

'Also' as a discourse marker: its use in disjunctive and disaffiliative environments



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ABSTRACT The aim of this article is to demonstrate the intricate operation of the adverb 'also' in actual interaction at a level of detail that dictionary definitions have failed to capture. Using primarily a conversation analytic framework in examining two data corpora, which include a series of graduate seminar discussions and television roundtable discussions, I argue that the semantic features of 'also' are strategically deployed to accomplish complex interactional goals in a disjunctive or disaffiliative environment. In a disjunctive environment, 'also' can be invoked to legitimize one's speaking rights – to get the floor. In a disaffiliative environment, 'also' can be mobilized to either soften or strengthen a disaffiliative action in subsequent talk. These practices of 'also' are accounted for in part by the tensions between coherence and continuation (Linell, 1998; Tracy and Moran, 1983), and in part by the institutional contexts of news media (Dickerson, 2001; Greatbatch, 1992) and graduate seminar (Waring, 2001, 2002 a, b).

KEY WORDS: *coherence, conversation analysis, discourse marker, disagreement, topic management*

The past 15 years or so have witnessed the burgeoning of a rich array of investigations into the complex nature of discourse markers (e.g. Condon, 2001; Craig and Sanusi, 2000; Erman, 2001; Fraser, 1990; Kleiner, 1998; Lenk, 1998; Maschler, 2002; Oversteegen, 1997; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 2001). Schiffrin (2001) provides a useful summary of three perspectives on discourse markers: (1) Halliday and Hasan's (1976) systemic functional approach which looks at the cohesive function of discourse markers; (2) Schiffrin's (1987) interactional sociolinguistic approach in which markers serve to connect utterances on the multiple planes of participation framework, information state, ideational structure, action structure, and exchange structure; (3) Fraser's (1990) pragmatic approach in which the role of markers is to convey the speaker's communicative

intentions or dictate the interpretation of the message conveyed. (For a detailed account of these three perspectives, see Schiffrin, 2001.) Schiffrin's (2001) also calls attention to the lack of coherence and consistency among the studies of discourse markers. A range of labels have been given to words such as 'and', 'okay' and 'oh'. More importantly, scholars have not always agreed upon, as evidenced in the variety of definitions, what counts as a discourse marker. Schiffrin (1987: 31), for example, defines discourse markers as 'sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk', and these markers serve to connect utterances on the aforementioned planes. Maschler (2002: 2) employs a semantic (metalingual) as well as a structural (intonation unit initial) criterion in her definition of discourse markers, claiming that 'markers are used to negotiate frame shifts or changes in footing' (2002: 19). Four categories of discourse markers result from this definition: interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive. The main aim of this article, however, is not to sort out the various perspectives on and definitions of discourse markers. I use 'discourse marker' loosely as a cover term for those words or expressions that rise above their semantic/referential meanings to take on complex interactional duties or so-called 'discourse meanings'. I am interested in the exact interactional tasks they accomplish in actual talk, regardless of the theoretical categories they might belong to as markers.

Most discourse markers that have received in-depth analysis to date belong to a fairly limited set of conjunctions (e.g. 'and', 'but'), particles (e.g. 'well', 'okay', 'whatever') or lexicalized clauses (e.g. 'you know', 'I mean', 'I'm just saying'). Although Stubbs (1983: 77) points out that adverbs are 'of great interest in the study of discourse sequences', serious attempts at uncovering the discourse functions of adverbs have been rare (see 'now' and 'then' in Schiffrin, 1987; 'just', 'only' and 'never' in Beebe and Waring, forthcoming).

Using primarily a conversation analytic approach, which, to my knowledge, has not typically been applied to the study of discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1987) so far (see Heritage and Sorjonen's (1994) study on 'and' for an exception), this article specifically tackles the adverb 'also' as a previously unexamined discourse marker. As Antaki (2002: 5) aptly writes, 'One of the liberating things CA has done is to show us that common sense or bookish descriptions of words (like "adjectives" and "evaluations") are not only unspecific about what words do in interaction, but sometimes wholly misleading.' The aim of this article is, then, to demonstrate the intricate operation of 'also' in actual interaction at a level of detail that both common sense and bookish descriptions have failed to capture. It might be argued that the analysis undertaken here is not strictly a conversation analytic one. Indeed, besides adhering to a CA focus upon sequential analysis and participants' orientation, my discussion of data relies on a range of resources from interactional sociolinguistic and other discourse analytic research outside the realm of CA.

The actual interaction dealt with in this article pertains specifically to the institutional contexts of graduate seminar and television forum, where the central activity concerns the exchange of ideas or pursuit of positions. The primary

data set contains five sessions of a graduate seminar in which discussions center around second language reading and literacy. The supplementary data set includes seven sessions of roundtable discussions on current affairs from the Sunday morning show *This Week* on ABC.

According to *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (Costello et al., 1995), 'also' has the following two meanings: (1) in addition; too; besides (e.g. 'He's young, and he's also brilliant.');

and (2) likewise; in the same manner (e.g. 'Since you're having another cup of coffee, I'll have one also.'). The first meaning 'in addition', 'too' or 'besides' ('additive' henceforth) involves some sort of listing, and the features being enumerated are bound by a common topic. In 'He's young, and he's also brilliant', for example, one is counting the qualities of a man – the common topic. The second meaning 'likewise' underscores similarities of some sort. In 'Since you are having another cup of coffee, I'll have one also', it is the identical act of 'having another cup of coffee' that warrants the use of 'also'.

Both meanings can be observed in actual interaction doing listing or showing similarities, in which cases the interactional functions of 'also' match its semantic meanings. Those cases do not constitute the central concern of this article. I focus, instead, on such cases where the semantic features of 'also' (i.e. 'additive' and 'likewise') are strategically deployed to accomplish different interactional goals in either a disjunctive or a disaffiliative environment. First, in an environment where what the current speaker is saying is disjunctive to prior talk, the 'additive' meaning of 'also' can be invoked to legitimize one's speaking rights – to get the floor. Second, in an environment where what the current speaker is saying is disaffiliative with prior talk, the 'additive' meaning of 'also' can be invoked to strengthen a disagreement in subsequent talk. And alternatively in some cases, both the 'additive' and 'likewise' meanings can be invoked to soften a disagreement.

