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Regression on the fused lect continuum? Discourse markers in Scottish Gaelic–English speech



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Abstract

This article analyses semantically-equivalent discourse markers (YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ) of two languages in contact—Scottish Gaelic and English—as a platform for investigating Auer's (1999) 'Code-Switching–Language Mixing–Fused Lect' continuum. Using a corpus of approximately ten hours of speech of older (over 50 years of age) Gaelic–English bilinguals, this paper shows how the use of English language discourse markers in salient positions and the subsequent salience bleaching of these discourse markers illustrates movement along Auer's continuum. However, the paper then discusses how rapid language shift and the emergence of 'new' speakers of Gaelic challenge Auer's assertion that contact may only progress, not regress, along the continuum. © 2016 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Discourse markers; Code-switching; Language contact; Scottish Gaelic

1. Introduction

The question of when a particular lexeme, morpheme, or phoneme becomes so integrated into another language that it is considered 'part' of that language remains a frequent topic of discussion for language contact studies (see for example Poplack et al., 1988; Gardner-Chloros and Edwards, 2004; Edwards and Gardner-Chloros, 2007; Winford, 2010). This topic is often referred to as 'borrowing;' for example, Poplack et al. (1988) distinguish between 'established' borrowings (e.g. where a lexeme from Language A is used in Language B with Language B inflections) and 'nonce' borrowings, which are single instances of borrowing in which there is no precedence for linguistically integrating the 'borrowed' word into Language B. Myers-Scotton (1993) suggests that language alternation can be best explained by conceptualising it in terms of a 'Matrix Language,' which is the language that provides the overall grammatical structure of the sentence and an 'Embedded Language,' which operates as the donor language for the Matrix Language. However, this approach has been widely debated (see for example, Auer and Muhamedova, 2005; MacSwan, 2005), with some analysts arguing that some contact situations cannot be conceptualised as Language A versus Language B, but as a single unified code (see Meeuwis and Blommaert, 1998). Such, for example, is argued to be the case of 'urban Wolof,' a French–Wolof contact variety spoken in Dakar (Swigart, 1992), or for Lingala–French and Swahili–French for Zairians living in Belgium (Meeuwis and Blommaert, 1998).

In 1999, Peter Auer, whose ground-breaking work (1984, 1988) pioneered the Conversation Analytic (CA) approach to code-switching, proposed to delineate language contact as it progresses from alternation from two (or more) languages to the existence of a unilingual code. Auer refers to this delineation as the 'Code-Switching (CS)–Language Mixing (LM)–Fused Lect (FL)' continuum. In the first stage, which he terms 'code-switching' ('CS'), the alternation of the two languages

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is locally meaningful within the conversation (the subject of much of Auer's earlier work on code-switching; see also [Alvarez-Caccámo, 1996](#); [Wei, 1998](#); [Cromdal, 2001, 2004](#) for some other examples of work done within this paradigm). In the second stage, termed 'language mixing' ('LM'), individual switches lose their local salience due to frequent code-switching; as Auer (p. 321) explains, "codeswitching is most salient against a ground which is monolectal. The more frequently codeswitching occurs, the less salient it becomes." Code-switching in LM, however, operates on a wider macrosocial level by indexing identity to a particular community, and Auer emphasises (p. 318) that the most fluent bilinguals are to be found in this stage. In the transition zone between CS and LM are elements of both code-switching and language mixing—that is, code-switching still functions as a local meaning-making cue, but some instances of language alternation begin to lose their salience. Auer describes (p. 321) that code-switching within this liminal space usually consists of "CS on emphatic repetitions and summaries, CS for different 'voices' (including reported speech), CS in order to contranspose material of high or low relevance (such as asides or parenthetical remarks), CS for marking personal versus objective passages, and so forth." From 'Language Mixing' to 'Fused Lect' ('FL') involves intense grammaticalisation, the end product of which is a variety that is so highly entwined that (p. 321) "speakers of a fused lect AB may, but need not be proficient speakers of A and/or B." In other words, the code functions in its own right, with the theoretical possibility that speakers may be monolingual speakers of the emergent variety.

In his illustration of how LM may transition to FL, Auer discusses the case of discourse markers, postulating (p. 324) that the grammatically 'unbound' nature of these speech elements make them a particularly fruitful locus for examining language contact. How discourse markers function overall has gained considerable interest over recent years, not only in terms of their role in the meaningful segmentation of speech (see for example [Schiffrin, 1988](#); [Aijmer, 2002](#); [Tagliamonte, 2005](#); [Blakemore, 2006](#)), but also their use in signalling social relationships between interlocutors (see for example [Andersen et al., 1999](#); [Fuller, 2003](#)). In terms of studies that look at code-switching in the context of language contact, [Goss and Salmons \(2000\)](#) for example conclude that the exclusive use of English-language discourse markers in German–American plays is due to the perceived compounded salience of English in German speech; however, over time, the ubiquity of these discourse markers has resulted in bleached salience, yet the discourse markers have remained (see [De Rooij, 2000](#) for a similar discussion of French discourse markers in Shaba Swahili; see also [Gardner-Chloros et al., 2000](#), and [Reershemius, 2001](#) for further discussions of code-switching, segmentation, and salience). Auer postulates that the systematic replacement of discourse markers from one language in contact with discourse markers from the other language in contact, or the use of discourse markers that is unlike either contact languages (e.g. [Oesch-Serra, 1998](#)), or the stratification of language of discourse marker for function (e.g. [Maschler, 1994](#)) signals movement along the liminal space from LM to FL. Thus, discourse markers provide an important way to understand language contact in progress.

