

Affiliation in Adolescents' Use of Discourse Extenders

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1. Introduction

This discussion explores the use of discourse extenders, eg *and stuff* and *å så* 'and so', by adolescents to express affiliation in 'telling' (Cheshire 2000) episodes in interview contexts. Our understanding of discourse extenders extends earlier work (Winter & Norrby 2000) on the multifunctionality of the forms. The study draws upon research that has problematised the functions and meanings of set marking tags (Dines 1980; Stubbe & Holmes 1995), utterance final tags (Aijmer 1985), post noun hedges (Meyerhoff 1992), general extenders (Overstreet 1999), extension particles (Dubois 1992) or our preferred category, discourse extenders. The extracts presented in (1)-(4) below exemplify the discourse extenders from Australian English [AE] and Swedish speaking adolescents included in our analysis.

- (1)¹ Elise: I go out with my friends and stuff ... Just, I'm not into .. big 'club things, and [stuff] ...
- (2) James: Yeah, there's about four or five of us, you go to the same youth group and that ... and yeah we hang around at lunch ... time and that ... and talk and, yeah, that's basically all we do
- (3) Andrew: ... and ... that's good and he's good because you know we can talk to each other about stuff and that ... whereas other people you know, tell someone else or something ... So it's good to,
- (4) HK5 [jaa eller när man dricker te eller nånting
 X: ja @
 HK4: ja . mer [(x lite)
 HK3: [sitter hemma å läser tidningen å sånt liksom typ
 HK4: [ja
 HK5: [en sån kväll när man bara sitter hemma å gör ingenting
 X: mm
 HK4: ja men- @

¹ Transcription symbols

.	pause
underlined	discourse extender
[]	overlapping talk
»	used in overlaps to indicate that the speaker continues turn further down
/	rising intonation
@	laughter
x	inaudible word
HK4	speaker identification in Swedish data (H=school code; K=female, M=male)
:	speaker exchange

HK3:	de e ganska . intet . [sägande ändå
HK6:	[typ sitter . <u>å så</u>
Gloss:	
HK5:	[yeah or when you have tea <u>or something</u>
X:	yes @
HK4:	yes . more [(x a bit)
HK3:	[sitting at home reading the paper <u>and such</u> sort of like
HK4:	[yes
HK5:	[such an evening when you're just sitting at home doing nothing
X:	mm
HK4:	yes but- @
HK3:	it's quite . non (.) [descript anyway
HK6:	[like sitting . <u>and so</u>

The affiliative function of discourse extenders reflects their role in the negotiation of interpersonal meanings and identity discourse of self, peers and 'others' in adolescent talk. The adolescents use the extenders as a resource to affiliate with the interviewer, with present and absent peers and to the topic under discussion. The findings suggest that girls and boys access the discourse extenders in varying frequencies in terms of the type of extender, the interview topic and the gendered affiliations and alignments.

The discourse sequences of 'telling' have been identified as those in which the adolescents draw upon their own or others voices (Bahktin 1981). Adoption of the term 'telling' reflects the performative nature of talk, the central positioning of interviewee's experiences in interviews and the idea that affiliation is negotiated in the sequential organization of the interaction. In the next section we provide an overview of the frequencies of discourse extender use, their use as a resource by girls and boys and elaboration of the interview topic **Self and friends**. The subsequent section presents the analysis of the affiliation function of the discourse extenders. First we examine the 'illustration' and the 'extension' or 'more' (Overstreet 1999) discourse extender meanings in affiliative talk. Second, we examine the gendered social uses of discourse extenders and discourses of femininities and masculinities in affiliative practices by the girls and boys.

2. Discourse extenders in the study

The data comprise dyadic interviews with AE speaking adolescents and multi-party interviews with Swedish speaking adolescents (see Winter & Norrby 2000, Winter in press, Norrby 2000) for complete descriptions of the data and research methodologies). The consideration of the two data samples reflects the authors' collaboration on discourse extenders and the tellings of adolescents in our data and no attempt is made to undertake statistical comparative analysis of discourse extenders in AE or Swedish.

The data sets revealed a total of 577 discourse extenders in Swedish and 565 from the AE data. There are 44 different extender forms in the Swedish data and 57 in the AE data. Both data sets report higher frequencies of discourse extender use and proportional representation per thousand words of talk than those previously reported (Aijmer 1985; Dines 1980; Overstreet 1999; Stubbe & Holmes 1995). The data sets included in the current study differ from earlier studies in our exclusive inclusion of adolescents. The 3 most frequently occurring extenders, in each data set, discussed in this paper are presented in Table 1:

Table 1: The most frequently occurring discourse extenders in the Australian English and Swedish data.