'Also' in a disjunctive environment

Although the semantic meaning of 'additive' inherently claims coherence to preceding talk by virtue of a common topic, sometimes the point that 'also' proclaims to 'add' does not turn out to be substantively relevant to what the prior speaker has said, that is, it is disjunctive to prior talk. The excerpt below is drawn from a session from the graduate seminar data. Prior to the session, the professor has assigned a common reading and given each student a task to complete along with reading the article. The following discussion revolves around the professor's question of whether everyone went into the task thinking there might be multiple main points. Kelly answers yes, and she went on to account for her answer as follows:

[1]

1 Kelly: =Well I was relieved actually I've never really thought

- 2 about the topic, and I kne:w there was sorta one out there.
 3 but as I mentioned before having this sort of (.)
 4 unconscious fear when someone asked me to summarize
 5 the main point, I was like- you know putting it on paper
 6 was a horrifying id↑ea.=
 7 Prof: =Commitment. hah?=
 8 Kelly: =ye:ah! It's a commitment
 9 (.)
 10 that has a right or wro:ng to me. An:d (.) I didn't want to be
 11 wr(hh)ho:ng an:d uh
 12 (1.2)
 13 Tamar: → °It's also a different () of maybe reading
 14 ()° which depends on our task. My task, for example, f- f-
 15 find five concepts, it didn't even say main concepts.
 16 ((continues to end of turn))

Kelly's point is that the notion of one article carrying multiple main points in fact puts her at ease because the burden of finding the right answer is lifted. Following Kelly, Tamar states, with the use of 'also', that her task does not have anything to do with 'main point'. What Tamar says neither adds to nor shows similarity with what Kelly said earlier. Tracy (1984) identifies two ways of establishing coherence. One can either extend the 'issue' or point in prior talk, which contributes to global coherence. Or, one can extend the 'event', using some specific detail in prior talk as a trigger, which contributes to local coherence. Coming back to our data extract then, Tamar's remark of 'It's also a different () of maybe reading . . . ' extends neither the issue (i.e. the thought of one article carrying multiple main points being a source of relief) nor the event (e.g. Kelly's description of her anxiety) of Kelly's turn. It is, therefore, disjunctive to Kelly's prior talk.

The disjunction is also observable from the perspective of sequence organization. Besides accounting for her affirmative answer to the professor's question, Kelly's turn (lines 8–11) is also hearable as doing trouble-telling (Jefferson, 1984) as she describes her fear of being 'wrong'. The first appearance of 'wrong' (line 10) contains an elongated vowel, and its second appearance (line 11) is juxtaposed with another sound stretch as well as some laugh tokens. This slightly exaggerated manner of telling makes it sound as if Kelly were mocking herself for her own insecurity (see teasing in Drew, 1987). It may be argued that Kelly's turn is constructed as a combination of trouble-telling and self-deprecation, both of which carry sequential implications of what constitutes the appropriate next turn. Jefferson (1984), for example, shows that co-participants typically orient to getting out of trouble talk by turning to closing the conversation or starting a new topic. And according to Pomerantz (1984), the preferred responses to self-deprecation are disagreements. Thus, the (1.2) second of gap subsequent to Kelly's self-mocking turn can be interpreted, in the context of trouble-telling, as the trouble-recipient's incipient attempt to get out of the trouble talk. It can also be interpreted, in the context of self-deprecation, as the absence of disagreement from co-participants. But as shown in Tamar's turn design (line 13), it appears to

be the first trajectory – that of getting out of the trouble talk – that eventually materializes. The soft tone in which Tamar's turn is initially delivered subsequent to the (line 1.2) second gap, may further indicate Tamar's orientation towards treating her 'also'-bearing turn as a topical disjunct – something to be downplayed.

However, there is yet another way to characterize the exact nature of Tamar's topically disjunctive turn. Although what Tamar says does not link to the immediately prior turn, it does to the 'prior prior'. It responds to the professor's question prior to the excerpt: 'Did everyone go into the task assuming the existence of multiple points?' In pointing out that her specific task does not pertain to 'main point', Tamar questions the premise of the professor's original query. Kelly's talk about her fear of 'one main point' can in fact be construed as a digression since this account drifts away from the question of whether she went into the task assuming multiple points, and Tamar's 'also'-bearing turn marks the return to the original topic. This sort of linking, which indicates 'relationships to the segments of the discourse such as earlier topics, the topic before a digression . . .' is believed to signal global coherence (Lenk, 1998: 247).¹ Meanwhile, Tamar's talk also complements Kelly's ('yes + account') in responding to the professor's query, as if she were responding to a 'super-topic' (Korolijia and Linell, 1996: 809). By using 'also', Tamar marks her talk as a co-response (see 'structural coordination' in Schiffrin, 1987) to the professor's question, one that does not necessarily bear any thematic connection to its fellow responses. What we have here, then, might be a semantically disjunctive relationship that is structurally complementary.

This relationship could be what 'also' is precisely signaling: it appears to set off the co-participants' as well as analysts' search for a structural coherence that is momentarily invisible in a predominantly disjunctive local environment. It brings to the foreground a globally additive relationship that is temporarily buried underneath the locally palpable turn-by-turn semantic disjunction. In so doing, Tamar is able to fit in her independent response to the professor's question without completely relinquishing her grip on doing topical talk. One final note: the analysis of Tamar's turn as responding to a super-topic is consistent with my earlier analysis of it being designed to get out of trouble talk, responding to a super-topic being one way to initiate a new episode (Korolijia and Linell, 1996: 809).

Let us now turn to another data extract and see how the above analysis is borne out. The issue concerns the problem of university-level immigrant students not being able to perform at the university level, despite the large amount of comprehensible input they have received throughout the American public school system. To account for the problem, Tamar suggests that the input they received in the public school is not necessarily target language input, given the high percentage of immigrant population. The professor then cites the author Scarcella as saying that it is also not standard language input since peer input played an important role. Both argue that the input is somewhat 'defective'.

