. There have been several attempts to operationalize the "denial of expectations" relationship in terms of presuppositions (Lakoff 1971), arguments and results (Anscombre and Ducrot 1977) and in terms of contextual implications (Blakemore 1987).

Lakoff's 1971 paper is an attempt to understand the semantic properties of conjunctions through acceptability judgments of decontextualized conjoined sentences. According to Lakoff, for a hearer to understand conjoined sentences and therefore find them acceptable, the hearer must make certain presuppositions and deductions based on these presuppositions. In the case of *but* these presuppositions and their concomitant deductions establish an expectation in P, if p then not q, which is denied in Q. According to Lakoff, presuppositions may be based not only on a general tendency derived from knowledge of the world with regard to the sentence under analysis, but may also be derived from the prior discourse the speaker has participated in, which allow the speaker and hearer to be in possession of special information which render the presupposition and its denial calculable. However, according to Lakoff, the more "idiosyncratic" the presuppositions, the less acceptable the conjoined sentence is likely to be to the hearer.

Anscombre and Ducrot (1977) recognize that expectations or presuppositions may be derived from the interpretation of an utterance as well as its propositional content. They argue that *mais* 'but' signals an "argumentative instruction." That is to say, *mais* signals that the speaker presents two opposite conclusions of which only the second can be chosen. They state three conditions for the operation of *mais*: First, a speaker who employs the sentence form *p mais q* supposes that there is a certain "conclusion" *r* that can be derived from *p* ; second, *p* is considered an "argument" in favor of *r*, and *q* is an "argument" in favor of *not-r* ; and third, the speaker believes that *q* is a stronger argument than *p*, so that the whole of the utterance, *p mais q,* is for the speaker an argument in favor of *not-r*. If this analysis is applied to the example below, then *p* = John is not an economist, *q* = John is a businessman, and *r* = John should not be consulted. If *q* is an argument in favor of *not-r* and is considered the stronger argument then John should be consulted.

(28) *[A and B are discussing the economic situation and decide that they should consult an expert]*
       A: John is an economist
       B: He is not an economist, **but** he is a business man.

However, it may not be always be appropriate to understand P and Q in terms of arguments. Dascal and Katriel (1977) suggest that describing the following con-versational exchange in terms of Anscombre and Ducrot's framework is rather   "strained" (149).

(29)   A: Shut the door!
        B: O.K., **but** don't give me orders.

According to Dascal and Katriel, it is hard to know what exactly would be considered the conclusion *r* derivable from *p*. If the conclusion derived from *p* were compliance on the

part of speaker B then q = don't give me orders would have to suggest an argument in favor of *non-r*, i.e., non-compliance. Given that q is considered to be the stronger argument we would therefore expect B's utterance to convey refusal to obey the order, but of course it does not.

Given that an utterance may have several different interpretations, Blakemore is concerned with how hearers select interpretations in accord with speaker intentions. Blakemore seeks to clarify this process of utterance interpretation within Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance framework. Accordingly, hearers are held to monitor utterances for relevant information that will allow the derivation of assumptions or "contextual implications," and the confirmation or denial of existing assumptions. According to Blakemore (1987), a contextual implication is derived from the content of an utterance together with premises supplied from the hearer's background beliefs and can be regarded as enhancing the hearer's knowledge state.

Although, as we have seen, Blakemore has argued against the notion of contrast or semantic opposition *but,* she retains a dichotomous view of *but*. Her distinction is based on the use of *but* as a discourse marker or what she prefers to call a "discourse connective" and the role of *but* as a coordinator. As a "discourse connective," Blakemore confirms the meaning of *but* as "denial of expectations," while in its role as a coordinator she prefers the term "contrast" *but*. In its "denial of expectations" use in (30), Blakemore argues that *but* conjoins two propositions, while in its "contrast" use as in (31), it conjoins one single proposition.

(30)   Jack's a Republican **but** he's honest.
(31)   Mary votes Labour, Susan votes SDP, Anne votes Tory, **but** Jane votes for the Communist party.

According to Blakemore, in (30) Q negates or implies the negation of an assumption, (namely that all Republicans are dishonest), which the speaker assumes the hearer to have derived as a "contextual implication" from P. In other words, "in indicating how the proposition it introduces is relevant, the speaker's use of *but* constrains the interpretation of the preceding proposition" (1989b: 26). Blakemore suggests that, "The connection is not between the constituents of a conjoined proposition...but between the pragmatic interpretation of one proposition and the pragmatic interpretation of another." (27)

The context of example (31) is a discussion as to whether Mary, Susan, Anne or Mary, who are all British, would fit into the American political system. Here, the hearer is not assumed to have derived a contextual implication from P. According to Blakemore, "The first clause affects the interpretation of the second in the sense that it gives the hearer access to a property whose ascription is understood to be negated by the second" (1989b: 35). In the case of example (31), the hearer's task is to ascertain from the context that property which Jane does not have that all the others have. In this way *but* signals a constraint on the relevance of the conjunction of two propositions. "Whereas," Blakemore argues, "the denial of expectation interpretation results from the use of *but* as a constraint on the relevance of the proposition it introduces - that is, as a discourse connective, the contrastive interpretation results from its use as a constraint on the relevance of the conjunction of the two propositions it connects" (17). In other words, "the conjoined proposition... has relevance over and above the relevance of each conjunct taken individually" (34).