This paper will use the concepts of salience (and its possible erosion) and stratification of language of discourse marker according to function as starting points in exploring Auer's proposed trajectory from the perspective of Scottish Gaelic–English contact. The fact that Scottish Gaelic is undergoing acute language shift from one generation to the next offers a different vantage point within the body of work that examines discourse markers in bilingual speech, as the majority of these studies have examined situations where the two languages are relatively 'healthy' languages in their own right, even though one of the languages in contact may be a 'minority' language vis-à-vis the other (e.g. [Maschler's 1994, 2000](#) studies of English–Hebrew contact in Israel). Furthermore, language revitalisation efforts have resulted in an increasing number of L2 speakers of Gaelic, and considering the way that these 'new' speakers (*cf.* [McLeod et al., 2014](#); [O'Rourke et al., 2015](#))¹ use discourse markers offers a further dynamic to investigating the CS–LM–FL trajectory.

1.1. *Language contact and discourse markers in a Gaelic context*

Scottish Gaelic—henceforth simply referred to as 'Gaelic'—is a Celtic language and is spoken by less than 58,000 speakers in Scotland according to the most recent Census ([NROS, 2013](#)). Throughout its history, Gaelic has been in contact with a number of languages, namely Pictish, Old Norse, Anglo-Norman, Latin, and Scots; however, it is Gaelic's prolonged contact with English that has attracted the bulk of scholarly attention. English borrowings are noted in Gaelic literature from at least the seventeenth century and usually take the form of an English lexical item for a military term or a luxury good ([Gillies, 1993](#)). [MacAulay \(1982\)](#) notes that the use of Gaelic borrowings in literature began tapering off in the nineteenth due to normative register constraints; concurrently, however, borrowings remained a facet of the spoken register, an observation which resonates with present-day empirical research on code-switching and Gaelic registers (see [Lamb, 2008](#); [McEwan-Fujita, 2008](#)).

The use of English discourse markers in Gaelic speech is not a new phenomenon, and it is argued in this paper that some discourse markers have become so ubiquitous in otherwise-monolingual Gaelic discourse that, when adopting the

¹ Although there is much debate on what constitutes a 'new' speaker, for the purposes of this paper, the term 'L2' and 'new' speaker will be used interchangeably.

speakers', not the linguists' point of view, in looking at code choice (cf. Meeuwis and Blommaert, 1998), English language words like 'so,' 'oh' 'aye,'² and 'well' cannot be considered 'English' words in the context of monolingual Gaelic utterances. For example, John Lorne Campbell, a well-known Gaelic scholar, writes (1972, p. 2, emphasis my own): 'Words like 'bicycle,' 'hire,' 'hotel,' 'fence,' 'well' (exclamation), 'wire', are part of the Scottish Gaelic language today, however one spells them.' A search on the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic finds that the first written instance of the word 'well' spelled as 'uill'³ appears in 1914 in the religious writing *Teagasg nan Cosamhlachdan* by Martin Donald John. Even in looking at *An Teachdaireachd Gaelach*, one of the foremost Gaelic literary works spanning several decades, begun by the Reverend Norman MacLeod in the 1830s, it appears that 'oh' as a discourse marker is already subsumed into Gaelic speech, as the Reverend is very careful to italicise words he appears to consider foreign, yet the use of 'oh' (which usually appears as 'O!'⁴ in the text) is not italicised. In terms of Auer's paradigm, the ubiquity of these English language discourse markers in Gaelic suggests movement along the CS–LM–FL continuum.

The borrowing of discourse markers has not been completely asymmetrical, however; for example, it is still common to hear '*ma-tha*' (equivalent to 'then' in English) in Highland English, the variety of English borne out of the Gaelic–English contact situation, especially in closing greetings (e.g. 'right, *ma-tha*;' 'okay, *ma-tha*;' see Sabban, 1985, for a more detailed discussion of Gaelic influence on Highland English). It is also possible that the fact that '*ach*' ('but') can be used as a discourse marker similarly to Scots (Germanic) origin '*och*' (expression of dismay) has resulted in their coalescence, which would account in part for the ubiquity of '*och*' in Scottish English generally and its status as a marker of stereotypically Scottish speech.