What Tamar proceeds to add to the discussion with the word 'also' in line 7 is the notion that input does not always become intake:

[2]

- 1 Tamar: Well it's not enough input in English then.
 2 Prof: Well she she claims too that a lot of their input was peer
 3 input and and that in many cases was not standard uh
 4 language input.
 5 Libby: S- they speak a different variety.
 6 Prof: Yeah.
 7 Tamar: → and also if you look at input (with also) intake, you have to
 8 um then there's some something saying about uh you have
 9 to perceive
 10 >forget the [exact phrase.<

Tamar proposes her talk in line 7 as a third account for the discrepancy between input and performance among immigrant university students. Note, however, that the input/intake distinction, which constitutes Tamar's account, does not pose a problem for immigrant students only, but for all language learners. In principle, then, it only marginally addresses the issue under discussion, and thus emerges as a disjunctive item in the ongoing listing of accounts. The additive use of 'also' in this local environment is not warranted. Is 'also' then used to invoke a structurally complementary relationship in responding to a super-topic as it was in the prior excerpt?

This possibility does not seem to obtain perfectly, either. Recall that the so-called super-topic in this case is the puzzle of immigrant university students' poor language performance despite sufficient input. The most that can be said here is that Tamar's talk does address a larger, *unstated* topic regarding the disparity between poor performance and sufficient input – one that potentially supersedes the actual super-topic of the disparity between poor performance and sufficient input *among immigrant students at the university level*. But perhaps it is precisely the use of 'also' that directs our attention to the possible existence of this potential super-topic that might subsume Tamar's turn at talk. It fuels the expectation that some type of coherence is somewhere to be found, and creates the impression that the speaker is staying on topic despite the topical disjunct. This particular use of 'also', which accounts for the prior excerpt as well, provides evidence for Linell's (1998: 187) claim that 'conversationalists take pains to make their discourse coherent in at least a perfunctory way', referring to the transition used to connect two adjacent episodes of virtually no semantic connection as 'pro forma transition' (Linell, 1998: 197–8).

In both cases above, 'also' is used to introduce some type of independent contribution to add onto others' responses to a discussion question. This contribution happens to be ill-fitted (disjunctive) to the locally unfolding line of talk, yet warrants voicing. For Tamar in the immediately preceding excerpt, in particular, the notion of 'input' in prior talk provides a window of opportunity for her to

display her knowledge of the classic SLA (second language acquisition) distinction between input and intake, even though such knowledge display might interfere with her other interactional duty of staying topically coherent. The fact that prior talk has offered a springboard for Tamar's input vs. intake argument may provide for her use of 'and also' instead of the solo 'also' to project an even tighter link, albeit in a pro forma manner, to the immediately prior sequence. It seems that with 'also', Tamar is able to accomplish her knowledge display without overtly violating the maintenance of topical talk. In short, by invoking an actual or potential super-topic which might support some type of structural coherence on a global level, 'also' claims, without showing, or at least without immediately showing, topical coherence. It is a device that accomplishes the sort of 'pro forma transition' Linell (1998) refers to.

My final exemplar in this section might be considered a deviant case, which does not appear to fit into the account established so far. Libby's turn that begins the excerpt is formulated as a response to Tamar's question of whether ESL students in a specific discipline should be given reading materials within the discipline:

[3]

- 1 Libby: ((lines omitted))I- I once had this experience where I saw
 2 (.) it was academese and then simplified language. and
 3 everybody said oh- an-and the articles of the academese (.)
 4 was more difficult the simplified language was easier. I
 5 found the academese (.) >totally easier to read and the
 6 simplified language I couldn't figure out what they were
 7 talking about.hhh< cause sometimes it's missing
 8 connectors,.hhh so (.) in fact for a very specialized
 9 audience, they do better within their genre.
 10 (.)
 11 than when stuff is (.) rewritten for them.
 12 (0.9)
 13 → but- but was your question also (.) whether (.) we need to
 14 give (.) ESL students in English for Specific purposes a
 15 general language background as opposed to a specific
 16 language background?=
 17 Tamar: =Yeah. no should we design them as specific uh uh
 18 program at all, or should everybody () just be taking um
 19 gen-general u:h English.
 20 (0.1)
 21 Libby: °Okay.°
 22 Ellen: If you have a group of students they're all going towards
 23 the common go:al, (.) it makes: (.) sense but (.) I think-
 24 (3.0)

Libby's elaborate account details how a specialized audience would find an original text easier than a simplified version. What Libby does then is not answer Tamar's question per se. Rather, she uses the idea of the type of material in

relation to its audience as a springboard. Libby's central claim concerns the readability of an *original text versus a simplified version* for a specialized audience; whereas Tamar questions the applicability of *specialized vs. general materials* to ESL students within a specific discipline. The disjunction can be sequentially observed in the (0.9) second no-uptake gap of silence as well as the cut off 'but-' in line 13. What Libby is now faced with is the task of exiting the somewhat off-topic comment and returning to Tamar's original question – an optimal environment for using a word such as 'anyway' (Sacks, 1992, vol. 2: 567–8; Schegloff, 1984: 38) or 'however' (Lenk, 1998), which has been noted to mark the end of digression or indicate 'what it precedes is fitted not to the immediately preceding, but to what preceded that' (Schegloff, 1984: 38).

What Libby actually uses to reintroduce, reconnect, or return to what she believes to be Tamar's original question, nevertheless, is neither 'anyway' nor 'however', but 'but . . . also' (line 13). Drawing upon the 'additive' connotation of 'also' (i.e. 'was your question also . . .') by way of attributing a wider scope to Tamar's original question, she manages to frame what she has just said as, not digressive, but having partially satisfied Tamar's query. In so doing, she legitimizes her off-target response as well as her speaking rights that brought off that somewhat off-topic account.

