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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Theoretical orientation

As Ford and Wagner (1996: 277) put it, "the study of recurrent linguistic patterns has become, for numerous scholars, inseparable from the study of patterns of social interaction." This book explores the linguistic patterns formed by expressions of epistemic modality in American English conversational discourse, and the functions that such patterns may serve in social interaction. It discusses an area of the English language that has been almost completely neglected in the recent explosion of interaction-based studies in discourse–functional linguistics. The area of epistemicity, a subcategory of modality, forms a relatively coherent semantic domain, and comprises linguistic forms that show the speakers' commitment to the status of the information that they are providing, most commonly their assessment of its reliability. Expression of epistemic stance is highly pervasive in everyday spoken interaction; in fact speakers show more concern for marking their epistemic stance than marking attitudes or evaluations, or expressing personal feelings and emotions (cf. Biber et al. 1999; Thompson 2002). However, epistemic modality does not constitute a uniform syntactic category, as epistemic stance can be expressed in a variety of syntactic forms in English. My study will present as problematic the study of epistemicity as a strictly semantic phenomenon, because the way this category is made use of in spoken discourse is above all socially and interactionally motivated, and should be analyzed accordingly.

This book, therefore, has its origins in an overall approach to the study of language which is generally called discourse–functional or functional linguistics. What is common to the rather diverse research methods and areas of study in this school is that they try to uncover functional motivations for the organization of forms and structures in grammar and language use. Such scholarship typically (though not exclusively) relies on quantitative methods as a means of uncovering distributional information about grammatical patterns and their relations to functions served. More recently, many scholars in functional linguistics have begun to draw upon the research methodology and

findings established in conversation analysis (CA), a sociological line of inquiry concerned with the interactional organization of social activities and the role of talk in social processes. CA, like functional linguistics, represents a strictly empirical area of investigation, but advocates a qualitative rather than quantitative approach (but cf. Heritage 1995 for the role of quantification in CA). Functional linguists of this orientation aim towards expanding our understanding of grammar as an interactionally shaped phenomenon, and a number of contributions specifically examine the ways in which the dialogic nature of language use is associated with particular grammatical structures (e.g. Fox 1987; Kim 1992; Ford 1993, 1994; Ford & Fox 1996; Ford & Thompson 1996; Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 1999; Sorjonen 2001). Several important recent collections serve as further evidence of the coming together of discourse–functional linguists and scholars working in CA (Auer & di Luzio 1992; Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996a; Ford & Wagner 1996; Ochs, Schegloff, & Thompson 1996; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Ford, Fox, & Thompson 2002a). Much of the recent work by the aforementioned functional linguists (who now begin to be commonly known as 'interactional linguists') concentrates on the dependency of syntax on turn-construction (cf. also Kärkkäinen, Sorjonen, & Helasvuo in press, who examine how turn-taking and sequential organization may shape the kind of syntax that a language has and also how the syntactic structure of a language may constrain the interactional practices engaged in by its speakers).

The research reported on in this book bears a distinct resemblance to the above studies in its methodological orientation: I also view epistemic markers within turns-at-talk whose structure is incrementally achieved (Schegloff 1996), so that the speaker proceeds temporally from one element of the turn to another, and towards a possible turn completion and speaker change. Such an approach, based on conversation analysis, also necessarily shifts the focus of inquiry towards conversational actions accomplished by speakers over sequences of turns. Through such an approach, it is possible to bypass the form–function dilemma, that the literal semantic meanings of epistemic stance markers do not stand in a one-to-one relationship to their discourse functions (cf. for example Biber & Finegan 1988 for pointing out this dilemma). When stance-taking is viewed as one type of conversational action, we may not even want to claim that the coherent semantic domain of epistemic modality will form a coherent pragmatic domain of epistemic stance, and that for each semantic meaning there is a corresponding pragmatic function. Ideally, the analysis should not even start from a grammatical or semantic category, but from recurrent types of action in certain sequential environments. Yet, in many respects there turns out to be a coherent domain called epistemic stance, with many regular

and routinized patterns and forms of organization established at both linguistic and interactional level for this category. This is elaborated in the chapters that follow.

My approach is thus slightly different from most linguistic work on grammar and interaction; I start out with a semantic rather than syntactic category, and establish functional motivations for a grammatically quite heterogeneous (and in part problematic) class of markers – those indicating epistemic modality. But my findings have many implications for the organization of a dialogical grammar of English, in which stance-taking is regarded as an interactive activity and not as a static mental position of an individual speaker.

The present study also has affinities to a body of slightly older pragmatic and discourse analytic research that deals with the interactional functions of epistemic modality (Holmes 1982, 1984; Hübler 1983; Markkanen 1985; Coates 1990; Kärkkäinen 1991, 1992). These studies have typically viewed epistemicity within a general pragmatic paradigm, often applying some pre-existing taxonomy such as that of linguistic politeness onto the data. In contrast to such endeavors, however, this book abandons all preconceived notions or theories of function and strives to uncover patterns of epistemic stance in a strictly empirical study, through close observation of the data, thereby presenting many novel findings as regards its patterning in discourse and its interactional functions.

Finally, my study offers a new contribution to research in linguistics in that it is a corpus-based description of epistemicity in spoken American English; few if any comprehensive studies have been carried out on this variety of English to date. One notable exception is Biber et al. (1999: 966–986), who offer a quantitative treatment of the grammatical marking of stance in English, based on a large database of some 6.4 million words of conversational American and British English (2.5 million and 3.9 million respectively). The focus of this approach, however, is on the quantification of different types of grammatical stance markers in the database, and on differences in this marking across the registers of conversation, fiction, newspaper language, and academic prose (and to some extent between British and American English conversation). In the present book, apart from establishing the recurrent markers and patterns of stance- taking in my American English conversational data, I will delve quite deeply into the social and interactional functions of this marking.

1.2 Objectives and organization of the study

My overall contention in this book is that the expression of epistemic stance in spoken everyday American English is highly regular and routinized, and that recurrent patterns and forms of organization are observable at several levels of language and interaction: at the level of linguistic form (such as grammatical class and syntactic type), at the level of intonation units (as interactive and not only cognitive discourse units), and in terms of conversational turns (as clearly interactive units of discourse). A close description of the actual interactional practices engaged in by discourse participants when they mark their epistemic stance, with *I think* a case in point, further illustrates the high degree of routinization in stance-taking. Yet such analysis also yields results that support a *less* routinelike and more strategic use of these items, depending to a large extent on their prosodic realization and other prosodic contextualization cues attendant in a given utterance and conversational action.