The purpose of this paper is to use two semantically-equivalent discourse markers YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD⁵ and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ as a platform to demonstrate how contact may progress along Auer's continuum and the theoretical implications of this, especially when Gaelic's status as an obsolescing language is brought into scope. After outlining the methodology, the paper will detail the overall distribution of YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ in terms of linguistic context (i.e. whether or not the use of these DMs coincides with code-switching) and will also look at any pragmatic differentiations according to language of the discourse marker. The paper will conclude by discussing how although the semantically-equivalent DMs in this paper do indeed provide evidence for Auer's contact trajectory, Gaelic's position as a language undergoing shift, meaning that younger speakers in general use far less Gaelic than older speakers, as well as the fact that Gaelic is also being acquired as an L2 by an increasing number of speakers, challenges Auer's supposition that contact can only progress, not regress, along the continuum.

2. Methodology

This exploration of discourse markers is drawn from a corpus (referred to as the 'Campbell Family Corpus'⁶) of approximately ten hours of natural speech recorded in the home environment in July 2009. The corpus as a whole consists of a number of different participant constellations within three generations (encompassing an age range of 3–71) of a bilingual family located on the Isle of Skye and Harris. This paper only includes discourse markers from the first generation members' speech with each other because with the exception of one second generation speaker (Peigi, a new speaker of Gaelic), the first generation are the only speakers who use Gaelic consistently. Again with the exception of Peigi, the highest proportion of Gaelic spoken by a second or third generation speaker is less than 20%. Although the other second generation members were raised as Gaelic speakers, they ceased normative use of the language before adulthood. However, due mainly to the efforts of two key speakers in the family—Peigi (the third generation's mother) and Nana (the third generation's paternal grandmother)—the family as a whole is trying to maintain Gaelic with the third generation. This means that the second generation's use of Gaelic is limited primarily to talk directed at the third generation (and which often takes form of directives or reprimands) and the third generation's use of Gaelic in turn often coincides with arguing with their caregivers. These microlevel language practices, along with fact that language shift is already in place both within the family and wider community make the Campbell's goal of language maintenance an uphill struggle (see Smith-Christmas, 2014, 2016 for more detailed accounts of these challenges).

² 'Aye' in Scottish English can function both as an affirmation equivocal to 'yes' and also more as a discourse marker (more or less equivocal to 'yeah'). In Gaelic, there is no word for either 'yes' or 'no' (affirmations or negations are relayed by using either the affirmative or negative form of the verb), and 'aye' as both an affirmation and as a discourse marker is common in Gaelic-English speech.

³ Although this does not mean that all speakers view 'well/uill,' part of the 'Gaelic code,' see Deuchar's (2005) discussion of how orthography can be used in determining the status of a particular lexical item in terms of its code assignment; see also Hickey (2009).

⁴ O on its own in Gaelic means 'since,' but from a cursory look at the volumes, it appears that when the Reverend uses it in conjunction with an exclamation mark, he intends for it to assume a discourse marker role.

⁵ This can occur in a number of different forms—*tha fios agad*, *fios agad*, *fhios a'd*—which can vary according to level of formality and emphasis intentions (you know versus y' know) as well as dialect. For the purposes of quantification, however, all forms were considered as one type and the nuances of different forms will be discussed in the analysis.

⁶ All names (first names and family names) are pseudonyms.

Table 1
Total occurrences and proportional relationships.

Discourse marker	Number of occurrences and proportion
You know	45 (36.9%)
<i>Fios agad</i>	16 (13.1%)
Anyway	27 (22.1%)
<i>Co-dhiù</i>	34 (27.9%)
Total	122

The discourse markers analysed in this article are drawn from interactions where Nana (who can be considered the ‘main’ speaker within this study) is conversing with her siblings (two females, one male) and cousins (also two females, one male). Although when recording natural, spoken interactions there is always the inherent challenge of overcoming the Observer’s Paradox, in this case, the fact that the I knew most of the speakers well, and the fact that family members were interacting with each other were important factors in mitigating the Observer’s Paradox (cf. Labov, 1970). After the corpus was recorded, I transcribed it and Nana verified it for accuracy. A key to transcription conventions can be found at the end of this article.

The corpus was coded in Nvivo, a computer programme designed to analyse large amounts of written data, such as transcriptions of naturally-occurring speech, for language of each particular speakers’ turns (see Smith-Christmas, 2012). The choice to focus on YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ was borne out of a preliminary evaluation of the corpus which showed that these were commonly-used discourse markers but arguably not as integrated into Gaelic speech as ‘so’ ‘well’ ‘oh’ and ‘aye.’ Nvivo was also used in extracting and coding the discourse markers YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ and the corpus was also manually verified for any quantification and coding errors. The analysis is centred on three central components in looking at CS–LM–FL progression: (1) the overall distribution of discourse markers (to see if one discourse marker is systematically replacing the other), (2) salience and (3) function according to language. The results of these findings are discussed below.