Discourse extender	Frequency	% of total discourse extenders
Australian English		
Or something	99	17.6%
And stuff	80	14.2%
And that	47	8.3%
Total	226	40.1%
Swedish		
å så 'and so'	150	25.9%
eller nånting/eller nåt 'or something'	102	17.6%
å sånt 'and such'	72	12.5%
Total	324	56.2%

Table 1 shows that the three most frequent forms in Swedish *å så*, *eller nånting/eller nåt* and *å sånt* account for 56% of the total and *or something*, *and stuff* and *and that* account for 226 tokens or 40% of the total discourse extenders in the AE data.

2. Topics in the interview data and discourse extenders

The discourse extenders featured in the topic **self and friends** in both data sets. In the AE data this topic could be linked to specific questions included in the interview protocol, eg 'Can you tell me what you do after school' as well as emerging through extended tellings on other topics. In the Swedish interviews, collected as part of a project focussing on adolescents and music, the topic **Self and friends** could not be linked to specific interview questions but the adolescents engaged in this topic in their interviews.

The selection of the topic based around **self and friends** also facilitates the exploration of the discourse construction around issues that have been documented as relevant for adolescence (Eckert 2000; Eriksson 1997). The talk invoked issues such as self-image and representation to peers, the normative roles and influences of peer groups and the imperative to distinguish self from others in construction of identity discourses.

3. Girls and Boys using discourse extenders

The focus on the tellings in the interviews facilitates an examination of adolescents resourcing discourse extenders and their construction of discourses of gender, and other, identities (Bucholtz et al. 1999). The adolescents incorporate different ways of accessing similar resources (Cheshire 2000) in their tellings. In particular, given the matching of sex for the interview participants, ie all female and all male interview contexts, adolescents construct gender (dis)affiliations through their discourse extender use. Table 2 presents a profile of the users of extenders in terms of their gender:

Table 2: The frequency of discourse extenders in AE and Swedish interview data.

		Number	%
Australian English	Girls	127	56.2
	Boys	99	43.8
Swedish	Girls	202	62.3
	Boys	122	37.7

The findings presented in Table 2 reflect negligible differences for AE speaking adolescents with a more substantial difference reported for Swedish. However, if the frequency counts are reconsidered in light of the difference in contribution to the total Swedish interview talk time, (girls account for nearly 66% of the total word count) the differences between the girls and boys are slight. Thus as a discourse resource, it appears that girls and boys in the interview contexts access the most frequently occurring discourse extenders at more or less equal rates.

Table 3 below presents the proportional use of the most frequently occurring discourse extenders in the boys' and girls' talk in the interviews:

Table 3: The % use of the most frequently occurring discourse extenders in the AE and Swedish data.

Discourse extender	Girls	Boys
Australian English		
Or something	42%	58%
And stuff	65%	35%
And that	36%	64%
Total		
Swedish		
å så 'and so'	69%	31%
Eller nånting/eller nåt 'or something'	46%	54%
å sånt 'and such'	71%	38%
Total		

Despite the finding presented earlier that girls and boys access discourse extenders as resources in closely matching proportions within the interview talk, the results presented in Table 3 show that they appear to be differentiating about which discourse extender they use. For example in the AE data there is less difference in the use of *or something* than in the girls and boys access to *and stuff* and *and that*. It appears that the use of the discourse extenders in the expression of (dis)affiliation and the construction of gender emerges as a relevant focus for the AE speaking adolescents. In the Swedish data the girls are more frequent users of *å så* and *å sånt* while the boys access the form *eller nåt/nånting* more frequently (this finding takes on even greater significance if their smaller total talk time is considered).

4. Affiliation and self and friends

The topic of **self and friends** reveals a prevalent use of discourse extenders in which adolescents display their affiliation to the activities and experiences of everyday life that construct the identity of the speaker and her/his representation of image and 'lifestyle'. They perform affiliations to other peers, absent or present, who have critical knowledge about meanings of 'lifestyle' or speaker image as well as gendered constructions of identities. The affiliations include reference to gendered participation in sites of relevance such as 'clubs' and the activity of 'clubbing' as well as reflecting the girls' interactive affiliation to others present in the interviews. The adolescents use discourse extenders in their talk to show their affiliations through illustration meanings to ensure that interaction and group participation is facilitated and to extend the scope of the telling through meanings of 'more' (4./1) and to express and construct gendered subjectivities (4./2).

4.1 Discourse extenders for affiliation to the interaction

'Illustrative' and 'extension' comprise the two major meanings of the discourse extenders involved in the construction of interactive affiliation. The illustrative discourse meaning is closely linked to the original set-referential meaning (eg Dines 1980) in that it allows for 'one

possibility of many possibilities' in the sequential talk. However, the discourse meaning is not limited to the referential function. Its role in adolescent talk is to allow for a negotiation of other possibilities and the discourse extender serves to mitigate or hedge the strength of the possibility.