The objective of the first major part of this book, presented in Chapter 4, is an extensive overview of the expression of epistemic stance in a body of naturally-occurring conversations. The purpose of this overview is twofold. Firstly, since not too many studies have been carried out on conversational American English, there is reason to investigate which linguistic expressions of epistemicity are in fact commonly used by American speakers to show their attitudes to knowledge, whether they favor certain expressions over others, whether they tend to express only certain semantic meanings, whether these expressions differ from those used by native speakers of other varieties of English, and so on. As will be established, a fairly limited set of epistemic markers are actually used by the speakers with any frequency; epistemic stance in everyday spoken American English turns out linguistically to be highly regular and routinized. Secondly, this part of the study is an exploration into the recurrent patterns formed by epistemicity in discourse and social interaction. I outline the discourse patterns exhibited by the most common markers in terms of their occurrence in certain positions in conversational discourse. As it turns out, the most relevant position is not best described in terms of a grammatical unit such as clause or sentence, but in terms of a prosodic unit that is sensitive to interactive requirements, namely the intonation unit (IU). The encoding of epistemicity in intonation units exhibits great consistencies and recurrent patterns in the data: by far the most frequent position for speakers to express their epistemic stance is at the beginnings of intonation units. Stance may also be encoded in a separate IU with some frequency, whereas stance marking is seldom done in IU-medial or IU-final position. However, as will become apparent,

there is clearly a functional divergence between encoding stance IU-initially and encoding it in a separate IU. It is worth emphasizing that such novel findings would not have been possible without starting out with the intonation unit as the locus of the expression and qualification of speaker commitment; I will discuss this issue further in Chapter 3 below. In this respect, then, this study continues the line of studies that originates in Chafe's idea of intonation units as the fundamental unit of discourse production (cf. Chafe 1979, 1987, 1994 for intonation units as idea units or foci of consciousness), where major research questions are formulated in terms of intonation units. My emphasis is not on their cognitive constraints, however, but on the interactional constraints that are relevant for their construction and sequencing. Finally, in addition to intonation-unit related occurrence, another relevant discourse position to examine is the placement of epistemic markers in conversational turns. Here, again, a pattern emerges: epistemicity is not typically a device used at turn transition but is more diffuse in nature, appearing within rather than at the beginnings or ends of conversational turns. This makes it potentially a very local interactional device, and simultaneously a manifestation of the emergent nature of utterances and turns-at-talk.

The second major goal of this book, to be presented in Chapter 5, is to further highlight the essentially interactive nature of stance-taking. This is done through a close qualitative analysis of the interactional functions of the most frequent epistemic item in American English everyday speech, *I think*. Following the theoretical assumptions and adopting the methodology of conversation analysis, I analyze *I think* within the sequential and activity contexts in which it occurs in the data. In addition, I pay a great deal of attention to an aspect of that context that has not received enough attention in CA, namely prosodic contextualization cues that yield highly situated interpretations of the functions of *I think*. These cues include, firstly, the encoding of *I think* in terms of intonation units, which is clearly shown to be of relevance for the interactional functions of this marker. Secondly, certain prosodic features, such as utterance stress, intonation, tempo, pitch, tone of voice, pauses and hesitations, are paid systematic attention to, and are shown to similarly greatly impact the type of functions that *I think* may have in interaction. The types of functions established for this marker differ, firstly, according to whether *I think* is intonation-unit-initial (by far the most common encoding for this marker) or occurs as a separate intonation unit. Secondly, further differentiation of the functions is possible in the intonation-unit-initial cases, depending on how *I think* is realized in finer prosodic detail, especially in terms of accent and tempo.

The organization of this study is as follows. This chapter will further discuss the data and the transcription methodology used for the present work in Section 1.3, while Section 1.4 highlights the relevant analytic organizations in conversation analysis. Section 1.5 argues for the approach adopted here of including a whole array of epistemic markers in the initial analysis while concentrating only on one epistemic marker (*I think*) in a more rigorous analysis of the interactional functions. In Chapter 2, I present a summary of earlier semantic and pragmatic-interactional studies on epistemic modality. In Chapter 3, I summarize the necessity of, and advantages obtained from, taking the intonation unit rather than the more traditional clause (or sentence) as our main analytical unit. Chapter 4 gives an extensive overview of epistemic markers as they occur in my database: which items in fact occur in American English conversation, what their semantic-cognitive meanings are, and what kind of recurrent discourse patterns they form in terms of their position within intonation units and speaking turns. Chapter 5 presents the functional analysis of one epistemic marker, *I think*. Finally, Chapter 6 makes some concluding remarks and examines the implications of this study for the organization of the grammar of English and, more widely, for the field of functional linguistics.

1.3 Database and transcription: Principles and conventions

My data come from the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*, or SBCSAE (Du Bois 2000a), collected in the Department of Linguistics, University of California at Santa Barbara.[1] SBCSAE consists of audiotaped recordings representing naturally-occurring and grammatically standard American English as it is spoken in different parts of the country, by an ethnically and socially diverse set of speakers. A leading principle in the collection of this database was that the recordings should be as natural as possible. In many cases, the participants of the conversations were left to do the recording themselves; the tape-recorder was left with them for a period of time (sometimes for a few days), with the advice to leave it running while they were attending to their normal daily businesses. These data are therefore ideally fitted for a study of any interactional aspects of conversational American English. Since I was not directly personally involved (nor in many cases was any other researcher) in making the recordings, this enables and even forces me as an analyst to rely exclusively on the participants' own procedures for producing interaction and showing commitment. Also, the ethnographic information that is available for the speakers, the setting, and the speech event, proved relevant for the actual analysis

only sporadically, even though it of course widened the analyst's knowledge of the cultural context within which the interactions were embedded. Such background knowledge did not necessarily bear in any clear way on the analysis of a given occurrence of *I think*, for example, and is indeed not made use of in any systematic way in either of the main parts of the study. Instead, what was of crucial importance was the sequential location of a given utterance or action, both locally, or in terms of what preceded (and followed), and globally, in terms of where the speech segment fitted in in the larger sequence of events in the interaction.

The database consists of five conversational segments or excerpts, *A Book about Death*, *A Tree's Life*, *Tell the Jury That*, *Lambada* and *This Retirement Bit*. These segments are 15–25 minutes long, and the data amount to 1 hour 43 minutes of conversation, in all comprising 5,402 intonation units. An additional corpus of 8 conversational excerpts is used for comparison in the analysis of *I think*. In the five conversations there are 15 speakers, 5 male and 10 female, who represent an ethnically, socially and geographically diverse set. Some information on the recordings, including ethnographic information on the speakers, is given below.

A Book about Death
(Filename: Death)
A conversation between a couple who are lying in bed late at night, recorded in Santa Barbara, California, in 1989.
Pamela: in her thirties, white, southern California native, college degree, actress / film maker.
Darryl: in his thirties, white, southern California native, college degree, employment in communications / computer graphics, works as graphic artist.

A Tree's Life
(Filename: Tree)
Late-night conversation between two sisters, recorded in Pryor, Montana, in 1992.
Alice: age 28, Crow Indian, currently a student at a local community college.
Mary: age 27, Crow Indian, currently unemployed but does a number of part-time jobs, including working as a cook and a firefighter.

Tell the Jury That
(Filename: Telljury)
An attorney preparing two witnesses to testify in a criminal trial, recorded in San Francisco, California, in 1993.
Rebecca: age 31, white, northern California resident, attorney.
Rickie: early twenties, African American, San Francisco native, claims clerk, Arnold's wife.
Arnold: early twenties, white, grew up in Saginaw, Michigan, currently in the U.S. Army, Rickie's husband.
Jill: age 21, white, southern California native, graduate student.

Lambada
(Filename: Lambada)
After-dinner conversation among four friends in San Francisco, California, in 1990.
Harold: age 34, white, California native, software engineer, Jamie's husband.
Jamie: age 26, white, northern California native, dance teacher, Harold's wife.
Miles: in his thirties, African American, doctor in San Francisco.
Pete: age 33, white, southern California native, graduate student.

This Retirement Bit
(Filename: Retire)
A conversation among three friends before lunch, recorded in Tucson, Arizona, in 1993.
Doris: age 83, white, formerly an educator.
Sam: age 71, white, formerly a school nurse.
Angela: age 90, white, formerly in journalism.

My focus is in general on the study of conversational language as it manifests itself in casual everyday interactions. Ten Have (1990: 35) argues that the commonplaceness of conversation has been an asset rather than a deficiency in studies on talk-in-interaction, since there is no obvious, pre-given functional significance to prejudge what is happening in the data, as might be the case with talk in more institutional settings. In view of the latter, research in conversation analysis has shown that various institutions are "talked into being" within the local sequences of talk (Heritage 1984a: 290). One of the above transcripts, *Tell the Jury That*, even though conversational in tone, represents a more task-oriented type of interaction and already borders on institutional discourse.