On the surface, a couple of discrepancies exist between this excerpt and the earlier two. First, unlike those in the previous excerpts, the 'also'-bearing turn does not constitute a disjunctive co-response to some actual or potential super-topic. Instead, it is preceded by one's own disjunctive talk. In other words, it is used not to introduce, but to exit disjunctive talk. Second, in the first two excerpts, the disjunction is located across turns, whereas in the third excerpt, we observe a disjunction around a transition-relevance place within a turn. Yet, at a deeper level, 'also' performs a similar function of giving a somewhat disjunctive response a sort of pro forma legitimacy. Again, the use of 'also' makes it possible for Libby to bring in her independent contribution while maintaining the appearance of staying on topic.

A more generalized account for what I call 'disjunctive also' might be, then, that 'also' is used to legitimize one's speaking rights – to get the floor even when what one has to say is not immediately relevant (as in the first two excerpts) or relevant at all (as in the third excerpt) to the prior turn. Tracy and Moran (1983: 120) speak of the tension between 'be attentive' and 'introduce a new topic' in building coherence (see 'interlocutors' attempts at both maintaining and renewing topics' in Linell, 1998: 201). 'Also' appears to be an interactional resource designed precisely to strike a balance between the two. Using 'also', co-participants are able to contribute new elements to the discussion – elements often more reflective of their own experience and knowledge than relevant to the topic of the moment – while maintaining the appearance of coherence and being attentive.²

'Also' in a disaffiliative environment

In the previous section, I have shown that the additive feature of 'also' can be activated to function in a disjunctive environment to achieve the appearance of coherence, and accordingly, to legitimize one's speaking rights. I now turn to the use of 'also' in a disaffiliative environment, where the 'also'-bearing turn disaffiliates with preceding talk, and show how the semantic properties of 'also' contribute to its interactional functions in such an environment. In particular, I hope to convince the reader that (1) the 'additive' meaning of 'also' can be invoked to undermine another's argument and strengthen one's own, and in some cases, and (2) both the 'additive' and the 'likewise' meanings of 'also' can serve to mitigate disaffiliative talk. The occurrence of 'also' in a disaffiliative environment is perhaps intuitively appealing in light of its common co-occurrence with 'but' and the phrase 'not only . . . but also . . .'.

The excerpt below is taken from a discussion on a second language reader's decoding process. For a child learning to read in a first language, s/he often already knows what 'bread' means before s/he learns to read the word 'bread' in print. The question is whether such access to meaning is available to second language readers as *they* were learning to read. Prior to the excerpt, the professor said that 'the meaning isn't there yet' for a second language reader, while Libby pointed out that sometime it is, alluding to the case of cognates (e.g. 'professor' in English and 'profesor' in Spanish). At the beginning of the excerpt, the professor accepts Libby's point with a modification:

[4]

- | | | |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Prof: | (Sometimes (.) |
| 2 | | Okay, someti:mes (.) it <u>could</u> be, but it <u>maybe</u> there're in |
| 3 | | differing degree. depending on the word. °okay?° |
| 4 | | (0.2) |
| 5 | Kelly: | → .hhh but they said <u>also</u> that you don't necessarily see it |
| 6 | | like- like the instruction and instrucción? in Spanish? |
| 7 | Libby: | I- [I °doubt I have to go back 'n' look at them°= |
| 8 | Kelly: | [When you <u>read</u> it, |

What Kelly proposes at the arrowed turn is that even in the case of cognates, where one would think, as does Libby, the meaning of the word can be available to a second language reader, there is no guarantee that the reader will indeed *recognize* the cognate. This proposal potentially impairs Libby's theory, nor does it align with the professor's concession that the availability of meaning varies by the word. Not surprisingly, Libby receipts Kelly's turn somewhat defensively by arguing that her experience with Spanish learners indicates the contrary. As Kothroff (1993) points out, once opposing positions are established, disagreement becomes preferred. In this case, Libby's undelayed counter-argument perhaps retroactively bears testimony to the disaffiliative move initiated by Kelly. In fact, Kelly's turn is designed in a dispreferred format from its onset. In line 8, the

(0.2) second slight delay coupled with the in-breath signals that a delicate matter is underway (Lerner, 2001). Once the contrastive orientation is established by 'but' (Schiffrin, 1987), Kelly does not go directly into the argument that the reader might fail to recognize the cognate. Instead, she prefaces her point with 'they said', thereby aligning herself as the mere 'animator', not the 'author' nor the 'principal' (Goffman, 1981) of the upcoming counter-point.

The question is, what is 'also' doing in this disaffiliative environment, where invoking the meaning of 'likewise' is clearly not warranted? There is a possibility that Kelly is merely adding onto the discussion so far – doing some sort of listing. This act of listing, however, is not an innocuous one. Note that paralinguistically, a stress is placed upon the word 'also'. It appears as if with the use of 'also', a point were being made. In particular, by claiming an additive link to prior talk, the stressed 'also' may be used to emphasize that there exists another side to the 'cognate' story – a side that Libby has failed to consider but Kelly sees. Thus, 'also' is used to strengthen a disagreement. In particular, Kelly's use of 'also' appears to be in accordance with graduate students' attempts at asserting their intellectual competence (Tracy, 1997; Waring, 2001, 2002a).

Let us consider an example from the roundtable discussion on ABC's *This Week*, where 'also' occurs without the explicitly contrastive marker 'but'. The discussants are Sam Donaldson, the co-anchor, and three commentators: George Will, George Stephanopolous, and Linda Douglas from ABC News. The California Governor had issued a warning that the four suspension bridges in California could be the possible targets of terrorist attack. Donaldson asked whether this warning was helpful. Both Will and Douglas responded positively. To that, Donaldson cited the former FBI agent, who is now in charge of New York's security, as saying that the Attorney General's warning was not helpful because 'we're al(.)ready on high alert. How much higher can you ↑go.' By animating (Goffman, 1981) an 'expert's' comment such as this, Donaldson had successfully created a credible voice of opposition to be reckoned with. At that point, Stephanopolous joined in and sided with Will and Douglas, stating that both the American government and the Governor of California did the right thing, despite the vagueness of the warnings. 'It's important to treat people like grown-ups,' said Stephanopolous. The excerpt begins with Donaldson's response to Stephanopolous. Note that this time Donaldson is both the 'principal' and 'author' (Goffman, 1981) of the oppositional view:

[5]

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Donaldson: | Okay but if (0.2) <u>cr</u> y <u>w</u> olf. (0.2) Let's <u>h</u> ope nothing |
| 2 | | would happen. but it's the third warning, the fourth |
| 3 | | warning.=the Americans are starting to let their |
| 4 | | guards down. |
| 5 | | and W [↑] oon. |
| 6 | | (1.0) |
| 7 | Douglas: | Well [but () |
| 8 | Stephanopolous: | [That'll be <u>s</u> illy. I think. |

-
- 9 Donaldson: (but) that would be silly. but it might happen. =
10 Douglas: =But ↑George's his point is probably
11 ↑right. =People ↑a:re being more vigilant. They
12 ↑a:re watching for (.) people running around taking
13 strange photographs inside the airports >and that
14 sort of thing.<
15 Donaldson: → Well (.) they also according to some authorities
16 overwhelmingly (.) 911 operators with reports, UPS
17 trucks stopped (.) down the street they shouldn't
18 have stopped there and, people are responding when
19 they should be doing something ↑else.
20 (1.0)
21 Will: Well- we'll see, I mean there're obviously going to
22 be a lot of false (.) warnings here false (.) bits of
23 evidence. but some of them may be true. >That's all
24 you can [↑look for.<

Donaldson's 'cry wolf' argument is followed by yet another round of exchanges solidifying the oppositional positions, which ends with Douglas' comment that 'People ↑a:re being more vigilant . . . ' (lines 11–14). The arrowed turn marks Donaldson's third attempt at single-handedly arguing against the benefits of issuing vague warnings. He points out, with the prefacing of the stressed 'also', that 'being more vigilant' has its downside, that is, 'people are responding when they should be doing something ↑else'. Again, it seems unlikely that by using 'also', Donaldson is trying to mitigate his counter-argument by drawing some similarities (invoking the meaning of 'likewise') between his point and that of the others.

First of all, the goal of the roundtable is to promote lively discussions, which often thrive on controversies (see 'values of immediacy, controversy, liveliness, and entertainment' in Greatbatch, 1992: 271; and 'the normality of disagreement' in Dickerson, 2001: 203). Thus, the institutional context seems to favor the upgrading of disagreements. Of course, institutional contexts do not dictate the choice of interactional practices, whose import ultimately needs to be recovered from the locally emerging sequential environment.

Sequentially, the 'also'-prefaced remark is Donaldson's third attempt to argue against the feasibility of the vague warnings. He started with animating a former FBI agent's objection to the vague warning. He then moved on to the hypothetical scenario of 'cry wolf', using its dire consequences to illustrate the danger of vague warnings. At last, he turns to the real consequences of disruption yielded by the vague warning. As he emerges from 'animator' to 'author' and 'principal' (Goffman, 1981), from the hypothetical world to the real world, Donaldson is becoming increasingly engaged and aligned with his argument. It is conceivable that 'also' could have been used to preface either or both of the first two arguments (e.g. 'A former FBI agent also said . . . ' or 'There's also the cry wolf problem'), but it wasn't. Insofar as 'also' is positioned in Donaldson's third and final counter-argument, where his persistence and conviction appear to culminate, it

is much more likely to be an upgrader than a mitigator. Or more precisely, it is the element to be delayed.

Finally, this line of argument may be further developed with a consideration of the design of the turn that contains 'also'. Implicated in the turn-initial 'well' in line 15 is the suggestion that upcoming talk may upset expectations (Schiffrin, 1987: 126–7), in this particular context, the expectation that Donaldson will concede in the face of concerted opposition. Moreover, the paralinguistic emphasis placed upon 'should' and 'something else' as in 'people are responding when they should be doing something ↑else' further indicates that Donaldson is in no way compromising his stand on the destructive force of vague warnings. Donaldson's disaffiliative action is thus both sustained and amplified in this turn composition. In other words, besides the institutional context which normalizes controversy, neither the position nor the composition of Donaldson's turn provides for the analysis of 'also' in this excerpt as a mitigator based on 'likewise'. Rather, drawing upon the semantic meaning of 'additive', 'also' invokes an orientation to what Donaldson is saying as 'another side of the story' – a side that the other discussants failed to consider while formulating their arguments. In this sense, the use of 'also' allows one to momentarily gain the upper hand in an argument and to look as if one is winning. It strengthens the argumentative nature of Donaldson's position.

This argumentative tone of 'also' can be seen in the following excerpt as well. In response to Will's comment that the Democratic Party is acting 'stra:ngely', Stephanopolous argues that the Democratic Party is doing what they are doing to win the election next year, so what Will considers strange is not strange after all:

[6]

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Will: | In the last- in the last two weeks the Democratic |
| 2 | | Party has said we're () free trade °at least in the |
| 3 | | House°, and they said we can't live with even six |
| 4 | | months cloning I think the Democratic Party is |
| 5 | | acting, stra:ngely. |
| 6 | Stephanopolous: | → Well the Democratic Party has also said we're fo:r |
| 7 | | spending more on homeland defense and <u>that</u> might |
| 8 | | be the victory that comes back to rule (.) George |
| 9 | | Bush=He (beat back)Tom Dash on homeland |
| 10 | | defense spending <u>mo:re</u> (.) for terrorism, at ho:me |
| 11 | | but the Democrats the Democrats >are going to be |
| 12 | | able to< take that, uh in election year next year.= |
| 13 | Roberts: | =We [ll we'll ↑see: |
| 14 | Donaldson: | [Th- |
| 15 | Stephanopolous: | Yeah. |
| 16 | Donaldson: | Thank you all, we'll ↑see. That's a great way to end |
| 17 | | the Roundtable. |
| 18 | | ((group laugh)) |

Similar to Donaldson's turn in the previous excerpt, Stephanopolous begins with the disaffiliative marker 'Well', and continues with 'the Democratic Party has also said . . .', mirroring Will's earlier remark: 'the Democratic Party has said . . .' in lines 1–2. In this case, Stephanopolous' use of 'also' effectively undermines the thoroughness of Will's argument, and concomitantly, strengthens his own. Another piece of information that might lend support to this interpretation is that Stephanopolous has traditionally been representing the Democratic perspective while Will represents the Republican one, and that their adversary voices are precisely what the show needs to generate liveliness and controversy.