3. Results

3.1. Distribution of discourse markers and salience

In total, 122 tokens of YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ were extracted from the first generation’s speech with each other. This is from a corpus of approximately 30,000 words.⁷ The frequency of each discourse marker’s use and the proportion of this use in relation to the total of the four discourse markers’ use overall is detailed in Table 1.

As evidenced in Table 1, there is a slight preference for English discourse markers overall, as 59% of the discourse markers are in English and 41% of discourse markers are in Gaelic. This slight asymmetry in terms of language can in part be explained by the fact that overall, first generation speakers use more Gaelic than they do English (64% of their turns in the corpus overall were coded as Gaelic; 20% as English; 12% as ‘Mixed’ and 4% as ‘Undecided’). As Auer highlights that CS is most powerful against a background that is monolectal, it would follow that as speakers overall use more Gaelic, the language that they switch into more often is English, rather than vice versa. In looking at the frequency in terms of pairs, in the YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD pair, there is a clear preference for the English-language equivalent: YOU KNOW occurs nearly three times the number of times as FIOS AGAD. However, in the ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ pair, speakers appear to exhibit a slight preference for CO-DHIÙ, as it occurs more often than ANYWAY. From this overall distribution, it is evident that there is not a systematic replacement of one discourse marker over the other in terms of language, as would be the case, it is argued, for language contact progressing along Auer’s continuum.

However, in looking at salience, there emerges a clear differentiation in terms of language of discourse marker and salience context. Contexts were considered non-salient if the discourse marker was used monolingually, i.e. where the discourse marker matched the language of the immediate surrounding discourse. For example:

Example 1.

- 1 Nana *cha robh i dona co-dhiù* (.) *cha robh* (.) *cha robh* (.) *cha robh Maggie cho dona*
she wasn’t so bad anyway no no Maggie wasn’t so bad

⁷ For a number of reasons, it was difficult to ascertain an exact word count of the first generation subcorpus. However, as the argument is not centred on overall DM use within their speech, but rather, two semantically-equivalent DMs’ use in relationship to each other, the word count estimate is simply intended to foreground the more in-depth analysis in the paper.

Example 2.

1 Isabel that's not a very good- och well **anyway**

On the other hand, contexts were considered salient if the discourse marker was used bilingually, which included cases where the discourse marker itself represented a code-switch, i.e. was opposite to the language immediately surrounding it, or in a switch environment, in which the discourse marker either preceded or initiated a code-switch. For example, in the following two excerpts, the discourse marker *itself* is the code-switched element, as it is opposite to the language immediately surrounding it:

Example 3.

1 Tormod *mu na h-uinneagan* **you know**
about the windows

Example 4.

1 Nana [...] like a slab of- *fios agad*- cla:y [...]
you know

Related to this are cases where the discourse markers are seen to either precede the switch or lead the switch, depending on the direction of the switch. For example, in the following the discourse marker *precedes* the switch:

Example 5.

1 Nana [...] he was a talker **you know** *agus thòisich e ag introdusadh a h-uile duine* [...]
and he started introducing everyone

Conversely, in the next example, the discourse marker appears to *initiate* the code-switch, i.e. the switch occurs at the discourse marker itself, rather than immediately after it:

Example 6.

1 Nana @@ aye *ars' mise* we're going over the sick bags [[@@]
I say
co-dhiù bha Tormod ag ràdh uill thèid thu fhèin còmhla rium [...]
anyway Tormod was saying well you'll come with me

In the case of bilingual discourse marker use, regardless of whether the discourse marker is the single element of the code-switch, precedes a longer code-switched clause, or initiates a longer code-switched clause, it is argued that code-switching highlights the salience of the discourse marker and the role it performs in the discourse. Not only is the discourse marker used as a pragmatic cue as it would be in monolingual speech, but the contrast of the two codes heightens its pragmatic function. The few cases in which a discourse marker was used as the sole element of a speaker's turn and *also* contrasted with the code-choice of the interlocutor's previous turn were also coded as bilingual; as in the other bilingual examples, the co-occurrence of a discourse marker and a contrasting code choice appears to highlight the saliency of the discourse marker, as seen in the example below:

Example 7.

1 Isabel I think if if she had been been incognito
she might have spoken more Gaelic on the phone 'cause
she normally *'s e Gàidhlig a bhios i bruidhinn*
it's Gaelic that she speaks
fad an t-siubhail air a' fòn
all the time on the phone