The attorney, Rebecca, is responsible for bringing up certain issues in order to prepare the witnesses to appear in court shortly after the interaction took place. Yet, turn-taking procedures, for example, have been claimed to be either conversational or 'quasi-conversational' in such less formal and more private types of institutional interaction (Heritage 1995: 409), and I indeed consider this segment to represent (one end of) conversational discourse.

The corpus data were transcribed using the conventions in Du Bois et al. (1991, 1993, cf. Appendix 1). The transcription process involved a team of transcribers, including myself, and several rounds of transcription and checking, with repeated reconciliation sessions to arrive at an accepted version of some problematic point. The transcription methodology used draws primarily from two sources, from the techniques commonly used in CA (e.g. in Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1978) and from the work of Chafe (e.g. 1979, 1987, 1994) that acknowledges the importance of the *intonation unit* (variously referred to as tone group, tone unit, or intonational phrase in some earlier research) as the fundamental unit of discourse production. Thus, the data are transcribed into intonation units, or stretches of speech uttered under a single intonation contour, such that each line represents one intonation unit. Du Bois et al. (1991: 100) also define four other criteria used for identifying and classifying these units. They include a resetting of the baseline pitch level at the beginning of the unit, a pause at the beginning of the unit, a sequence of accelerated syllables at the beginning of the unit, and a prosodic lengthening of syllable(s) at the end of the unit. They also observe that the presence of these cues is neither a necessary nor sufficient criterion of IU status. In general, however, the interrater reliability accomplished in the perceptual identification of intonation units was very high in the transcription process. By *utterance*, finally, I mean a prosodic unity that consists of a syntactic and semantic whole, which often coincides with intonation unit but which may also override the boundaries of IUs (cf. Schiffrin 1987: 33–34 for a discussion of utterance and other units of talk).

As became clear from the above, the intonation unit is the most important type of *prosodic feature* transcribed in the data. Other prosodic phenomena have not often received systematic attention in functional studies to date, not even in those that acknowledge the intonation unit as a fundamental unit of speech production. And as Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996b: 46) observe, even though in CA research there may be "an impressive arsenal of transcription symbols for the representation of prosody," prosody nevertheless figures surprisingly little in the actual analysis. Initially, the corpus data in my study were transcribed with no specific research questions or specific researchers in mind, and were intended for a possibly wide range of uses and users. The tran-

scription was intended as a broad transcription, giving information primarily on the words spoken, the speakers, intonation units, transitional continuity of intonation at the ends of IUs, overlapping speech, pauses (but with no attempt to measure their exact length), laughter, vocal noises, uncertain hearings and indecipherable words. Some types of voice qualities were also transcribed, precisely when they were distinctive or judged to be potentially interactionally relevant. Depending on the research interests of individual researchers, the broad transcript can then be made narrower and more sensitive to features that are deemed relevant for the conversationalists and the interaction in question. In the course of my research I added the following prosodic features to the transcript at relevant points; the identification of these features was based on auditory or perceptual, rather than instrumental, analysis. First of all, I identify utterance *accent*, both primary and secondary. Primary accent is characterized by a prominent pitch movement that carries intonational meaning (Du Bois et al. 1993: 57), although a syllable or word bearing primary accent tends to be loud and long as well (Couper-Kuhlen 1986: 79). There can be more than one primary accent in an IU, but it is also possible for none to be present (Du Bois et al. 1993: 57). Secondary accent, by comparison, does not show any pitch movement, and it is less loud and/or is not necessarily marked by lengthening of sound(s); yet a syllable or word showing secondary accent is more "marked" than the surrounding nonaccented syllables or words. Secondly, I have marked certain voice qualities at a much higher level of sophistication than in the original broad transcription: *loudness* (loud or soft speech), levels of *pitch* (especially high pitch), as well as *tempo* and *rhythm* (rapid speech, slow speech, halting speech, marcato speech). Thirdly, as regards the marking of *pauses*, I have not measured them instrumentally but have only counted their length at relevant points, using the method of slow and regular counting and claiming an accuracy of 0.5 seconds at the most.[2]

1.4 Conversation analysis: Four types of interactional organization

After a linguistic point of departure, my general frame of reference in this book will be conversation analysis, an approach to the study of spoken interaction developed by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson within the theory of ethnomethodology. Conversation analysis is essentially the study of methods of conversational action (Heritage 1995). In this section I briefly highlight the types of interactional organization, or the local management systems of conversation established in CA, which are also relevant for the explication

of the patterning of epistemic stance in interaction (for a more comprehensive treatment of the principles and theoretical assumptions of CA see e.g. Levinson 1983; Heritage 1984a, 1989; Taylor & Cameron 1987; Psathas 1990, 1995; Nofsinger 1991; Sacks 1992; Pomerantz & Fehr 1997; Hutchby & Wooffit 1998; ten Have 1999).

As Schiffrin (1994: 236) puts it, a distinctive feature of CA is that it searches for recurrent patterns, distributions, and forms of organization in large corpora of talk, in order to come up with evidence for the presence of units, existence of patterns, and formulation of rules. Conversation analysts thus attempt to identify and analyze recurrent interactional structures or patterns, and to show that the participants themselves orient to certain sequential expectations in talk-in-interaction. CA has been very successful in discovering new phenomena in the sequential organization of interaction. A large body of research has concentrated on showing that speakers are in fact implicitly aware of many local management systems of interaction. Such systems or types of interactional organization include (1) the fundamental nature of adjacent positioning of utterances in conversation and the concept of adjacency pairs, (2) the organization of preference in interaction, (3) the management of turn-taking in interaction, and (4) the related concepts of recipient design and participation framework.[3]

(1) Heritage (1984a: 260–261) describes the significance of the *adjacency* of utterances in conversational organization through the following assumptions. Firstly, an utterance which is placed immediately after another one is to be understood as produced in response to or in relation to the preceding utterance. Secondly, if a speaker wishes some contribution to be heard as unrelated to an immediately prior utterance, s/he must do something to lift the first assumption (by prefixes like *by the way*). In other words, conversationalists generally assume that adjacently placed utterances are to be heard in relation to one another. On the other hand, some current turn's talk may project a relevant next activity or range of activities, and a "most elementary instance" of this phenomenon is the *adjacency pair* (Heritage 1984a: 245–247). Heritage cites Sacks, who characterized the adjacency pair as a sequence of utterances which are adjacent and produced by different speakers, and which consists of a first part that makes relevant a particular second part (or a range of second parts). Heritage further argues (1984a: 247) that the production of an utterance identifiable as a first pair part, e.g. a question, selects a next speaker who should immediately proceed to produce the appropriate second pair part. This constraint is described as *conditional relevance* of a second action

upon a first. The relevance of an answer, however, may be held in abeyance while preliminaries are sorted out in numerous levels of embedding of insertion sequences (Levinson 1983: 304–305). And when the appropriate next action does not occur, the matter is especially accountable. A large body of research in CA has studied adjacency pairs such as question–answer, invitation–acceptance/refusal, offer–acceptance/refusal and accusation–denial/admission (e.g. Pomerantz 1978; Davidson 1984; Goodwin & Goodwin 1987), or some interactional phenomenon in terms of such pairs (e.g. Heritage & Sorjonen 1994; Beach & Metzger 1997). As will be seen in Chapter 4, the notion of adjacency pair and adjacent positioning of utterances is crucial for the description of the interactional working of *I think*.