So what determines which *but* is dependent on whether the speaker believes that the hearer has derived a contextual implication from P or not. There are, therefore, no textual clues as to which *but* is being used. The fact that a sentence is syntactically co-ordinate does not necessarily mean that it will be used to express a conjoined proposition; in other words, there is, as Blakemore (1987) says, "a discrepancy between syntactic representation and propositional form" (137). That is to say, both contrast *but* and denial *but* may orthographically be either preceded by a period or not. And if *but* may be considered dichotomously in this way, why not *however* and *though*? Whereas, there is certainly a distinction to be made between coordinator *but* and discourse *but*, it is, as I have suggested, better understood in terms of gradience. And it is hard to justify Blakemore's use of the terms "contrast" and "denial of expectations," especially when, as she suggests, that "denial" is involved in both instances.

And, of course none of these operationalizations of "denial of expectations" are able to explain the occurrence of discourse or sequential *but*, that is to say the use of *but* as a way of marking off what the speaker considers a subordinate section of discourse or digression in order to return to the main discourse topic (Polanyi and Scha 1983; Schiffrin 1987). In example (32) B's interruption signals a desire to get onto what she considers to be the most salient discourse topic.

(32)   A: We had a very nice lunch. I had an excellent lobster.
       B: **But** did you get to ask him about the money?

Approaches based on the notion of denial of expectations, therefore, are unable to account for all occurrences of markers like *but*. In order to understand the core instruction of but and similar markers, I suggest that a better description of the work these markers do is that of cancellation.

3.3. *Cancellation*

Cancellative markers signal that the relationship between discourse segments is one of cancellation; i.e. an aspect of information derived from P is canceled in Q. An aspect of information is any piece of information which is derivable, though not necessarily derived, by the hearer from the prior discourse context either globally or locally with respect to any feature of the act of communication such as propositional content, illocutionary force, perlocutionary effects in terms of face, politeness, mood, etc., and conversational conventions such as turn-taking and topic change.

The notion of cancellation is derived from the work of Dascal and Katriel (1977) and Katriel and Dascal (1984) with regard to their analysis of the semantic and pragmatic conditions for the use in Hebrew of aval, which may be translated by *but* in English. Dascal and Katriel's approach is predicated on an understanding of utterance meaning or what they call their "onion model of meaning." An utterance, according to Dascal and Katriel (1977) is made up several layers of meaning "...ranging from the more to the less explicit, from an inner 'core' of content to contextually conveyed implicatures via layers and sub-layers such as presuppositions, modality, illocutionary force and felicity conditions" (153). Utterances may convey all of these layers of meaning simultaneously. The purpose

of using *aval* is to separate out layers of meaning and "...indicate a refusal to accept all the layers of meaning of an utterance *en bloc*" (153). According to Dascal and Katriel, therefore, a *but* utterance marks a differential response to the layers of meaning in the preceding utterance. So, in example (26), repeated here as (33), according to Dascal and Katriel, speaker B accepts the propositional content of A's utterance but not its illocutionary force.

(33) A: Shut the door
     B: O.K., **but** don't give me orders.

Dascal and Katriel go on to provide further examples of how *but* utterances may cancel a particular layer of meaning and what these layers may be.

(34)   It's a flower, **but** it's made of plastic.
(35) A Now you know all the facts.
     B Yes, **but** I am not convinced of his guilt.
(36) A Open the door.
     B As you wish, **but** it won't open.
(37) A What do you think about John?
     B I like his wife a lot, **but** I guess I like him, too

In (34), according to Dascal and Katriel, the *but* utterance cancels one of the semantic features of *flower*; here it cancels the feature of growth. In (35), according to Dascal and Katriel, B accepts both the illocutionary force and the propositional content of A's utterance but rejects the intended perlocutionary effect, namely, its persuasive intent. In (36) Dascal and Katriel suggest that what is rejected by the *but* utterance is the felicity condition; that is to say, the speaker's ability to carry out the request. In (37) the conversational implicature created by the first conjunct of B's response (i.e. "I don't like John") is canceled by the second clause which asserts "I like John too."

Dascal and Katriel's onion model refers specifically to five layers (propositional, illocutionary force, modality, felicity conditions and conversational implicature), but the suggestion is that there may be more, and that within each layer there are sublayers, all organized hierarchically. However, the claim that meaning is stratified in this way, to be peeled off layer by layer, though certainly appealing, remains problematic. The focus of the cancellation in Dascal and Katriel's model is always on the meaning conveyed by the immediately prior or local discourse segment. However, if we consider cancellation as also operating globally on whole chunks of prior discourse and the wider context in which the discourse takes place, then the notion of meaning needs to be replaced by a term that better reflects the hearer's state of understanding with regard to the discourse as whole. For this reason, I prefer to understand cancellation as operating on aspects of information within the global and local discourse context, rather than layers of meaning with reference to the immediate linguistic environment.