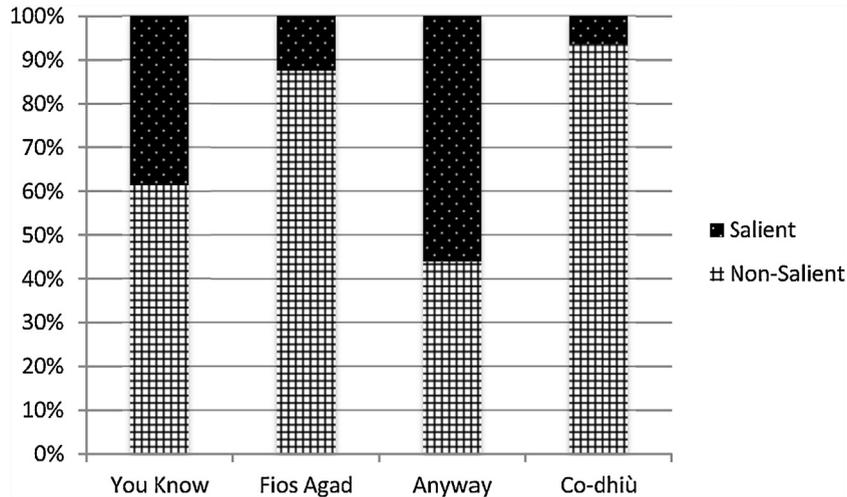
2 Nana *'s e*
it is

3 Isabel you know

4 Nana *tha i a-nis a' fas cho* [...]
she's now growing so

Graph 1 illustrates each discourse marker's use in terms of whether it was used in a monolingual (non-salient) or bilingual (salient) context. In some instances, this could not be fully determined (which was mostly the case in instances where the conversation surrounding the discourse marker was unintelligible).

As can be seen from the graph, English-language equivalents are used more frequently in salient positions than Gaelic-language equivalents. This favouring of English-language DMs in salient positions suggests movement on Auer's continuum somewhere in the liminal space between CS and LM; the contrast afforded by using English-language DMs is



Graph 1. Frequency of discourse marker use by context (non-salient versus salient) ($n = 116$).

perceived to heighten salience, but it is conjectured that over time, much like the DMs ‘so,’ ‘well,’ ‘oh’ and ‘aye,’ this salience will diminish, as is the case in the other studies of language contact discussed in the introduction. The following sections further examine ways in which each discourse marker is deployed in order to determine whether the functions of each discourse marker are becoming stratified according to language, which would suggest further movement along the continuum.

3.2. YOU KNOW and FIOS AGAD

In qualitatively examining the tokens of YOU KNOW and FIOS AGAD, there emerged no striking differences in the functional roles each semantic equivalent played. As discussed in previous work on ‘you know,’ the semantic content of ‘you know’ means that it can often function as a way of indexing shared knowledge (either real or perceived) between speaker and interlocutor (Holmes, 1986; Erman, 2001; Tree and Schrock, 2002). This is evidenced in the following example, where Nana uses ‘*tha fios agadsa*’ (the emphatic form of ‘you know,’ equivalent to ‘you know’ in English) to draw her interlocutor Isabel’s attention to the fact that a particular group of holiday homes would be a convenient place for an extended family to stay. In this case, both interlocutors are familiar with the particular group of holiday homes and the extended family to which Nana is referring. YOU KNOW therefore functions as an indexical amplifier in drawing on this shared knowledge, as seen below:

Example 8.

- 1 Nana *bha i ag ràdh sin- gun robh clann a-mach 's a-steach*
she was saying that- that [the] children were in and out
às gach àite tha fhios agadsa:: gun robh e uabhasach
of each place you know that it was very
freagarrach an t-àite shiud
convenient that place
- 2 Isabel \wedge aye

Similarly, in the following example, which is drawn from another conversation between Nana and Isabel, Nana uses the English equivalent YOU KNOW to highlight another shared reference (in this case, Nana’s daughter’s shawl) between the two interlocutors:

Example 9.

- 1 Nana Màiri’s shawl **you know** the orange shawl it’s disappeared
 - 2 Isabel ah aye
 - 3 Nana I wanted Màiri’s back
- (2.7)
- 4 Isabel och you might as well forget it then (4.2) I haven’t seen it for years

In this example, the ‘you know’ serves to amplify the indexical cue ‘the orange shawl’ in Turn 1. From Isabel’s response in Turn 2, it is clear that she and Nana have a shared knowledge of this particular real-world referent. However, as has been emphasised in multiple discourse marker studies (see for example, [Holmes, 1986](#); [Jucker and Smith, 1998](#); [MacAulay, 2002](#); [Erman, 2001](#)), the function of ‘you know’ is not by any means limited to indexing shared knowledge. This premise is illustrated in the following example, in which Nana’s cousin Flora is telling Nana about an experience in South Africa, which Flora did not share with Nana (and furthermore, Nana has never been to South Africa):

Example 10.

- 1 Flora *far an robh sinn a' fuireach (.) Houseba:y*
 where we were staying
bha iad- air na sràidan nan suidhe
 they were on the streets sitting
*na fireannaich a' lorg obair **you know***
 the men looking for work
- 2 Nana *oh smaointich aye*
 imagine that

In this example, YOU KNOW achieves an indexical concordance between ‘*iad*’ (‘they’) and ‘*na fireannaich a' lorg obair*’ (‘the men looking for work’). It appears to function as what [Erman \(2001, p. 1339\)](#) refers to as a ‘textual monitor;’ the indexical concordance serves as a repair for the previous potential ambiguity and the fact that ‘you know’ occurs in a salient context suggests that the speaker intends to highlight this repair. Additionally, as this particular example is turn-final, this instance of ‘you know’ also illustrates [MacAulay’s \(2002, p. 757\)](#) observation that ‘you know’ can be used in negotiating floor space as well as [Erman’s \(p. 1340\)](#) conclusion that ‘you know’ can play a role in comprehension checks.