In the earlier extracts, by the time 'also' appears, either a disagreement environment has already been established, or a disaffiliative orientation has already been adumbrated. The seemingly prevalent co-occurrence of 'also' with a disaffiliative action made me wonder whether the marker 'also' is oriented to as a disaffiliative marker even before the disaffiliative turn design has become clear. It indeed seems so.

The following excerpt begins with Tamar's response to the professor's question of why one article is more readable and another less so. In citing genre as a differentiating factor, Tamar claims that a personal narrative is easier to read than a review of literature. In principle, pointing out that one genre is more readable than another has not really answered the professor's question. Because the puzzle remains: why is a personal narrative necessarily more readable than a review of literature?

[7]

- 1 Tamar: ((lines omitted)) reading a personal narrative ((lines
2 omitted)) is much easier than a page of um (.) Koda. which
3 uh review:s very complex research literature tries to bring
4 toge- together compare and contrast make even more (.)
5 produce even more generalization on top of that.
6 (1.0)
7 Prof: Wh::y.
8 Libby: → [It also has to [do with backgroun kno:wledge.]
9 Tamar: [abstract and concre:t.]
10 °backgron-° (.) well YEAH (.) because there's much less
11 background knowledge ((lines omitted)) for the Koda you
12 need mo:re (.) ah ah specific disci- disciplinary (.) knowledge
13 in this particular area whereas the Bell's article could be any
14 almost any lay person could read it. and get almo- almo-
15 almost as much out of it as we did I think.
16 (0.5)
17 Libby: Maybe not as much. but (.) could get (.) some- (.) a flavor.

This (1.0) second gap of silence as well as the subsequent 'Wh::y' uttered by the professor only renders this chasm more explicit and on-record. Note that Libby's 'also'-bearing turn at the arrow begins merely one beat later than the professor's 'Wh::y', and it turns out to be a potential answer to the 'Wh::y' question. In other

words, it is an attempt to address what Tamar has failed to address earlier – a rectifying move, and is therefore disaffiliative in an implicit way. More important, it seems to be interpreted as such by Tamar herself. Instead of letting Libby finish, Tamar interrupts by proceeding to answer the professor's 'Wh::y' question herself. Moreover, in her receipt of Libby's suggestion of 'background knowledge' in line 10, there is a sense of Tamar's attempt to argue that 'background knowledge' is not incongruent with her original idea of 'genre' (e.g. 'well YEAH') – an effort to smooth out the disaffiliative orientation shown in Libby's 'also'-marked move. In so doing, Tamar insinuates that Libby has not really said anything new and different – an implication which is, to a certain extent, resisted by Libby's subsequent modification (i.e. 'Maybe not as much, but could get a flavor.').

Here are two more brief examples to show that 'also' is being oriented to as a disaffiliative marker:

[8]

1 Libby: → °I also-° I thought that it may have to do with (.) what these
2 students have in fact been studying in the different
3 languages.=For example, if a (.) student found the friendly
4 letter is easiest because they had a strong colloquial French
5 ((continues to end of turn))

[9]

1
2 Sam: ((lines omitted) do picture help. Well, what are the pictures
3 of. you know, and and all these assumptions with things th-
4 we think (.) connect are obviously I think (.) cultural (.)
5 (0.4)
6 uhm
7 Prof: → .hhh we- we als- Yeah! >absolutely< we also- tend to teach
8 (.) like (.) we were taught.
9 (0.4)((continues to end of turn))

In excerpt [8], 'also' is cut off and replaced by two mitigating markers in 'I thought it may have to do with . . .'. This self-repair, coupled with the soft tone in which 'I also-' is delivered, may suggest that it is the disaffiliative orientation in 'also' that is being mitigated here. In excerpt [9], Sam talks about the need to challenge our assumptions in teaching regarding what works and what doesn't. In response, the professor starts to use the word 'also', immediately switches to a cut-off, and does not restart her point with 'also' until after the interjection 'Yeah!' >absolutely<.' It appears as if she were indicating to Sam: 'I'm using "also", but I'm not disagreeing with you.'

So far, we have shown that the additive meaning of 'also' can function to strengthen one's argument in a disaffiliative environment, and that 'also' functions as an upgrader rather than a mitigator in this environment. There are, however, exceptions. In certain disaffiliative environments, 'also' can be used to convey mitigation by creating the appearance of affiliation. The following excerpt

concerns the problematic nature of the term 'main point' in reading assessment. At the end of the previous session, the professor passed out an experimental task regarding 'main point' in which she asked every member of the seminar to respond to a different question about a common reading. Just prior to the excerpt in the current session, the professor pointed out that the term 'main point' has been widely used without being defined, and people tend to ask questions in all sorts of forms to get at the so-called 'main point', which is precisely what she did with the task without letting the class know at the time. The excerpt begins with Ellen's response to the professor's comment:

[10]

- 1 Ellen: Do you think that the you think that those
 2 questions signal, that that person asking doesn't
 3 know what they want? you don't think [that (
 4 Prof: [well in my case I
 5 did. I think so. because I I'm it's something that I really
 6 deliberated over as I was typing this task, you know, on this
 7 paper to give out. and and for me, it's like how do I ask this.
 8 I want so- somewhat to try to find the main point so to
 9 speak, but what is that main point what is it that I want
 10 them to focus on. I want O:NE point I want people to
 11 commit (.) to one thing. One (.) statement of
 12 [some sort.=
 13 Libby: [.hhh =When when we talk about committing
 14 → to one statement, do we also include (.) preknowledge of
 15 genre because if you know that (.) in academic articles like
 16 Leki, she's always going to make (.) a research point and a
 17 pedagogical implication point. It's kind of part of (.) the
 18 genre. Therefore it's not so much one point.=It's it's two
 19 points. Two interrelated points. I mean there may be more.
 20 ((continues to end of turn))