In example (4), presented in the introduction, the girls use a sequence of discourse extenders in their construction of a possible scenario for adolescent activity associated with a particular type of music. The scenario emerges through the telling with multiple contributions (also see (5) and (6)) from the participants that provide the scaffolding for the scenario. (HK5) suggests that she (and by implication her friends) might listen to this when *dricker te* 'drinking tea'. The extender *eller nånting* 'or something' marks the activity as an illustration or a possibility and is taken up by one of her co-participants when she further remarks:

- (5) HK4: när man sitter hemma nära styckna å så ee . bara . eller typ café eller nånting .
 HK4: when you're sitting at home a couple of people and like just . are . or like café or something .

The discourse extender facilitates additional co-construction of the 'typical' setting for the scenario being elaborated and hedges the illustrations of *hemma* 'at home' and *café* 'café'. The illustrative meaning of *eller nånting* and its pragmatic mitigation continues to be accessed in the scenario co-construction when HK4 moves from the hypothetical scene in (5) to the construction of a reality for herself:

- (6) HK4: skulle jag sätta på den sjäälv får man ju va på humör typ . lagar mat eller nåt
 HK4: if I was going to turn it on myself you'd have to be in the mood like . cooking or something

The discourse extender *eller nåt* facilitates the group collaboration in the construction of the scenario through a series of 'illustrations' marked by discourse extenders. The multiple repetitions of the discourse extenders establish and maintain affiliation (of interaction, participation, topic) in light of the assurances of the hedging pragmatics of the form. The interpretation is also relevant for extract (3) presented earlier in the paper. In (3) Andrew illustrates the identification of others, ie *someone else*, to hedge the strength of the implied limitations of people he has access to in contrast to his friend in whom he is able to confide. Interestingly, the proportional representation of *or something* in **Self and friends** topic in the Australian English data is far lower (18%) than the other two discourse extenders – *and stuff*, *and that*. Likewise, the access by Swedish boys to *eller nåt* is limited in the topic of **self and friends** and is far more prevalent in the illustrative function when they are engaged in the performance of knowledge and expertise in the interaction (4./2).

'Extension' or 'more' meanings are the second of the major meanings for the discourse extenders in performing affiliation. In examples (1) and (2), in the introduction, speakers access *and stuff* and *and that* as a means of extending the topic and the activities or events mentioned. *Clubbing* and *lunch times* are not illustrations of possibilities rather they are specific activities. The adolescents are orienting to the interactive responsibilities of providing complete or detailed answers and affiliating to the interviewer to recognise the construction of the 'more' meanings for the forms. The discourse extender allows for the talk to continue. However, as discussed in the next section the adolescent construction of clubbing carries additional gendered constructions about identity. The talk draws upon the affiliation established in the interview to encourage the interviewer to recognise and understand the implications for self-image and representation of adolescents who do and those who don't *go to big clubs*. The discourse extender signals affiliation and inclusion for unpacking the 'more' meanings for *and stuff* and *and that*. In examples (7) and (8) the speakers access *and stuff* and *and that* with the more or extension meanings:

- (7) Carol: about what we do and stuff/

- (8) Larry: Um . special tools I get from a mate's go-kart centre/ .. and um .. I just use tools .. I just keep meself and just borrow sanders and that ... from other people/

Carol and Larry access the 'more' type discourse extenders to show affiliation with the interviewers to understand the extenders meanings of what (friends) *do* and the sharing arrangements for boys who renovate *go-karts* and need *tools*. Friends are sources of sharing and *and stuff* and *and that* allow for affiliations to appreciate and recognise the extension of the meanings for unexpressed content.

In the Swedish data the extender *å så* also appears to function to extend the application of the activities and experiences mentioned by the speaker (see (4)). In (9) the speaker extends the activity 'listens to music' by *å så*, to also include other possibilities within this activity, at the same time signalling that she believes that her interlocutor will understand what she means.

- (9) MK4: de e ingen mer i min familj än jag som lyssnar på musik å så mamma blir bara distraherad
 MK4: there's nobody else in my family than me who listens to music and so mum just gets distracted

MK4 signals the added identity meanings about her family members and their non-participation in the activity of listening to music and her affiliation with the co-participants to understand the implications for her own self representation and the image of her family members. It is clear from the extracts analysed above and the references to gendered access to particular types of discourse extenders that the affiliative function include constructions of gendered social practices and identity meanings.