Context can be considered as that information or set of assumptions that are brought to bear both in the construction and in the interpretation of an utterance. According to Wilson (1994), "these [assumptions] may be drawn from the preceding text, or from observation of the speaker and what is going on in the immediate environment, but they also may be

drawn from cultural or scientific knowledge, common-sense assumptions, and, more generally any item of shared or idiosyncratic information that the hearer has access to at the time" (41). Blakemore includes "assumptions about the speaker's emotional state and assumptions about other speakers' perception of the [hearer's] emotional state" (1992: 138). I prefer the term information to assumptions because it subsumes what interlocutors know, assume and believe, etc., when they encode and decode meaning. What's more, this notion of context is reflexive: The information or set of assumptions that will be brought to bear to construct and interpret utterances will be continually updated as the discourse proceeds. Given such a view of context, then it can be seen how important the notion of cancellation is in the negotiation of shared understanding.

Cancellation, therefore, can be understood as acting on all aspects of communication. Most writers on discourse markers make a tripartite distinction with regard to the communicative process. H&H distinguish between the ideational and the interpersonal use of language, or what they otherwise refer to as external and internal meaning. Ideational language refers to the way that language is used to describe the phenomena of the real world while interpersonal describes the kinds of communicative purposes - promising, threatening, suggesting, etc. - to which language is put. Similarly, external meaning is "inherent in the phenomena that language is used to talk about," as in examples (38) (example [30] earlier) and (40), while internal meaning is "inherent in the communication process" (1976: 241) as in examples (39) and (41) Other writers on discourse markers make a similar distinction: Borkin (1980) refers to empirical and rhetorical relationships, Schiffrin (1987) distinguishes between the ideational and action structures of discourse, and Redeker (1990) uses the terms ideational and rhetorical. Here, I will follow Redeker's terminology.

(38)   Jack's a Republican, **but** he's honest. [IDEATIONAL]
(39)   *(A group of criminals need someone on the inside to help them break into the Republican headquarters and they discuss possible candidates.)*
  A: We need someone to help us on the inside
  B: Jack's a Republican, **but** he's honest. [RHETORICAL]
(40)   She's tall, **but** she's no good at basketball. [IDEATIONAL]
(41)   She's good at basketball. **But** she's tall. [RHETORICAL]

Example (38) is a classic example taken from Lakoff (1971). If we imagine the context of (38) as a cynical Watergate world in which all Republicans are considered dishonest, then the aspect of information derivable from P - all Republicans are dishonest - would be considered descriptive of the world as the addressee knows it. In (39), on the other hand, the speaker in (B) is heard to be proposing a candidate in P, and then canceling the suggestion in Q. In (40), Q cancels a conclusion derivable from P that John must be good at basketball, which is a generally accepted view of the world. In (41), however, Q appears to cancel a perlocutionary effect given off by P, namely that P is perhaps too boastful or suggesting something remarkable. The effect of the cancellation, therefore, is to hedge or mitigate.

A third component of communication on which markers are held to function is that of the discourse or sequential level (see example [32]). According to Redeker (1990), "sequential relations can be paratactic, that is, transitions to the next topic or to the next

point, or hypotactic, that is leading into or out of a commentary, correction, paraphrase, aside, digression or interruption segment" (369). Example (42) below is taken from an article which describes the success of a low-budget French film and what this success has meant to the director. The transition to the next paragraph is achieved by the use of *but* and a cleft together with a superlative: "What most delights him." Here, *but* signals that Q cancels the topic domain of P.

(42)   Suddenly, his telephone is ringing with producers interested in his next project. **But** perhaps what most delights him is that Americans will see his film. [SEQUENTIAL]

However, as H&H point out, the distinction between propositional content (ideational), communicative function (rhetorical) and sequential organization is not clear-cut (1976: 241). Consider (38) as a provocative or facetious remark, (which is no doubt how it was originally intended). Here *but* may be said to be proactive in that it directs the addressee to derive an aspect of information from P rather than signaling a reaction to an aspect of information the speaker assumes the hearer to have already derived. Here, the speaker knows that the addressee considers that Republicans are honest but wishes to convey to him her political orientation in a provocative manner. For the addressee to interpret the speaker's remark, it is necessary for the addressee to first derive the contextual implication, namely that Republicans are dishonest, such that it can be canceled with regard to Jack in Q. Considered in this way, *but* can be seen to be operating both on the ideational and rhetorical levels.