In response to Ellen's question, the professor clarifies that she did know exactly what she wanted in her attempt to formulate the different questions, namely, she wanted everyone to identify one main point of the article. The sequentially implicated 'preferred' next turn is perhaps some sort of receipt of this clarification from Ellen or some other member of the seminar. What we have, instead, in line 13 is an other-initiated repair (i.e. 'When when we . . . , do we also include . . . '), which could be the beginning of an insertion sequence, except that what appears to be the other initiation of repair is so constructed that it does not particularly seek or even permit a response. Note that Libby rushes through her turn's first possible completion point after the word 'genre' in line 15, and continues with an elaboration of the prior TCU (turn-constructional unit) (Sacks et al., 1974). Similar to Koshik's (2001: 25) analysis of 'How are we vulnerable because . . . ', the increment-like addition 'because . . . ' 'fits, grammatically and semantically', with the assertion 'we should include pre-knowledge of genre', by offering an account of that assertion. In other words, what Libby is really saying is that it is

important to take into consideration the factor of genre in contemplating main points because the professor's adamant goal of having people commit to ONE main point can become unrealistic in the case of some genre-specific articles. Hence, Libby is taking issue with the position of the professor – the official 'knower' in the room. It is an action that contains potential face threats to both the professor and herself: being right could weaken the professor's expert status; being wrong could undermine the intellectual competence to which she struggles to claim as a graduate student (e.g. Tracy, 1997; Waring, 2001; 2002a).

Given this sequential and interactional context, it seems essential that Libby frame her position as diplomatically as possible by exercising maximum mitigation. This is accomplished in a number of ways. First, her turn is grammatically structured in a question form as a status-congruent student-like inquiry as if she were seeking advice ('when we . . . do we . . .?'). The choice of 'we' over 'you' in 'when we talk about committing to one statement' reduces the amount of possible face-threat to the professor by including herself and perhaps the other students as the co-members potentially responsible for overlooking the genre factor. The self-repair ('When when') (line 13) adds an air of uncertainty to the upcoming point. I interpret 'also' within this overall mitigating orientation and as an element contributing to this mitigating orientation. While any motivation for Libby to upgrade an already disaffiliative action in an environment that does not favor disaffiliation seems minimal, mitigation appears to be something she could give generous rein to. With the insertion of 'also', Libby may be making an attempt to mark her contribution as merely an addition (the additive meaning of 'also'), not a contradiction, to what the professor said in the prior turn.

The extract below represents another instance where the appearance of affiliation is being created with 'also'. The discussion concerns the challenge of teaching extensive reading:

[11]

- | | | |
|----|--------|---|
| 1 | Tamar | [b- that's the hardest thing. How do you <u>know</u> what's |
| 2 | | most important and what's least important. You have to |
| 3 | | really <u>understand</u> the whole sentence in order to <u>know</u> |
| 4 | | what words matter and what words don't matter. This I |
| 5 | | have a lot of problem with.=How do you ↑teach that. |
| 6 | | (0.5) |
| 7 | Prof: | It's a tough one. Al-all of these are hard to |
| 8 | | [teach actually. huh huh huh |
| 9 | Tamar: | [>I mean you can teach a little bit you can say< if it's an |
| 10 | | adjective don't bother. But even that already assumes quite |
| 11 | | a bit of linguistic knowledge to know if the word is an |
| 12 | | adjective. And on the other- actually to stop and look at the |
| 13 | | sentence of it already slow you down <u>considerably</u> . |
| 14 | Prof: | → You might also say if it appears multiple times it's |
| 15 | | important. |
| 16 | | (0.5) |
| 17 | | That's one technique that () used. |

Tamar is the one who raised the question while implying that teaching extensive reading is a daunting task. She then concedes by saying that 'you can teach a little bit' (line 9) by, for example, instructing the students not to bother with adjectives, only to reach the conclusion that even doing *that* was impossible without compromising the basic principle of extensive reading. Therefore, Tamar's seeming concession in fact behaved as a rhetorical device that strengthens her original point that teaching extensive reading was almost impossible. What the professor does subsequently at the arrow, with the 'also'-bearing turn, is *add* to the 'list' of strategies of teaching extensive reading that seems to have been started by Tamar. The adding is also done in a *likewise* manner (e.g. the mirroring syntax between 'if it's an adjective don't bother' and 'if it appears multiple times it's important'). In so doing, the professor is in fact indirectly contributing to the position that extensive reading *can* indeed be taught – one that is fundamentally incompatible with Tamar's. However, adding to the 'list' initiated by Tamar and claiming a 'likewise' relationship between 'if it's an adjective don't bother' and her own 'if it appears multiple times it's important', combine to project the appearance of affiliation, and consequently, renders the implicit disagreement less visible. The consequence is less face threatening for Tamar. But more specifically in this situation, the use of 'also' appears to allow the professor to guide the discussion (through some corrective 'teaching') without discouraging participation – a task intrinsic to her role as the advisor/moderator of the discussions. Broe (2002) describes a similar use of 'and then', which adds 'an air of innocence' to disguise an otherwise argumentative or disaffiliative turn.

In sum, the interactional goals accomplished by 'also' in disaffiliative environments vary. In what seems to be the majority of cases, where 'also' tends to receive a stress in intonation, it is the additive feature of 'also' that is being exploited to undermine the thoroughness of another's argument and strengthen one's own. More specifically, in the doing of being additive, the speaker alludes to the less than airtight claim advanced by another, and concomitantly, the thoughtfulness of one's own. This practice bears some resemblance to what Muntigl and Turnbull (1998: 231) refer to as the 'counter-claim' in disagreement, where speakers 'propose an alternative claim that does not directly contradict nor challenge other's claim'. In other cases, where 'also' is often produced without a stress, it can work as a mitigator. Appealing to its semantic feature of 'additive' or 'likewise', 'also' serves to create an illusion of affiliation while speakers implicitly disagree with their co-participants. In this case, the delicate battle of making a substantive contribution to the topic of discussion without threatening the face of another (Brown and Levinson, 1987) is being artfully fought. In short, in a disaffiliative environment, 'also' tends to either be mitigated (e.g. delayed, softened in tone, replaced) or do the mitigation.