(2) A related sequential principle in CA is *preference organization* (Pomerantz 1984, cf. also Levinson 1983; Nofsinger 1991), or the structural preference for certain types of second pair parts over others. Preferred second pair parts tend to be structurally simple, while dispreferred second parts tend to be complex. For example, a preferred type of second pair part to an invitation, namely an acceptance, typically involves a simple acceptance without delay, while a dispreferred type, a rejection, routinely incorporates delays, prefaces (like *uh*, *well*, token agreements, qualifiers or hesitations), accounts (explanations for why the invitation is not being accepted) and/or a mitigated or indirect declination component (Heritage 1984a: 266–267). Conversation analysts are careful to point out that the concept of preference is not related to the speakers' or hearers' individual preferences but is simply a structural or formal preference. Taylor and Cameron (1987: 113–114) criticize this concept as "absurd," however, and argue that preference relations have a functional and/or psychological basis. This is in fact being acknowledged by some CA practitioners, who tie preference to the notion of 'face' (cf. Heritage 1984b, 1989; Lerner 1996; Piirainen-Marsh 1996 for such views, for example). Again, we will see in connection with *I think* that the notion of dispreferredness needs to be complemented with that of face, to account for some uses of this item in interactionally charged, less routinelike environments.

(3) The seminal paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1978) laid the foundation for much of the work on conversational *turn-taking*, the third important local management system in interaction. Together with sequences and actions, it is of course turns within these sequences which are the means that the interlocutors use for talk-in-interaction, and turns are the primary units of analysis in CA. Sacks et al. (1978: 12) distinguish various unit types that may construct a

turn, including sentential, clausal, phrasal, and lexical constructions. Such unit types allow a projection of the unit-type under way, i.e. they allow the recipients to project what it will take for the unit to be completed. A transition from one speaker to another becomes relevant at the end of such a unit, at a 'transition relevance place' or TRP (Sacks et al. 1978: 12). However, Ford and Thompson (1996) expand the notion of TRP to include not just grammatical completion, but intonational and pragmatic completion as well. They in fact regard grammatical 'turn-constructional units' (TCUs), such as words, phrases, clauses or sentences, which were earlier treated as the *only* clue of TRPs in the CA literature, as the *least* relevant units for understanding the notion of a 'turn'. It is intonational completion that is decisive, since even pragmatic completion, i.e. that something is interpretable as a complete conversational action within its sequential context, is dependent on intonational completion: the listener would not be likely to judge an utterance as pragmatically complete unless it were intonationally complete (Ford & Thompson 1996: 150). The authors propose calling such conjunctions of intonational, grammatical and pragmatic completion 'complex TRPs', or CTRPs (1996: 154). Ford et al. (1996: 430) further question the fundamentality of the syntactically-based view of unit types, and even the necessity of clear units in the first place; they claim that utterances can have trajectories without being constructed out of clear units. They further claim that there are multiple practices, involving pragmatic fittedness of the utterance for its sequential slot, syntax, prosody, gaze and body movement, that contribute to, and sometimes conflict with each other, in the projection of upcoming turn completion. In their opinion (Ford et al. 1996: 442), rather than to ask how many TCUs an utterance is composed of, a more relevant question to ask is what the many practices are by which participants speak past a place of possible completion, and what they achieve by doing so. An important aspect of the present book will be to explore how epistemic marking relates to TCUs and turn completion. For example, there is evidence that some epistemic markers may extend a turn past a grammatical completion point, which may or may not simultaneously be an intonational (and pragmatic) completion point.

(4) A further type of interactional organization is the general principle of *recipient design* in conversation. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson first mention this principle in their turn-taking paper (1978): they use it to refer to the multitude of respects in which talk by one party is constructed in such a way as to display an orientation to the coparticipant(s). The authors mention word selection, topic selection, and the admissibility and ordering of sequences as areas of interaction where this principle is operative. The work of Charles Goodwin

has demonstrated the pervasiveness of this organizing principle in interaction. He (1981) stresses the emergent nature of turns-at-talk: speakers design but also redesign and modify the emerging meaning of their utterances to suit particular kinds of recipients. From the recipients' point of view, Goodwin and Goodwin (1992b: 163–164) state that listening to talk "involves constructing a continuously changing horizon of projected possibilities for what the unfolding talk might become." The related concept of *participation framework* in conversational interaction, introduced by Goffman (e.g., 1981a) and other scholars in interactional sociolinguistics, has been further elaborated on by Goodwin and Goodwin (e.g., 1987, 1992a, 1992b). According to their earlier work, differential access to knowledge constitutes one important aspect of participation. A story or even one utterance may be told differently to knowing than to unknowing recipients, or to unknowing recipients in the presence of knowing recipients (cf. Goodwin 1979). Also, recipients align themselves to something said by a speaker either as knowing or unknowing recipients. Later, however, Goodwin and Goodwin (1992a: 81) take participation in interaction to be a multichannel activity, involving an array of heterogeneous phenomena like syntactic position, intonation, body movement, displays of agreement, differential access to a world beyond the activity etc. Speakers may also show a range of different types of participation, from heightened participation to a trailing off of involvement, for example when an activity such as an assessment is collaboratively done and brought to a close by the participants (Goodwin & Goodwin 1992b: 169–170).

Even though conversation analysts have been largely preoccupied with the local management and the formal organization of discourse, there is now a growing body of studies that relate the phenomenon under investigation to its larger sequential, extralinguistic and social context (cf. research into talk in institutional settings). In the last thirty years or so, CA has indeed accumulated a body of "self-embedding findings that constitute the theoretical background for new empirical initiatives" (Heritage 1995: 410). The research in this book draws from that set of findings, whilst it simultaneously contributes to it from a linguistic perspective: prior linguistic (semantic and pragmatic) research has identified certain types of grammatical and syntactic expressions of epistemic modality as indicating a specific type of speaker stance, i.e. attitudes towards knowledge and commitment towards the status of the information offered. What still needs to be done, however, is to establish the recurrent interactional stance-taking practices of actual speakers in actual interactions, as well as the more specific interactional functions of individual stance markers.

1.5 Orientation of the present study

In the present study, I propose a functional and data-driven approach to this area of language use that differs from many earlier interactionally oriented descriptions. Many of the studies to be reviewed in Chapter 2 have imposed a pre-established top-down framework or taxonomy on a set of data. Here, however, I work from the data up. I do not approach these conversational data with a predetermined set of actions or illocutionary acts (cf. Searle 1975, 1976), nor with a top-down hierarchical model of spoken discourse (cf. Sinclair & Coulthard 1975; Edmondson 1981; Maynard 1993; Tsui 1994, etc.) or with principles established in linguistic pragmatics such as the politeness principle (Brown & Levinson 1987). I proceed through *close observation of the data* and of epistemic markers in the discourse environments within which they occur and in the social actions that they form part of. Even though I initially include the whole semantically-defined category of epistemic modality in the analysis, and establish some recurrent linguistic and discourse patterns for the category as a whole, I argue that it is not possible to carry out a rigorous analysis of the interactional functions in this way. Nor is it possible to posit just one or two superordinate functions to account for the system of epistemic modality as a whole. Quantification of the emerging discourse patterns serves as a means of drawing attention to and isolating this (as it turns out very prevalent) interactional practice (cf. Heritage 1995), but the determination of functions can only be done through close contextual study of each individual epistemic stance marker, with careful attention to the sequential and larger context of utterance as well as the many attendant prosodic contextualization cues that may impact its functions in actual interactions. In such analysis, a stance marker may turn out to have functions that have less to do with stance than with the organization of discourse, as will be established of *I think* in Chapter 5.