Of course, discourse markers may operate on the ideational, rhetorical and sequential levels simultaneously. I illustrate how *but* can operate as a cancellative in this way in a narrative segment of discourse taken from an interview with Carlos Santana, the rock guitarist, which appeared in a music journal. Santana is describing his attitude towards jamming. Often, when such jams take place in public, they can be highly competitive - one musician may try to outdo or "cut" another musician, hence the notion of "dueling guitars."

(43)   I'm not into dueling guitars, **but**[1] when you go into those funky blues clubs you'd better be prepared to get scratched. It's like the greats pull a switchblade on you. The last time Buddy Guy came to the area he invited me to play with him. **But**[2] before I got on stage, he sang, 'Just because it's your hometown, don't think you're gonna put me down.' He was fooling around, **but**[3] he was also serious. **But**[4] I love it because that's how I continue to learn. (*Downbeat*, August 1991: 29)

But[1] may be considered both ideational and rhetorical. It is ideational in the sense that it describes an attitude already held by the speaker, which is somewhat contradictory. And it is rhetorical in that the *but* utterance introduces a disavowal of a prior assertion. In both cases, however, the *but* utterance serves to cancel an aspect of the prior utterance, namely that the speaker is 100% committed to the truth of the prior assertion. *But*[2] is ideational: The generosity of the invitation is canceled by the threat in the but utterance. *But*[3] is again ideational, canceling the scope of the assertion that he was "fooling around" Here the context allows *but* to signal the cancellation of the assumption that "fooling around" and "being serious" cannot coexist in the real world. *But*[4] is mainly rhetorical: The *but* utterance

cancels the negative attitude towards "dueling guitars" that has been presented up to this point. By inference, it may also be said to be ideational, if, from the present tense use of "I love it," it can be deduced that on the particular occasion described the experience was positive. And it is also clearly sequential in that it marks the end of the narrative sequence and the beginning of an evaluation. And it also signals a turn transition.

In this way the cancellation functions as a powerful tool in negotiating the complexities of the speaker's communicative intent and provides a better description in terms of an instruction to the hearer/analyst as to which aspects of information of the global and local discourse are to be canceled.

4. Distinguishing between cancellative markers

A further problem derived from the taxonomies of QEA and H&H is the tendency to homogenize groups of markers with the same core instruction. The desire to classify markers has, therefore, given support to the view that many of these markers are synonymous and so the study of the subtle differences that exist between them has been neglected. So far I have distinguished between core and peripheral cancellative markers, now I will go a step further and make some further distinctions which will help illuminate the subtle but critical differences between core cancellatives. Whereas distinctions between core and peripheral markers can be made on the grounds of core instruction, distinctions within the core group address distinctions based on the syntactic, semantic and phonological properties of markers which I have argued overlay core instruction and allow for the interpretation of a marker in any one particular instantiation.

4.1. *Primary vs. secondary core cancellatives*

The first cut I want to make is between what I will call primary and secondary cancellative markers. I take my primary cancellatives to be *but, however, though, yet*, *still* and *nevertheless*. Secondary core cancellatives are *even so, for all that, except that*, etc. Secondary core cancellatives have more narrowly defined semantic features and syntactic privileges and it is the combination of these features which restrict them to more local sequential relationships. Consequently, they tend to occur less frequently (Altenberg 1986).

4.1.1.Referential "that"

Cancellative markers such as *in spite of that* and *for all that* appear to be restricted to signaling local relations between discourse segments because of the presence of referential *that*. Indeed, it has been argued that such lexical items cannot really be considered as discourse markers, if we accept the view that the ability of markers to signal connections between discourse segments is due solely to their characteristics as discourse markers and not through their reliance on other cohesive properties. As such QEA distinguish between *in spite of that* and *nevertheless* as adjuncts and conjuncts respectively. However, H&H point out that many conjunctive adverbs are originally made up of a reference item plus a

preposition such as *therefore* and *whereat*. What's more, they note that there is a class of conjunctives which may be followed by a preposition plus *that* such as *instead (of that)* and *as a result (of that)*. There would appear to be a process at work here whereby originally anaphoric items lose their particular referentiality but not their general indexicality. A further step in the process would appear to be to drop the pronomic form completely: *Notwithstanding* would appear to be in the process of losing its referential *that*, while *regardless* appears to have dropped its original preposition plus referential item. I take the blurring of the lines between discourse markers and other lexical devices as indicative of the diachronic shifts that are constantly at play in language and of the distinction between such lexico-grammatical categories as one of gradience. However, the residual referentiality of such items is likely to restrict these markers to the local rather than the global level.

4.1.2. Even so

If we compare the secondary core cancellative *even so* with the primary core cancellative *nevertheless*, it can be seen that the greater frequency of use of *nevertheless* may be explained by the referentiality of *so*. Although the pro-form so may refer to a whole discourse segment and not just function as a clausal substitute, so, especially if is also understood in its sense of "true," has referentiality problems with clauses that contain counterfactuals.

(44)   She was happy in her job. **Nevertheless/Even so**, she spent most of her lunch hour reading the help wanted ads.