Conclusion

What I have not been able to address is to what extent the operation of 'also', as

reported here, is tied to the institutional contexts of graduate seminars and television forums. It is possible that the interactional functions of 'also', which concern modulating the formulation of positions, play a specific role in managing the exchange of ideas in contexts where multiple and potentially competing goals co-exist. However, without evidence from ordinary conversation, which future research might present, the foregoing can only remain a speculation.

However, the connection between conversation practices and institutional contexts is an omnipresent one. For instance, I failed to find one single instance of the 'disjunctive also' in the TV data. In fact, all the instances from the TV data are exclusively exemplars of the 'disaffiliative also'. This may not be surprising since the institutional context of television roundtable discussion seems to favor controversy. What may be surprising is that in what was originally to be included as the third data set, which was comprised of tutoring sessions between an American tutor and a graduate student from India, I failed to find one single instance of any of the discourse uses of 'also'. This leads me to wonder whether the interactional practices of 'also' as described in this article are unique to multi-party interaction – another empirical question.

Moreover, it is unclear whether nonnative speakers would use 'also' in disaffiliative environments as well since I do not have any data showing that they do. One piece of evidence that I did come across outside the current data sets might perhaps provide a clue to this question. This particular piece of 'talk' seems to epitomize the argumentative use of 'also'. It is produced by a nonnative speaker of English in a discourse completion task (Beebe and Waring, forthcoming). When asked to react to a bookstore clerk's 'I have NOOOO idea' response to an inquiry, the nonnative speaker wrote: 'You also have NOOOO manners.'

In conclusion, using data from a graduate seminar and a television forum, I have tried to show that in an environment where the 'also'-bearing turn appears disjunctive to prior talk, 'also' can be used to claim, without showing, an additive, thereby coherent relationship to the prior. Sometimes such a relationship does exist to a certain extent when 'also' works to invoke a super-topic which subsumes the disjunctive turns, making the two complementary in the sense of co-responses to a super-topic. Thus, 'also' is shown to maintain the look of coherence by legitimizing one's speaking rights in a locally disjunctive environment. In a disaffiliative environment, 'also' can be either a mitigator or upgrader, depending partially on the paralinguistic delivery of the word, and partially on the specific interactional context of talk. Its semantic meanings of 'additive' and 'likewise' can be manipulated to create the appearance of harmony in the midst of forwarding a disaffiliative claim. On the other hand, the 'additive' meaning can be mobilized to pinpoint what a prior speaker has overlooked, thereby strengthening one's own claim. This latter use, which accounts for the majority of the cases in the disaffiliative environment, is argumentative in nature. These interactional practices of 'also' are accounted for in part by the ever-present tensions between coherence and continuation (Linell, 1998; Tracy and Moran, 1983), and in part by the institutional contexts of news media (Dickerson, 2001;

Greatbatch, 1992) and graduate seminar (Waring, 2001, 2002a, b). As shown, the semantic meanings of 'also' are strategically employed to build coherence and to modulate the force of one's contribution in specific sequential environments. 'Also' functions at the level of discourse.

One final note on discourse markers. I was primarily interested in how the adverb 'also' works in interaction. My interest was sparked by some initial 'noticings' in the course of examining my data. I only came to call 'also' a discourse marker after concluding that it did seem to perform some interactional duties beyond its semantic/referential meanings. Indeed, one might argue that 'also' connects utterances on both the ideational and actional planes (Schiffrin, 1987), it dictates to a certain extent the interpretation of the message conveyed (Fraser, 1990), and it shifts frames interpersonally, referentially, and structurally (Maschler, 2002).³ None of the uses of 'also' in my database, however, occupy the utterance-initial or intonation unit-initial position that a discourse marker normally does (e.g. Maschler, 2002; Schiffrin, 1987). Yet, they do perform discourse functions – interactional duties originating in but distinct from the word's semantic meanings. It is, of course, possible that the label 'discourse marker' is simply inappropriate for the types of interactional practices characterizing 'also'. Regardless, I hope that the findings of this study might provoke more refined understandings of discourse markers and contribute to the growing empirical basis upon which an integrative theory of discourse markers can eventually be built (Schiffrin, 2001).

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NOTES

1. The phenomenon of not connecting to the immediately preceding turn was first discussed by Sacks (1992: 349) in one of his 1972 lectures as 'skip connecting', where a speaker produces an utterance that is related to 'some utterance prior to the directly prior utterance', and speakers 'tend to skip-connect to themselves'. Local (2002) describes 'and-u(h)m' as a skip-connecting device used to indicate that subsequent talk links to some 'prior prior' produced by the same speaker. Note, however, that 'skip connecting' would not be a precise characterization of the practice I am describing here, because the focus turn speaker skips the immediately preceding turn not to connect to her own prior turn, but someone else's utterance in prior talk or some sort of a super-topic.
2. Since two of the 'also' examples discussed in this section were produced by Tamar, a nonnative speaker, and I have failed to find any instance of similar use (as in the first two excerpts) among native speakers, I was tempted to argue that being a nonnative speaker, Tamar is using 'also' to create the impression that she is competently managing the task of staying on topic (cf. nonnative speakers' use of 'yeah' in Wong, 2000) while inadvertently revealing her limited repertoire of discourse marking resources. I certainly consider this a plausible interpretation – an interpretation yet to be borne out

by analysis of further cases. At the moment, however, without further evidence from native speaker talk, I would hesitate to attribute such use to the nature of 'nonnative-ness', especially since in the more general account of its use as a 'floor legitimizer', 'also' does appear in the native speakers' talk repertoire as well (as in the third excerpt). Hence, I suspect that native speakers would use 'also' to signal the same sort of pro forma coherence in the same environments as Tamar is in.

3. Here I am not going into the details of the terminology employed by each scholar. Interested readers should consult the individual articles. I only wish to point out briefly that besides empirically behaving as a device at the discourse level in actual interaction, 'also' does, at least partially, satisfy the requirements of discourse markers as outlined by other researchers as well.

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