My conversational data invite attention to two main aspects of epistemic stance marking and stance-taking, to be elaborated on in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively:

1. Stance-taking in everyday spoken interaction can be viewed as highly regular and routinized in two respects. Firstly, only a *limited set of epistemic stance markers* are used by speakers with any frequency. Secondly, stance in interaction is predominantly expressed *initially*, i.e. before the actual issue or question at hand (which is expressed in the proposition or the associated clause or utterance, or sometimes in an extended sequence). Epistemic stance markers as a class show great unity in the way they form patterns in

the data in view of a relevant unit of social interaction, namely the *intonation unit*; they are predominantly placed at the beginnings of intonation units. This patterning in itself can be seen as interactionally motivated: establishing stance before the upcoming utterance helps recipients to align themselves to the unfolding turn.

2. Stance-taking is essentially interactively organized. It is an emergent *interactive activity*, an interactional practice engaged in by coparticipants in conversation, rather than an isolated mental position of an individual speaker. Displaying stance is engendered by what happens between the coparticipants in prior discourse, and displays of stance conform to and manifest aspects of interaction such as recipient design, pursuing uptake or signaling completion of one's turn-at-talk. Indeed, *I think* as one type of stance marker will be shown to arise from the immediate speaker–recipient interaction in certain recurrent sequence types (such as first assessments – second assessments).

Notes

1. I am deeply indebted to John Du Bois, Sandra Thompson and Wallace Chafe for the opportunity to contribute to this enterprise and to work in this project, in close co-operation with a group of other graduate students, and to be able to use these excellent data as research material for my dissertation.

2. Jefferson (as cited by Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996a: 43) recommends the method 'no one thousand, one one thousand, two one thousand, . . .' for slow and regular counting. Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996b: 43–44) indeed make the very good point that the overly "exact" marking conventions of pauses in CA, namely in tenths of a second, are nevertheless often based on slow and regular counting by the researcher, or at most on a stopwatch. Such figures imply exactness of measurement that is not always warranted. They also imply real-time objectivity, when in fact transcriber perceptions of what constitutes a pause are not necessarily the same as what the participants hear and/or orient to. The authors further argue that the conversationalists' notion of what constitutes a long or a short pause is not necessarily based on absolute time: it is the rhythm and tempo of surrounding talk which determine whether some absolute length of silence is perceived as long or short. Various types of computer software is of course nowadays available for exact clock-time measurement of pauses.

3. For lack of space, I leave out one important conversational management system here, that of interactional repair, but I fully acknowledge its import and role also in the expression of stance, as will become obvious in many of my examples in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2

Expression of epistemic stance
Preliminaries

In this chapter I define and delimit the semantic domain of epistemic modality, the overall starting-point for the present work (Section 2.1). Secondly, I give a brief review of the earlier pragmatically and interactionally oriented research into epistemic modality (Section 2.2).

2.1 Epistemic modality: Semantic definition

A great deal of the work done in trying to define the concept of modality in semantics has been heavily influenced by modal logic and the notion of possible worlds, in which propositions or events may be seen as 'real' or 'true' (cf. Perkins 1983; Palmer 1986).[1] Thus, modalities such as alethic (relating to the notion of truth), *epistemic* (relating to knowledge and belief), deontic (relating to duties), evaluative, boulomaic (relating to desire), causal, and likelihood modalities have been suggested by Rescher (Perkins 1983). Of these, it is primarily *epistemic* and *deontic modality* that are central from the point of view of natural language and that are also grammaticized in the system of English. Some researchers also distinguish a third type, commonly called *dynamic modality*, which relates to physical necessity and possibility (e.g. *He can swim*; notably Palmer 1979 and Perkins 1983, who combines Rescher's causal, likelihood, and boulomaic modalities under the notion of dynamic modality; Bybee et al. 1994, however, call this variety agent-oriented modality).

There are several other partially conflicting definitions of epistemic modality. As was stated above, this modality is related to knowledge and belief. Yet many researchers involve the notion of 'truth' in their definition of epistemic modality. Thus, Lyons (1977:797) states:

> Any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he utters, whether this qual-

> ification is made explicit in the verbal component [..] or in the prosodic or paralinguistic component, is an epistemically modal, or modalized, utterance.

Palmer variously refers to epistemic modality as an "indication by the speaker of his (lack of) commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed" and "as the degree of commitment by the speaker to what he says" (1986: 51), although the latter appears a much broader definition than the former. Coates (1990: 54) refers by epistemic meaning to the speaker's confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed in the utterance. And Bybee et al. (1994) argue that markers of epistemic modality indicate something less than a total commitment by the speaker to the truth of the proposition. As observed by Willett (1988: 52), such definitions are set in a context of a formal logician's view that propositions are either necessarily true, necessarily false or contingently true. The notion of truth of propositions has almost been a *sine qua non* in semantic research on modality, but it is not necessarily helpful for a more interactionally-based study such as the present one. My data do not show any clear orientation of the participants to the *truth* of what they are saying, but rather that they assess something as more or less reliable, or express their belief that such and such is the case, to name the two most common semantic meanings expressed in the database (cf. Section 4.3). Indeed, some researchers have opted for a less rigorous definition. Perkins for one (1983: 29–30) states that in their epistemic meanings the modals (i.e. the English modal auxiliaries) express the speaker's state of knowledge or belief or opinion about the proposition, while Holmes (1982) simply refers to epistemic modality as degrees of certainty. Even more broadly, Biber et al. (1999) define epistemic stance markers as presenting speaker comments on the status of information in a proposition. However, the *types* of epistemic modalities most commonly distinguished by many of the above scholars are possibility, probability and (inferred) certainty, whether they make reference to truth in their initial definition of epistemic modality or not.

The relationship between the notions of epistemic modality and *evidentiality* has further been somewhat problematic. Evidentiality has commonly been understood to refer only to the source of knowledge and the type of evidence that a speaker has for making a claim or assertion. Where evidentiality fits in with epistemicity and which one is considered the superordinate category varies from one researcher to the next. Thus, Chafe (1986) discusses evidentiality in a broad sense as attitudes toward knowledge, coding both the speaker's attitude towards the reliability of knowledge and his/her source of knowledge or mode of knowing, and Biber and Finegan (1989) likewise subsume epis-

temic modality under evidentiality. In contrast, Palmer (1986) explicitly includes evidentials under epistemic modality, suggesting that linguistic means like *it is said that* and *it appears that* are just one way of coding commitment or lack of commitment towards the truth of the proposition being expressed (cf. also Willett 1988; Traugott 1989 who adopt this view). Similarly, Biber et al. (1999) include under epistemic stance markers, not just certainty, actuality, precision and limitation, but also source of knowledge or the perspective from which the information is given.[2] There is indeed evidence that epistemic modality and evidentials are related (cf. Bybee et al. 1994: 180, for example) and the dividing-line between the two may be fuzzy. According to Traugott (1989), they also share a great number of similarities in their semantic development. The choice of one as a superordinate category over the other is then almost a matter of terminological convenience. In this book, I will adopt the possibly more widely held view and regard *evidential distinctions as part of the marking of epistemic modality*. This is motivated by my definition of epistemicity, namely as different ways of showing commitment towards what one is saying, or, specifying somewhat, as different attitudes towards knowledge (here I am drawing mainly from Chafe 1986 and Palmer 1986).