Similarly, in the following example, Nana’s use of YOU KNOW in a salient position appears to align with [Erman’s \(p. 1343\)](#) observation that ‘you know’ can often function in marking the juncture between an argument and providing evidence for that argument (see also [Holmes, 1986](#)). Here, YOU KNOW functions in elaborating on Nana’s proposition that her grandson had gone in a huff with her:

Example 11.

- 1 Nana *a' cur a h-uile càil ormsa bha e mar gum biodh ann am bus riumsa (.)*
 putting everything around me like he was in a huff with me
a' dol a chur a' chream agam dhan a' bhìn (.)
 going to put my cream in the bin
's (.) you know (.) standing on things
 and
 and just trying to annoy me, cause he was frustrated [..]

Although in this example Nana’s interlocutor Isabel knows the referent, she was not at this particular event; thus, rather than indexing shared knowledge, this instance of YOU KNOW in salient position serves to highlight Nana’s supporting evidence that her grandson was indeed in a huff with her. A full discussion of the functions of YOU KNOW and FIOS AGAD is beyond the scope of the paper; however, these select examples hopefully illustrate the point that overall, YOU KNOW does not appear to be favoured for a particular function and FIOS AGAD for another. As discussed in the previous section, however, English-language equivalents are preferred over Gaelic ones in salient environments. Taken together, these two realities suggest placement of the use of the YOU KNOW and FIOS AGAD pair in the liminal space between CS and LM; code-switching is still used for achieving particular discourse functions, but in terms of these particular discourse markers, overuse has the potential to semantically bleach the use of English-language equivalent. Additionally, as per Auer’s paradigm, the frequent code-switching in these older bilinguals’ speech *overall* (cf. Examples 6, 7, 11), further weakens individual discourse markers’ use in salient environments, as the code-switching moves from being contextually meaningful to becoming established as an interactional norm.

3.3. ANYWAY and CO-DHIÙ

As previously shown in [Table 1](#), CO-DHIÙ is used slightly more than ANYWAY. Unlike YOU KNOW and FIOS AGAD, there *does* appear to be a differentiation between ANYWAY and CO-DHIÙ in terms of discourse function. [Lenk \(1998\)](#) demonstrates that English ‘anyway’ has two broad functions: a more ‘traditional’ discourse marker role, i.e. a segmentation role and a propositional role, i.e. backing up an argument. In this study, ANYWAY appears to be used in its

more traditional discourse marker role (22 out of 27⁸ instances of use of ANYWAY appear to fulfil a segmentation role) while CO-DHIÙ appears to be used more often in supporting propositions (25 out of the 34⁹ instances of CO-DHIÙ were used in this manner) than in segmentation. The following two examples demonstrate the use of ANYWAY as a device in narrative segmentation:

Example 12.

- 1 Nana [...] Jamie said just in case it's faulty
 WH<**anyway** *fhuaìr mi* switch>WH
 I got (the) switch
agus o deich mionaidean às dèidh sin (.) all right [...]
 and ten minutes later

Example 13.

- 1 Nana [...] I know who you've met (.) and I'm maybe meet him and find out more but
anyway *cha d' fhuaìr mi riamh* [...]
 I never did (i.e. she never met him)

In both these examples, ANYWAY appears in a salient position and precedes the code-switch. These particular excerpts are taken from two lengthy narratives, the first about a faulty fusewire and the second about a failed trip to the Flannan Isles. In both stories, Nana relies on multiple linguistic and paralinguistic devices to segment the chain of events in a 'tellable' manner (cf. Norrick, 2005). In Example 12, ANYWAY marks the boundary between an instance of constructed dialogue and the subsequent action in the story. In Example 13, ANYWAY marks a temporal juncture as well as a boundary between constructed dialogue and the main narrative, as Nana's utterance 'I know who you've met and I'm maybe meet him and find out more' is an instance of reported speech.

In contrast to ANYWAY, CO-DHIÙ appears to perform more of a stance marker role. This is illustrated in the following two examples; in Example 14, Isabel uses CO-DHIÙ to mark her epistemic stance of certainty in asserting what her brother was doing last night and in Example 15, Nana uses CO-DHIÙ to assert that a particular café should be open:

Example 14 (from Smith-Christmas, 2013).

- 1 Nana [...] *dè tha Tormod fhèin a' dèanamh an-dràsta?*
 what's Tormod himself doing now?
 2 Isabel *cò aig' tha fios* (.4) doing something upstai:rs
 who knows
 3 Nana *sheadh*
 uh-huh
 4 Isabel *seilfichean airson leabhraichean no rudeigin*
 shelves for books or something
no sin a bha iad a' dèanamh a-raoir
 or that's what they were doing last night
co-dhiù *nuair a bha mi ann*
 anyway when I was there

Example 15.