(45)   Patrick Buchanan ended up further behind President Bush than first appeared. **Nevertheless/Even so**, his 37% ain't beanbag. Jurors were injured. Nevertheless/Even so, one juror was apparently too shaken up by the fire to continue today.

(46)   Two firefighters and a businessman were killed in the blaze, but none of the jurors were injured. **Nevertheless/Even so**, one juror was apparently too shaken up by the fire to continue today.

(47)   If only I had studied harder at school. **Nevertheless/ ?Even so**, I did okay.

(48)   I thought it was going to be a disaster. **Nevertheless/ ?Even so**, it turned out okay in the end.

(49)   I hoped he would give me some jewelry. **Nevertheless/ ?Even so**, he gave m e a book.

4.1.3. Except that

Of course the *that* in *except that* is non-referential and is a remnant of its structure as a subordinating conjunction and often dropped in spoken discourse. The use of *except that* as a discourse marker is similar to the use of *although* and sentence initial *though* as discourse markers in spoken discourse, where the latter are understood to follow a short pause.

(50) And when they began to get better, when, from those terrible, swollen lumps, skeletons began to emerge, we'd sometimes even see something resembling a smile. **Except that** this was the kind of smile that made your hair stand on end and your flesh crawl.

(51) It's not computational in the sense that information processing psychology is computational. **Although/Though**, if you extend the notion of computation sufficiently you can use it as a reasonably nice metaphor.

It is the grammatico-semantic features of *except that* and *although* which limit them to signaling a local sequential relationship.

Again it is somewhat problematic whether *except that*, together with initial *though* and *although,* should be considered as a discourse marker at all. It can be argued that they continue the message rather than juxtapose a new message. As we have seen, orthographic conventions such as periods are not wholly reliable indicators of where one message ends and another begins. However, it is clear that lexical items like *but*, *except that* and *though/although* are both [+] and [- discourse marker].

4.2. *[+ concessive] vs. [+ / - concessive] primary core cancellatives*

A concessive relationship may be said to exist between P and Q when the aspect of information derivable from P is intended to exclude the possibility of Q. Q, while conceding P, cancels the assumption derivable in P. In other words, P suggests that P and Q cannot coexist, whereas Q suggests they can. It is the kind of cancellation which has been described as denial of expectations but as we have seen it constitutes one type of cancellation. Cancellation in general signals that Q cancels an aspect of information derivable from P. In concessive cancellation, Q cancels an aspect of information derivable from P which is understood as an argument against the coexistence of P and Q. With regard to our primary core cancellatives, *yet*, *nevertheless* and *still* are [+ concessive] while *but*, *however* and *though* are [+ / - concessive]. In other words, *yet*, *nevertheless* and *still* can be considered a subset of *but, however* and *though*.

(52) I don't like the early painting very much - it looks overly calculated. **But/However/Nevertheless**, I find it unforgettable (**though**).

(53) I gave Jimmy fish for dinner **But/However/?Nevertheless**, I forgot that he was allergic to fish (**though**).

In (52) *but, however, though* and *nevertheless* are [+ concessive] but in (53) where the relationship between P and Q is [- concessive] *nevertheless* cannot function. In (52) Q, while conceding that the speaker does not like the painting and finds it "overly calculated," cancels the assumption derivable from P that the speaker therefore finds the painting "forgettable." In (53) there is no assumption derivable from P which suggests the non-occurrence of Q. Q *does* cancel an aspect of information derivable from P but this is not an aspect of information which suggests the non-occurrence of Q. Therefore, the relationship between P and Q is not concessive. Of course, the relationship between P and Q in (53) is being read off the ideational content. If the relationship is read off the rhetorical

relationship, then, of course, *nevertheless* is acceptable as signaling a concessive relationship between P and Q. Imagine that P is understood as an argument in favor of the speaker's parenting skills. Q, while conceding the warrant for the assumption derivable in P that the speaker is a good parent, cancels that favorable impression.

Examples (54), (55) and (56) are further instances of the [- concessive] readings of *but, though* and *however.*

(54) A: Pam's not in today.
      B: **But** I just saw her in the copy room
(55) A: Shut the window, will you?
      B: It's already closed **though.**
(56)   I hope you'll examine these cases on your own. The tour, **however**, continues
             at the next case on the left.

In (54) the whole propositional content of A's utterance in P is canceled by B's response in Q. Although there is an assumption derivable in P that because Pam is not in the office today she therefore cannot be in the copy room, which Q cancels, there is no concession in Q of the warrant of such a conclusion. Similarly in (55), there is nothing in P which Q needs to concede. Q cancels one of the felicity conditions of A's request in P. In (56) there is no aspect of information derivable from P which suggests the non-occurrence of P and Q, so there is nothing in P which Q needs to concede. The use of *however* here is sequential signaling the cancellation of the sub-topic or digression in P and the return to the main discourse topic in Q.

Although I have described *but, however* and *though* in terms of their [+| or [- concessive] properties it is really the vagueness and generality of their cancellative signal which allows them to interact with context to signal either [+| or [- concession].