It is the notion of *subjectivity* that has been seen as the common property of both epistemic modality and evidentials (cf. Lyons 1977; Palmer 1986). A common characterization of modality has been that it is associated with the subjective characteristics of an utterance, i.e. the grammaticization of a speaker's subjective attitudes and beliefs, as opposed to an objective statement of a proposition.[3] Subjectivity has even been argued to be an essential criterion for modality (by Palmer 1986, for example).

Diachronically, Traugott (1989, 1995) claims that subjective meaning represents the last stage in semantic change, i.e. meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief or attitude towards the proposition. Subjectification according to Traugott is evidenced in lexical as well as grammatical change. Among other categories, she offers the development of the epistemic meanings of the English modal auxiliaries *shall, will* and *must*, as well as the epistemic adverbial *probably*, as evidence for her claim. In the case of the above modals the result is grammaticization from full verbs to auxiliaries, in that they first acquire a deontic meaning, then a weakly epistemic and finally a strongly epistemic meaning.[4] In the case of *probably* the development is from a "manner" adverbial, meaning 'plausibly, believably', to a modal sentential one. Based on Thompson and Mulac's study (1991a), Traugott (1995: 38) also concludes that the English *I think* is becoming more subjective both in

function (towards a fixed phrase indicating speaker's epistemic attitude) and also in the overwhelming selection of the first person subject form.

Also from a synchronic perspective, subjectivity is beginning to be seen as a major organizing principle in much of language use and is becoming a focal area in functionalist research, as it can be held to influence a wide range of aspects of linguistic form (cf. Dahl 1997; Hopper 1991; Iwasaki 1993; Scheibman 2001, 2002). Research is beginning to show that not just "traditional" categories of stance, such as mood and modality, are indices of speaker attitude, but that our everyday language use is inherently subjective at many levels. Biber et al. (1999: 859) observe that conversation is characterized by a focus on interpersonal interaction and by the conveying of subjective information. Thompson and Hopper (2001: 25) found that in American English conversation speakers do not talk much about events or actions, but rather display their identities, express feelings and attitudes, and check their views of the world with their community-mates. The authors found that the favorite grammatical constructions in conversational English are in fact intransitive verbal clauses (*I **forgot***), copular clauses (*it **was** confidential*) and epistemic/evidential clauses (***I don't think** it's workable*). In other words conversation does not contain many highly transitive "objective" clauses (of the type *Pat faxed Bill the letter*) at all, even though these have hitherto formed the basis for many theories of the grammar of English and other languages. Scheibman's (2002) study shows that most common in interactive American English discourse are those subject–predicate combinations that permit speakers to personalize their contributions, index attitude and situation, evaluate, and negotiate empathetically with other participants. Thus, even though epistemic modality by definition is an important manifestation of subjectivity in language, displays of subjectivity clearly extend beyond the category of modality in a narrow sense. This book, however, focuses only on what are traditionally considered tokens of epistemic modality, and one of its contentions is that epistemic modality is predominantly expressed, except by a rather small set of high-frequency items, also through explicitly personalized, or explicitly subjective forms (i.e. involving the first person pronoun) in conversational interaction. Chapter 4 is indeed dedicated to establishing and elaborating on the prevalence of subjective markers of epistemic stance (*I think, I guess, I don't know,* etc.) in everyday language use.

Epistemic modality can be expressed by a *variety of linguistic forms*, such as epistemic phrases, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, lexical verbs and participial forms. For decades, the emphasis in linguistic description was on the modal meanings of the English modal verbs, or modals (cf. the semantic treatments of Twaddell 1965; Ehrman 1966; Boyd & Thorne 1969; Bouma 1975; Hermerén

1978; Leech 1971; Palmer 1979; Coates 1983; Tottie 1985, for example). In addition to the epistemic forms listed above, Perkins (1983) also discusses the modal character of the linguistic categories of tense, *if*-clauses, and questions. One can go even further and claim that the notion of (epistemic) modality is not restricted to any specific formal category, but that modal expressions form an open-ended class, as is claimed by Simon-Vandenbergen (1996: 391). She argues that modality can be expressed by a combination of means such as verbs, adverbs, intonation, etc., and a modal meaning may even be conveyed in a preceding or following sentence. Simon-Vandenbergen looks specifically at political interviews, in which the marking of modal meaning tends to be more verbose and elaborate than in casual speech, and where the expressions chosen are indeed less conventionalized and less pre-patterned, and more circumlocutory (*it is our firm conclusion that*, *no one in their right mind is going to imagine that*, *we do accept that there is some evidence to suggest that*). Thus, even though it is certainly possible that modality, and subjectivity, can be produced locally in a number of ways in many discourse types and speech registers, by a potentially open set of items or even through prosody and paralinguistic means alone (cf. Lyons' definition above of epistemic modality that comprises the latter two), in actual everyday conversation it is only a handful of linguistic expressions that are frequently used and have become (or are becoming) sedimented. It is these that the present study sets out to identify in American English conversation, i.e. the focus is on these high-frequency items rather than on the local construction of epistemic stance in new and innovative ways.

Of further relevance for this book is the fact that the meanings of modal items, especially modal verbs, are at least to some extent *contextually determined*. Preisler (1986: 91, 96) makes the point that the basic meanings of modal forms are in themselves extremely general, and that for example the modal verbs are semantically inexplicit. This is why they are prone to take on overtones of interpersonal meaning which derive from the particular context in which they are used. Similarly, Simon-Vandenbergen (1992) observes that the meanings of modal elements like *of course* are very much contextually determined; a modal adverb like this has slightly different meanings in different instances. She therefore proposes that it is "useful to work with a core meaning of *of course*, which remains basically the same in all contexts, and to try to explain the interactional function of the item in different contexts" (1992: 214). Somewhat from a different angle, Biber et al. (1999: 972; cf. also Leech & Coates 1980; Coates 1983) claim that the meaning of a stance marker can be ambiguous in some cases: for example, the verb *hope* in the example *I* ***hope*** *there's enough there* conveys both a personal attitude (non-epistemic meaning) and

lack of certainty (an epistemic meaning). The contextual determination of meaning will become apparent in the case of *I think* in the present study, even though no invariant core meaning will be posited for this phrase for reasons that will become obvious (cf. also various attempts at such in the case of other modal elements, such as Perkins 1982, 1983 and Silva-Corvalan 1992).

2.2 Epistemic stance: Interactional approaches

Given that the speaker's subjective stance is inherent in the semantic meaning of epistemic items, we may even see in this a possibility for them to take on new interactive meanings and functions. We might argue that expressing anything over and above propositions is not absolutely "necessary" (cf. Grice's 1975 Cooperative Principle of maximally efficient communication), and since epistemic items are not part of the proposition but show attitudes towards it, they are then free to take on "higher-level" interactional functions and do other work in discourse. We in fact know that speakers seldom express naked propositions without coding their attitude to them or parts of them in some way; as was seen above (Section 2.1), language that conveys how things are from our perspective is prevalent in everyday American English and very likely in many other languages of the world. Epistemic modality is one routine way of conveying the speaker's perspective, and it thereby becomes part of the overall social dimension of the utterance.

There have been various attempts over the past decades in linguistic pragmatics and discourse analysis to examine the interactional functions of epistemic modality. These studies have often carved out the whole sub-system of epistemic modality, a coherent semantic domain, and have looked at what interactional functions can be established within it. Such research has variously termed this area of language use 'expressions of stance,' 'hedging devices,' 'boosters' or 'attenuators,' 'pragmatic force modifiers,' and the like. More recently, some conversation analytical studies have adopted a different approach: they have taken one epistemic item as object of close scrutiny, and have extracted multiple functions for it depending on the sequential and other contexts of occurrence. Below is a short summary of some relevant interactional approaches to epistemic modality.