- 1 Nana oh six six they were going to the café mmm
 oh well *smaointich mun àm seo a' bhliadhna co-dhiù*
 imagine at this time of year anyway
shaoileadh tu gum biodh iad fosgailte gu ochd
 you would think they would be open until eight [o' clock]
tha daoine ann timcheall [...]
 there's people there around

In these two examples, the use of CO-DHIÙ is very different from the use of ANYWAY in the previous examples. In both cases, CO-DHIÙ is being used in conjunction with stating a proposition. In the first example, Isabel is narrating what her brother was doing last night (putting up shelves) and CO-DHIÙ is used in tandem with Isabel's claim to knowledge (she was

⁸ Four were considered propositional and in one case it could not be determined whether performed a propositional or segmentation role.

⁹ Eight appear to be used in a traditional segmentation manner while three were considered 'undetermined.'

there—‘*bha mi ann*’—so therefore she knows what her brother was doing). As discussed in greater detail in [Smith-Christmas \(2013\)](#), one of Isabel’s motivations for emphasising her claim to knowledge may stem from a need to redress a previous apparent lack of knowledge in Turn 2 (*cò aig tha fios* ‘who knows’). In the second example, Nana is providing evidence for her assertion that the café *should* be open, citing the time of year—summer, during which there are many tourists (*cf.* Nana’s statement *tha duine ann timcheall* ‘there are people around’) to warrant keeping a café open until eight in the evening. In looking at the differentiation between use of CO-DHIÙ and ANYWAY, what is postulated to have happened is that ANYWAY is becoming (or has already become) the favoured segmentation device because of the potential language contrast it affords in delineating parts of a narrative, while CO-DHIÙ has remained a stance marker. This differentiation in terms of function of discourse marker with language suggests a movement along the trajectory somewhere between LM and FL.

4. Discussion

This paper set out to demonstrate how the semantically equivalent discourse markers YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD and ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ can be used to explore the progression of Gaelic–English contact on Auer’s continuum. This exploration was foregrounded by the premise that this progression would involve the frequent use of English discourse markers in Gaelic speech because of their perceived salience, but that over time, overuse would result in diminished salience, as has already occurred with English-language discourse markers ‘so,’ ‘oh,’ ‘well,’ and ‘aye.’ It was confirmed by looking at the distribution of the discourse markers that English language discourse markers appeared favoured in salient positions; further, it was found that although there did not seem to be any differential discourse function according to language in the case of YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD, there did appear to be differential discourse function in the case of ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ. The analysis posited that YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD therefore falls within Auer’s hypothesised transitional CS–LM stage, while ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ points to the transitional LM–FL stage. It was further argued that other English language discourse markers such as ‘so,’ ‘oh,’ ‘well’ and ‘aye’ also point to the LM–FL transition zone.

The transition from CS to LM within this particular group of older bilinguals is well-attested to in [Smith-Christmas \(2012\)](#) and some of what Auer (p. 321) refers to as CS to LM ‘spearheading’ steps are exemplified in this paper; for example, CS in rendering constructed dialogue, as seen in Examples 6, 12, and 13 or integration of English language words into Gaelic morphology and syntax such as illustrated in Example 5 with the word ‘*introduadh*’ (‘introduce’ + the Gaelic present progressive suffix ‘*adh*’). However, although this paper has thus far presented examples which appear to illustrate the reality of Auer’s CS–LM–FL continuum, one element needs further discussion: the co-existence of language shift with bilingualism. One of the main premises of Auer’s continuum is that it cannot move backwards; that is, it cannot regress from FL to LM to CS. Further, according to Auer’s continuum, all language contact situations do not necessarily end up with a fused lect; at some point, most bilingual communities stabilise along this continuum. However, positing that a community stabilises also implies that the community continues to remain bilingual, which in the case of many autochthonous minority languages, such as Gaelic, may be more the exception than the rule. What happens when rapid language shift occurs and speakers are no longer bilingual, and, if they are, the balance is overturned, with the dominance of the two varieties now reversed? In this paper, we have seen the trajectory of bilingual speech progress along the expected path on the continuum from liminal CS to LM (YOU KNOW/FIOS AGAD) to liminal LM to FL (ANYWAY/CO-DHIÙ, as well as ‘so,’ ‘aye,’ ‘oh,’ ‘well’). It is posited that *overall*, the most appropriate categorisation of these older speakers’ language use is in the liminal CS–LM transition zone; however, there are other points worth discussing.