4.3. *But is the nucleus*

And finally it is clear that *but* is the main cancellative marker or nucleus of the group: But signals that an aspect of information derivable from P is canceled in Q. All other cancellatives share this core instruction but with additional restrictions. Every language has some form of the conjunction *but*, although they may not possess equivalents of my other primary core cancellatives (see Koenig 1988). I also note that *but* may be substituted for all the other markers and retain, if somewhat looser, the meanings signaled by the original markers (Koenig 1988). *But* shares with all other markers the same core instruction of cancellation but lacks the extra semantic/syntactic features of other cancellative markers which restrict the environments of their occurrence.

5. Distinguishing between primary core cancellatives

I can do no more than briefly outline the main distinguishing features of primary core cancellatives. For a more detailed survey of the subtle but critical differences that exist between cancellative markers see Bell (1994) and Fraser (1997a).

By operating as a focus marker, *however* gives the hearer-analyst a more precise instruction as to which aspect of information in P is to be canceled. The focused element in Q provides a clue as to which element in P is to be searched for and from which the aspect of information is to be derived and canceled. In (56) above, the focused element *tour* instructs the hearer-analyst to search P for a contrasted element in P.
The focusing signal is not merely to set up as a contrast but to point to the aspect of information in P which is to be canceled, "namely examining these cases on your own."

While *however* may be said to be phonologically prominent, *though* is phonologically reduced (see H&H: 250-251), which means that in a phrase *though* very rarely receives stress in the way that *however* does. It is this phonologically reduced feature which allows *though* to be used almost as a clitic in the way it readily attaches to questions and imperatives. The combination of a phonologically reduced feature and its ability to attach itself in sentence final position may explain the way in which *though* can be used to avoid the confrontational overtones of sentence initial *but*. The following example is adapted from Pomerantz (1984).

(57) A Good shot
      B1 **But** it wasn't very solid
      B2 It wasn't very solid **though**

Pomerantz claims that *though* suggests partial agreement with the prior message. In this way, the use of *though* may be seen as expressing a sensitivity to interactional demands by attempting to minimize the effect of dissonance in dispreferred responses.

Yet may function in part as a commentary marker by revealing the speakers attitude to the cancellation of the aspect of information in P and the fact that P and Q can coexist. *Yet* suggests that the speaker's deictic center is situated in P so that Q may appear surprising or paradoxical from the perspective of P (Hirtle 1977). Compare *yet* with *nevertheless*, which is neutral with regard to the speaker's attitude to the relationship of P and Q, and with *and yet*, which, as we have seen, often amplifies speaker surprise.

(58)   The Japanese machine is lighter and cheaper.
     a **Nevertheless**, the American machine was preferred because of its speed
     b **Yet,** the American machine was preferred because of its speed
     c **And yet**, the American machine was preferred because of its speed

Yet may also be distinguished from other concessives by its ability to mark a concessive relationship symmetrically. The possibility of Q may be excluded consequentially or presequentially; that is to say Q is considered improbable either as a consequence of P or as an antecedent of P. In other words, whereas *still, nevertheless* and *yet* may loosely be paraphrased as *despite* P, Q, *yet* may also signal the relationship as one of P, *despite* Q.

(59) a He's her brother. **Yet/Nevertheless/Still**, she fired him.
      b She fired him. **Yet/ ?Nevertheless/?Still**, he's her brother.

Nevertheless (including its allomorph *nonetheless*) is the most syntactically privileged. It can appear in both paratactic and hypotactic structures and can appear in sentence medial

and final position as well as sentence initial. *Nevertheless* is the most clearly defined and prototypically concessive of the primary core cancellatives It always signals the cancellation of an aspect of information derived from some property of P which would normally exclude the possibility of Q. Although the relationship between P and Q that *nevertheless* signals can often be paraphrased by the causal relationship implied by *despite that*, the relationship is better described in terms of the way in which assumptions derived from a property of P give rise to an expected or probable result which is canceled or blocked in Q, and such a relationship subsumes the derivation of an expected result based on cause and effect.

(60)   I wanted to play tennis. **Nevertheless/ *Despite that,** it was raining.

Still as a discourse marker borrows from its homophonous form as a time adverb the ability to signal that a prior condition persists in the face of an intervening variable. This notion of the persistence of a condition appears to situate the speaker's deictic center: The speaker considers the intervening or cancellative variable from the point of view of how the prior condition persists. In other words, *still* suggests that the speaker's deictic center is located in Q and that P is being examined in the light of Q (Hirtle 1977). I use the term condition or state because *still* as a discourse marker appears to operate more successfully where a condition rather than an action is understood to persist. The notion of the persistence of a condition may explain why *still* can have a mitigational meaning as in (61) and (62) and a justificatory meaning in (63) similar to *after all* in addition to its core instruction of cancellation.