Speech-act oriented linguistic work ultimately examined individual speakers and single turns as loci of pragmatic meaning. One common approach among them has been to regard epistemic modality as a strategy within the theory of *linguistic politeness* proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987);

very often epistemic markers have been said to act as hedges on illocutionary force. Thus, Holmes (1982, 1984) considers epistemic modality as part of a larger array of linguistic forms used for boosting or attenuating the illocutionary force of speech acts, for the purposes of orienting either towards the hearer's need to be liked and approved of (positive face), or towards his/her need to be unimpeded in his/her actions (negative face). Coates (1990) makes similar tentative observations about the face-saving function of modal forms, and Hübler (1983) and Markkanen (1985) examine the role of epistemic modality as a hedging device. Similarly, Nikula (1996) views a number of linguistic expressions that she calls pragmatic force modifiers as having a modifying function, whereby they act as hedges or emphatics, and simultaneously serving an interpersonal function, either that of politeness or of involvement. Her group of pragmatic force modifiers consists largely even though not exclusively of expressions of epistemic modality.

By extension, some attempts have been made to integrate various hedging and boosting material into a more unified *modal framework*. Stubbs (1986) brings a multitude of linguistic forms indicating propositional, illocutionary and lexical commitment or detachment into a unified modal grammar of English. Similarly, Maynard (1991, 1993) talks about non-propositional meanings or aspects of language (on the basis of Japanese), and brings them all into a wide and comprehensive framework of discourse modality. She (1993: 38) criticizes much earlier work for confining itself to limited grammatical categories without any attempt to incorporate the results into a comprehensive view of language as a whole.

Further, attempts have been made to analyze *speaker/writer attitudes*, or to identify different genres and speech styles on the basis of how they mark stance, evidentiality and affect. This is done by Biber and Finegan in two studies on written and spoken English data (1988, 1989). In the first of these (1988), the authors identify various stance styles by grouping texts into clusters according to maximally similar exploitation of stance adverbials. Later (1989), the authors consider the lexical and grammatical marking of evidentiality (cf. epistemicity in the present study) and affect, and conclude that the linguistic means used for expressing the speaker's stance in English are hedges, emphatics, certainty verbs, doubt verbs, certainty adverbs, doubt adverbs and possibility modals. The authors also observe that conversation is the most involved style in its marking of evidentiality. Of special importance for the present study are two observations made by Biber and Finegan. They point out (1988: 1, 30) that the discourse functions of stance adverbials often differ considerably from their literal meanings, and also observe (1989: 110) that in conversation cer-

tainty and doubt are sometimes expressed side by side, which they take to indicate that the focus is on involved interaction rather than precise semantic expression.

More recently, stance styles and stances have begun to be regarded, not as static phenomena residing within individual speakers, but responsive to interactional requirements and social contexts within which speakers and recipients interact. Thus, the focus has moved from the individual speaker towards a more dialogic approach, and towards the *social construction of meaning*. Fox and Clifford (1991) and Fox (2001; in effect a much later version of Fox and Clifford 1991) deal with grammatical evidentiality (i.e. information source) in English in the construction of authority, responsibility and entitlement. Fox and Clifford (1991) claim that evidentiality is employed by language users in constructing their authority to make particular claims in particular social interactions (drawing on the work of Du Bois 1986 on ritual speech, speech which constitutes an exception to this claim as it carries its own authority with no need for overt evidential marking). They present examples of how the evidential marking does not correspond in a simple way to the speaker's attitude towards the reliability or certainty of the proposition, but rather responds to the social context. Thus, for example, the speaker's real-world relationship to the knowledge does not always correlate with the evidential marker chosen, and speakers may also vary the evidential marking of an otherwise similar utterance or claim on different occasions because their authority to make the claim may vary from context to context, or they may want to show awareness of the sensitive relationship between speaker and recipient(s). Fox (2001) concludes that evidential marking is not only responsive to and constructive of the relationship between speaker and recipient, but also of the sequential location in which the utterance is produced.

Similarly, He (1993) also argues that modality points to the social construction of knowledge systems and of the relative discourse statuses between the participants in interaction. He studies modality in institutional discourse within the framework of interactive discourse analysis, drawing insights from conversation analysis. In academic counseling encounters, knowledge about institutional structures, roles and goals inhabits the details of the participants' moment-by-moment conduct, so that speakers modify their modal values according to several factors. Following Halliday, He divides modal operators (auxiliaries) and modal adjuncts into low and high categories: low modality is expressed by modals like *can*, *may*, *don't have to* and adjuncts like *I don't know*, *I think*, *I don't think* and *perhaps*, while high modality is conveyed by modals like *must*, *should* and *have to* and adjuncts like *I'm sure*, *certainly*, *of course* and

never (He 1993:510). Both students and counsellors use high modality values when they are dealing with facts. Students use low modality values to make requests, to state personal preferences and desires, and to proffer solutions to their own academic problems. Counsellors on the other hand resort to low value elements to suggest means, methods, and options to the students, as well as to give advice. Interestingly, He claims that when high-value modal elements are used by the counsellors to give advice, these are often preceded by low-value modal adjuncts such as *I think* or *might*, to mitigate the force of the advice, as in *Uh* ***I think*** *you* ***should*** *late-drop (.2) these classes* (1993:522).

Finally, there are a handful of conversation analytic studies that only take an individual epistemic item and regard it within the different sequential and activity environments in which it occurs. They thus shift the focus from individual turns to sequences of turns. Such studies thereby uncover functions for epistemic markers to do with issues of recipient design and face, but also with the organization of discourse. Tsui (1991) describes *I don't know* (an epistemic item) in terms of its sequential placement, as a marker used for avoiding assessment, prefacing disagreements, avoiding explicit disagreements, avoiding commitment, minimizing impolite beliefs and indicating uncertainty. In other words, even though *I don't know* is a "declaration of insufficient knowledge" (Tsui 1991:620–621), it acquires several interactional functions when the utterance occurs in different sequential environments. But the overall pragmatic motivation behind its production, Tsui claims, is often a concern to save face of self and other (1991:607); in other words Tsui's presentation may be argued to be somewhat limited precisely because of her attempt to relate the established functions to the pragmatic notion of face, as she thereby ignores certain other functions.

Indeed, in a more recent approach to the same epistemic item by Beach and Metzger (1997), functions having to do with regulating what will be talked about, for example, are established. Like Tsui, the authors view *I don't know* as claiming insufficient knowledge but observe that *I don't know* utterances may involve what they call proactive displays of interactional conduct. Thus, only in partial overlap with Tsui's list of functions, this item may be strategically and ambiguously used in troubles-telling, avoiding agreement/disagreement, moving towards completing stories, and postponing or withholding acceptance of others' invited and/or requested actions. Only some of those functions could be claimed (but are actually not by the authors themselves) to be motivated by considerations of face, while functions such as disattending and transitioning (i.e. towards completing stories, finalizing conclusionary assessments, and getting off troubling topics) seem to have a regulating role in discourse.

Finally, Tainio (1997) examines conversational turns involving markers of remembering in Finnish (*mä muistan* 'I remember' and *mä en muista* 'I don't remember'): how such turns structure conversation, what kind of activity they are interpreted as, and how they regulate the participation framework of conversation. One important function of such turns is to minimize the difference between knowing and unknowing recipients, as already claimed by Goodwin (1987). Another function can be to account for dispreferred second pair parts in conversation, i.e. as a manifestation of social solidarity. Interestingly, Tainio gives examples of cases where speakers may claim that they do not remember, when there is in fact some evidence that they do, and that presenting oneself as not possessing some information can be used to perform certain interactional functions in conversation.