4.2 Gendered affiliations through discourse extender use

The discussion of the gender affiliations constructed in the use of discourse extenders in this paper focuses on the signalling of affiliation and the interactive contexts for constructions of femininity and masculinity. Recalling the extracts presented in the introduction to this paper the extender *and stuff* suggests that activities, eg *clubbing* events, *dance parties* and places eg. *club things* index relevant general categories for the girls' lives and experiences. The discourse extender carries meanings that are less about illustrations of similar places, events or activities and more to do with the associations for those indexed categories. Such associations extend to the implied identity profiles for the speakers. The places, events and activities associated with dancing and dance parties construct Bianca as a carefree, happy, social girl while Elise (see (1)) distances herself and her friends from constructions of girl identities that attend *big clubs*.

- (10) Bianca: um . no, not really . no, not that I can think of . I like t' I like dancing and stuff ... I like partying ... dance parties and stuff ...

As discussed in the previous section, *and stuff* and its generalised or extended meanings of identity associations are the focus of the tellings. They suggest that the interviewer is able to access and share in the additional implications of the places *and stuff*. *And stuff* reflects some recognition of shared responsibility in the interview between the participants to understand the associated generalised meanings included in the self and friends' activities and places. Girls are aligning their participation in their immediate world and the wider contexts of youth culture as well as using the marker to show an alliance with the interviewer. Such alignments were also evident in the analysis of the co-construction in examples (4), (5) and (6) in which the girls negotiate shared activities of activities through illustration strategies for *eller nåt* 'or

something'. Example (11) below presents some boys negotiating affiliation and their uses of *eller nåt*.

- (11) BM3: eh de finns liksom ingenting bättre om man liksom den här s-sortens musik sitter framför den öppna spisen eller nånting va . de e heelt suveränt asså . hh (såhär) somnar jag me en gang @
 BM2: @jaha@ de e ju de du (ba) somnar av de jag tycker de asså e som e bara
 BM3: me- men man somnar int- fö- inte för att de e tråkigt [. utan
 BM2: [näna
 BM3: för att de e så jävla skönt egentlien
- Gloss BM3: eh there is like nothing better than if you sort of this s-sort of music sitting in front of the fireplace or something eh . it is totally awesome you know . hh (like this) I fall asleep right away @
 BM2: @ah yeah@ it is you know that you (just) fall asleep from it I think it you know is what is just
 BM3: bu- but you fall asleep not- be- not because it's boring [. but»
 BM2: [näna
 BM3: »because it's so bloody wonderful really

The boys resource the discourse extender in an illustrative function to suggest possibilities of usual practice. However, the interactive sequence is not the co-construction of scenarios of shared possibility but part of the negotiation of agreement or consensus about *somnar* 'sleeping' in the context of listening to a particular type of music. Thus the possibility for authority is opened up for group affiliation and discussion rather than the co-participation as argued for in the girls' talk. The gendered social practices of use are located in the affiliations of the discourse extender in the interaction.

An additional gendered affiliation is clearly identified in the use of the more or extended affiliative meanings of the discourse extenders. Girls appear to make greater use of the 'more' or extended meanings to show shared and inclusive participation by all interactants in the interviews. An additional complication rests with the gender differences in accessing *and stuff* and *and that*. Earlier, discussion identified the girls' and boys alignments in their uses of the forms. Boys are the dominant users of *and that* a form previously documented as stigmatised and restricted to working class speakers (Dines 1980). They account for the greatest proportion of *and that* from all types of socio-economic background and school type and certainly no 'middle-class' girls access this particular form. So it appears that while the group of users are no longer restricted to working class speakers, the form does appear to carry an avoidance usage for most of the girls, particularly those users of *and stuff*. This discrepancy suggests some meanings of masculinity may be contained within the *and that* discourse extender. We speculate that *and that* is found in boys' tellings that include 'risky' discourse sequences, eg. self-revelation or heterosexual norms (see (3) and (8) above). The interviewees align with emerging constructions of Australia masculine reticent heroes. The interpretation of boys' and girls' access to *and* based discourse extenders in order to affiliate with the interactional function of 'more' needs supplementing to consider the gendered social practices in **self and friends** talk.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the discourse extenders presented in this article has highlighted the affiliative meanings of discourse extenders through their illustrative and extension functions. These functions construct the organization of the interaction and the participation by the adolescents in the interviews. In addition, the gendered affiliations are found in the performances of telling and discourse extender use as well as in the gender preferential practices for the use of certain extenders. The analysis of the discourse extenders reveals affiliative meanings for the participants in the interviews, their self presentation and wider adolescent norms as well as the

negotiation of topical structure and negotiation strategies for representing and co-constructing realities.

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