(61)   He's overweight. **Still/*After all/ ?Nevertheless**, he works out.
(62)   It took Jim a long time to finish.
         Still/ After all/ ?Nevertheless, he had a bad leg.
(63)   I wish I didn't have to go to work today. **Nevertheless/Still**, it's Friday.

In (63) *nevertheless* appears to signal that Q cancels the wish or hope in P that work can be avoided that day by the reminder in P that there is still one more day of the work-week remaining. In other words, the speaker has to work despite her wishes. *Still,* on the other hand, seems to signal that P cancels somewhat the dismay on the part of the speaker at having to work that day by the reminder in P that at least it is the last day of the work-week. In other words, the situation is not as bad as the speaker thinks (see Blakemore 1989a: 46).

The persistence of a condition also suggests that *still* like *after all* more readily signals old as opposed to new information (Koenig and Traugott 1982) and a rhetorical rather than an ideational relationship between discourse segments (Borkin 1980). *Still* is more often used in a rhetorical sense in discourse contexts that involve evaluation and deliberation and less often in the narration of events or the description of scientific processes (unless these are being subject to a process of evaluation).

Whereas the default cancellative instruction of *nevertheless* is ideational and local the default cancellative instruction of *still* is rhetorical and global. In other words, the instruction in *nevertheless* to find a property of P that would normally exclude Q prompts the hearer/analyst to search the immediately prior or local discourse for an ideational property of P that is canceled by Q. *Still* on the other hand instructs the hearer/analyst to

search the wider prior discourse for a rhetorical property of P that is canceled by Q. It is not surprising then that the majority of occurrences of *still* in written discourse are in paragraph initial position, while the majority of occurrences of *nevertheless* are in sentence initial (Bell 1994). The following example illustrates how *still* operates more globally and *nevertheless* more locally is taken from an interview with the actress, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, star of the TV-sitcom, "Seinfeld," which took place at Louis-Dreyfus's parents' home in the Washington, DC area.

(64) On the strength of her television success, Ms Louis-Dreyfus has received her first major film role, in "North," directed by Rob Reiner, which she describes as an adult fairy tale. (It is the film, parts of which are being shot in New Jersey, as well as visits with her mother and father, that brought her from Los Angeles.) **Still/?Nevertheless**, it is for "Seinfeld" and its wildly mundane brand of humor that she reserves most of her enthusiasm.