First, rapid language shift has occurred throughout these speakers’ lifetimes; they live in a much more English-dominant environment, not only in their own communities but in their own households as well. Even in the lifespan of these older speakers, there is evidence of language shift, as Isabel, the youngest speaker in the first generation, tends to prefer English and many of her conversations with Nana appear far more CS than LM inasmuch that both speakers will switch to English for extended periods of the interaction (*cf.* Example 9). It is perhaps not counterintuitive that different speakers or interactions within a bilingual community may fall different places on the trajectory; however, in looking at the hypothetical continuance of Gaelic–English contact through subsequent generations of speakers, *it cannot be said that a rough point on the continuum has been established or will be established*. Rather, rapid language shift has occurred. As previously mentioned, with the exception of one second generation speaker, the second and third generation speakers in this study are English-dominant. In the second generation, code-switching to Gaelic is infrequent and when it *does* occur, it tends to occur when speaking directly to the third generation. The third generation in turn generally tend to use code-switching in the form of lexical insertions (e.g. ‘I am *modhail*’ [polite]) to argue with their caregivers (see [Smith-Christmas, 2012, 2014, 2016](#); also 2014, p. 520 and 2016, p. 91 for more specific detail on the ‘I am *modhail*’ example). In other words, the second and third generation’s integration of Gaelic and English is minimal compared to the first generation’s highly entwined bilingual language use.

This particular observation of language shift resulting in less integrated code-switching resonates with O'Malley-Madec's (2007) study of language contact in two Irish-speaking communities, one traditional and one post-traditional. In the post-traditional community, speakers avoid English language discourse markers and tend to only code-switch for metalinguistic purposes (which arguably indicates the CS stage in terms of Auer's paradigm), whereas speakers in the traditional community use lexical borrowings as well as a high degree of English discourse marker use in their Irish as an interactional style (indicating the LM stage in terms of Auer's paradigm). This bears resemblance to the generational language shift and use discussed in this article: the first generation (analogous to O'Malley-Madec's traditional community) falls on the LM possibly moving towards the FL point, while the second and third generations (analogous to O'Malley-Madec's post-traditional community) fall towards the CS points. The expected trajectory, of course, would be that the younger generations would continue along the trajectory towards a fused lect or stay at the same point as the first generation. This would indicate the stabilisation that Auer hypothesises. However, what seems to have happened is that the younger generations have actually regressed along the continuum.

Another dimension that needs consideration is the emergence of new speakers of the language. Gaelic, like many other minority languages, has turned to education as a language revitalisation strategy. This has resulted in a rise of new speakers of Gaelic, especially in terms of children who learn Gaelic as an L2 through Gaelic immersion education. Analysis of children in Gaelic immersion education's speech show that while by and large the children are English-dominant, they use Gaelic Matrix Language constructions with a high degree of English insertions (see Nic Leòid and Armstrong, 2014; Nic Leòid et al., 2014; see also Nance, 2013). Interestingly in terms of a discussion of discourse markers, it is also common to see the Gaelic word 'like' ('*mar*') used in younger speakers' speech as a discourse marker and deployed the same way DM 'like' is used in English conversation. This is also a feature of children in Manx immersion education (Clague, 2009; see also Hickey, 2009 for a discussion of practitioner's use of discourse markers in Irish language immersion education settings). The nature of the language contact has clearly changed from the first generation speakers' language use discussed in this study and not surprisingly, what emerges is a more English-dominant form of borrowing. However, in contrast, it has also been observed that adult new speakers appear to borrow far less than native speakers (cf. Wells, 2011), a linguistic practice born out of ideologies of purism (cf. McLeod, 2004) as well as the possible fear that a switch to English for a lexical item may signal a lapse in linguistic fluency and may therefore trigger a switch to English on the part of the native speaker (cf. Smith-Christmas and Armstrong, 2014). This facet of new speakers of Scottish Gaelic also resonates with O'Malley-Madec's observations, as she attributes the lack of language mixing among post-traditional speakers to an ideology of purism: because they are not part of the traditional community, speakers feel that mixing is equivocal to not fully speaking Irish, whereas in the traditional community, mixing, especially in the case of discourse markers, is an established communicative norm. This differential in language use further suggests that ideologies of purism and what constitutes a 'speaker' of language also may cause this mirror-image in terms of the expected places on the continuum, with new speakers falling at the CS end while older, traditional speakers fall at the LM to FL end, thus opening the possibility of regression on the continuum.

5. Conclusion

Through analysis of two semantically-equivalent discourse markers used in the speech of older Scottish Gaelic-English bilinguals, this paper has shown how language contact can progress along Auer's (1999) continuum. However, it has also discussed that although a particular language contact situation might linguistically follow the proposed paradigm, radical changes in the nature of the contact, such as rapid language shift and/or the emergence of a sizeable L2 population may make regressive movement on the CS-LM-FL trajectory possible. More research on this proposed outcome of bilingual communities undergoing shift would be very fruitful in further understanding the dynamics of language contact and language shift.

Transcription conventions

:	Elongated sound
–	Cut-off
<u>word</u>	Emphasis
[. . .]	Part of turn omitted
[[]]	Overlapping speech
(.5)	Pause (seconds)
(.)	Micropause (less than two-tenths of a second)
@	Laughter (pulse)
WH<	Whispered speech

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