It is the parenthetic information about the location of the film and visits to her parents, which constitutes the immediate local discourse, which makes the use of *nevertheless* awkward here. The instruction in *nevertheless* to find a property of P that would normally exclude Q tends to direct the speaker first to the immediately prior or local discourse. And clearly it is difficult to find a property here which would normally exclude the possibility of Q. *Still*, on the other hand, instructs the hearer to focus on the persistence of Q in the face of an intervening and cancellative variable and so draws the attention to more global than local concerns.
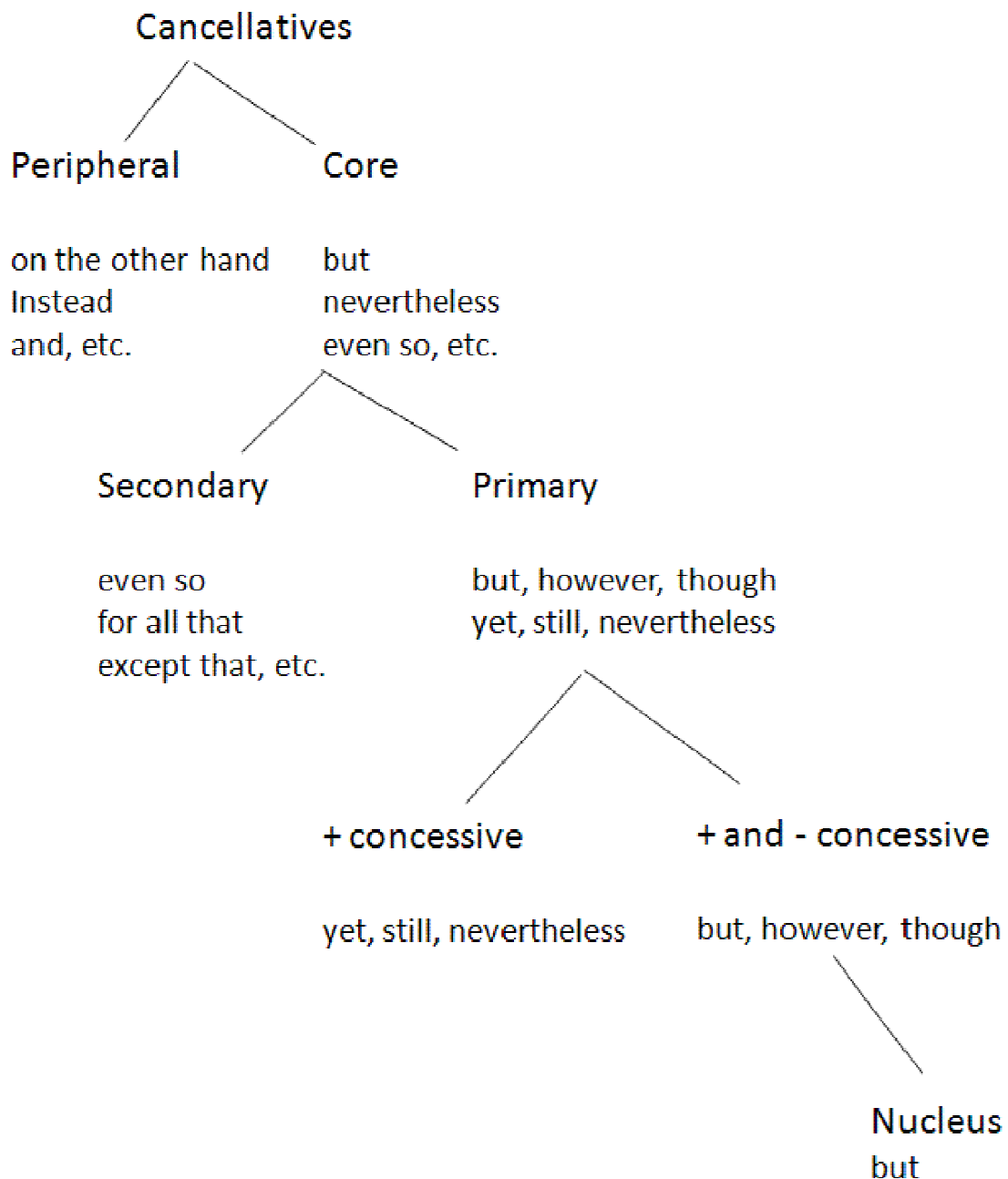
The primary core cancellatives, therefore, while sharing the same core instruction of cancellation, differ in the subtle ways in which they overlay the basic instruction with additional and unique features. The focus marking properties of *however* help specify the aspect of information to be canceled in P; the phonologically reduced and clitic-like properties of *though* help soften the dissonant effect of cancellation in interactional exchanges; *yet* and *still* suggest the speaker's point of view with regard to the cancellation; and, as in the case of *still* and *nevertheless*, markers may point more readily to the global and rhetorical aspects of cancellation and others to the more local and ideational aspects. In this way, we can begin to understand the conditions under which core cancellatives are interchangeable and those in which they are not. And we can begin to further appreciate how core cancellatives differ from peripheral cancellatives.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to counter three false assumptions which have been derived from the taxonomies of discourse markers of the kind found in Quirk et al. (1985) and Halliday and Hasan (1976): (i) multi-functional markers are polysemous; (ii) the categories used by these writers adequately describe the work these markers do; and (iii) members of the same functional class are interchangeable. By taking a core/periphery approach to one particular group of markers hitherto known as "contrastives: I hope to have shown that:

(i) Markers have a pragmatic core instruction which informs all of their instantiations. Where the interplay of core instruction, the semantic, syntactic and phonological properties

of a marker and context create instantiations which appear to be functioning in a different way to the core instruction, I have called these instantiations peripheral. So I have argued that so called "adversative" instantiations of markers like *and, on the other hand*, and *instead* are really peripheral to their core instructions.

Cancellatives

Peripheral

on the other hand
Instead
and, etc.

Core

but
nevertheless
even so, etc.

Secondary

even so
for all that
except that, etc.

Primary

but, however, though
yet, still, nevertheless

+ concessive

yet, still, nevertheless

+ and - concessive

but, however, though

Nucleus
but

(ii) I have argued that a better description of the work that markers such as *but*, *however* and *nevertheless*, etc., do is that of cancellation. I argued that cancellation better described the kind of work the hearer/analyst does by providing an instruction as to what aspect of information derivable from the prior discourse, P, either globally or locally is to be canceled by the current message Q. Further, I argued that the notion of cancellation provided a unified rather than dichotomous explanation of the work cancellative markers do by showing that cancellation could be understood to be operating on all aspects of the communication process. As such cancellation can be more readily understood as an important discourse tool in the construction and interpretation of communicative intent.

(iii) Finally, I have tried to show that a core/periphery approach to discourse markers forces a closer scrutiny of the semantic, syntactic and phonological properties of markers and how these properties interact with the pragmatic core instruction in a particular context to produce the subtle but critical differences between markers which share the same core instruction. By a series of distinctions - peripheral/core, primary/secondary core, [+ concessive] vs. [+ / - concessive], and finally nucleus - I began to illuminate the differences between cancellative markers. I further showed how cancellatives could be distinguished according to special features which allowed markers to operate globally or locally and with respect to the ideational, rhetorical and sequential aspects of communication, to suggest the speaker's deictic center with regard to discourse segments, to soften the dissonant effects of cancellation, and to provide focus marking clues as to the aspect of information to be canceled.

Clearly, it is hoped that the core/periphery approach I have taken here with regard to cancellative discourse markers can illuminate the study of other functional categories of markers.

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