2.3 Conclusion

We have seen that there is a growing body or research that shows that epistemicity in English is made use of by speakers in interaction to achieve rather diverse social functions: a politeness/face-saving function, the function of constructing one's authority or the relevant discourse statuses of participants, the function of achieving certain conversational actions within certain sequential environments (such as avoiding agreement or disagreement in certain sequential slots like second pair parts), the function of regulating aspects of interaction (like topic transition or the participation framework), or simply the function of displaying (true or "fake") uncertainty. What is common to the more recent body of work is that they focus *not* on the speaker's expressed commitment or attitude towards knowledge as such (as a cognitive phenomenon), but on the interactional use that such expressions and attitudes may be put in an actual social context, and what kind of interactional effects and consequences they may have on the *recipient(s)* and on the interaction process.

What also emerges from these studies, especially from the studies of Biber and Finegan (1988, 1989), Fox and Clifford (1991)/Fox (2001), and Beach and Mezger (1997), is the relatively unimportant role of the precise semantic meaning of epistemic items, while their functions can be multiple depending on the sequential environment and the larger social context.

Finally, however, it is possible to criticize some of the earlier speech-act based treatments of epistemic modality in view of the approach and the method of analysis that they have adopted. Their tendency was to encapsulate a vast array of epistemic markers into a uniform functional description,

rather than focusing on the range of interactional functions of individual items. Many of these studies are based on the widely acclaimed politeness taxonomy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), which in turn is based on Goffman's notion of maintenance of 'face' as a necessary condition of interaction. In effect these studies impose a top-down model on the data and attempt to subsume all the emerging functions under this overarching superfunction. Such analyses are likely to ignore functions of epistemic items that do not conform to the idea of linguistic politeness and face-saving.[5] Furthermore, such general pragmatic principles were not originally constructed on the basis of examining utterances in sequence, and they are not likely, nor intended, to capture all aspects of discourse and interaction. They are also based on the premise that speech acts are in principle identifiable by the analyst after the interaction has taken place, i.e. they represent an analyst-oriented or *etic* approach. Such an approach is based on classifications and interpretations made by the researcher, but it may be questioned whether the same categories of speech acts, for example, are recognized by the conversationalists themselves (cf. Taylor & Cameron 1987:48). The frameworks of Maynard (1991, 1993) and Stubbs (1986), on the other hand, appear premature and much too broad to be illuminating. What we need prior to a postulation of a comprehensive model of how language works are many more careful empirical studies on the social functions of even very limited areas of language. Hence, we need many more close qualitative analyses of individual modal items in the sequential contexts in which they occur, as has been done in some of the more recent studies. Some of these, especially those drawing on conversation analysis (e.g. Tsui 1991; Beach & Mezger 1997), represent a participant-oriented or *emic* approach to naturally occurring spoken interaction, and have unraveled functions that had not hitherto been established. Indeed, when we look very closely at just one display of stance in its various sequential environments (as was done in the studies on *I don't know* referred to above), multiple functions are likely to emerge, some of which, such as the discourse organizational ones, are impossible to subsume under a superfunction like face-saving.

Notes

1. Modality has proved a rather difficult area to delimit and conceptualize already at the level of semantics. Perkins (1983:18) defines modality in a very broad way as "the qualification of the categorical and the absolute as realized [..] within the code of language." Such a notion necessarily cuts across many grammatical categories and includes lexical means as

well. Indeed, considerable confusion and disagreement prevail in linguistic theory on how the semantic area of modality and the grammatical category of mood should be defined and classified in the first place.

2. Biber et al. (1999:972) in fact include a wider range of semantic meanings than is perhaps customary in studies into epistemic modality, such as actuality (*actually*, *in fact*), precision (*kind of*, *like*) and limitation (*typically*, *generally*).

3. The notion of the objectivity of propositions is not unproblematic, as it is possible to argue that the very choice of the lexical items within the proposition, or the choice of placing a noun phrase in the subject rather than, say, object position, is subjective (Sandra Thompson, personal communication). But there is a case for arguing that modal items in general are probably more inherently subjective than some of these choices.

4. *Shall* no longer has an epistemic meaning in modern English, but Traugott (1989:41–42) shows that *sculan* had at least a moderately strong evidential meaning in Old English, *sceolde(n)* 'supposedly.'

5. In Kärkkäinen (1991, 1992), I examined epistemic modality within the Interpersonal and Textual Rhetoric of Leech (1983). Because my focus was largely on the differences between non-native and native English speech, I relied on an already established pragmatic framework, and on experimental settings (simulations and role-play situations) rather than naturally-occurring conversations. I attempted to account for the functions of all epistemic items in my data, starting from a hypothesis that they can be explained by the Interpersonal and Textual Rhetoric of Leech (1983). In the Interpersonal Rhetoric, politeness and tact figure highly, and the results were to some extent predictable, i.e. epistemic items were used to save face, both of hearer and of speaker. In addition, a "residue" was established of more strategic, manipulative and persuasive uses, which could at least in part be explained by the Textual Rhetoric.

Chapter 3

The intonation unit as analytical unit

In this book I have adopted the intonation unit as my basic unit of analysis. This is done because I wanted to explore the extent to which intonation units can be viewed as units of interaction. Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996b: 16–17) observe that the basic prosodic phrase in speech is likely to be "a unit defined with respect to the utterance as a turn-constructional unit, a 'phonetic chunk' which speakers use to constitute and articulate turns-at-talk." Yet this area remains largely unexplored, and intonation units have primarily been viewed as units sensitive to cognitive rather than interactional constraints, as is briefly outlined in Section 3.1 below. However, I will lay down some arguments in Section 3.2 in favor of viewing them as very highly interactional units, and of choosing IUs rather than clauses or sentences as the analytical unit of preference.

3.1 Cognitive approaches to IUs

Within a cognitive view, intonation units have been established as functionally relevant segments of talk, and they have primarily been regarded as verbalization of information that is active in the speaker's mind at a given moment, and which the speaker intends to activate in the mind of the listener (Chafe 1987, 1994, 1998). Chafe has proposed a cognitive one-new-idea constraint for intonation units; one IU only contains at most one new piece of information. Intonation units have thus been regarded as units in the production of language that have to do with information flow and the referential aspects of discourse, such as referent introduction and tracking.

Gumperz (1992) likewise subscribes to a cognitive view of 'intonation groups' as idea units or information units or phrases. He observes that the occurrence of *of course* (an epistemic item) as a separate informational phrase, in a particular example that he gives, has the interpretive consequence of linking it with the preceding talk rather than with what follows. According to him, this "illustrates the methodological point that phrase [cf. intonation group] bound-

aries are not just "there" empirically, they are constructed and construed to serve rhetorical ends" (Gumperz 1992: 237). To him, the realization of *of course* as a separate IU is another 'contextualization cue', a foregrounding device.

3.2 IUs as interactional units

Intonation units have been observed to echo the syntactic structure of clauses especially, as some 60 percent of English IUs have been reported to consist of a single clause (Chafe 1994: 78). Yet in at least 40 percent of cases they are *not* coextensive with clauses but (usually) with parts of clauses, such as NPs, PPs, clause fragments, and so on. Du Bois et al. (1991: 101) also note that clauses and IUs as units diverge in interesting ways: a clause including a prepositional phrase may be spoken within a single IU, but on another occasion the same prepositional phrase will be presented in a separate IU. Can we provide an interactional explanation for this?

Schegloff (1996) draws our attention to the likelihood that aspects of the (grammatical) structure of sentences are to be understood as adaptations to their natural environment, namely turns-at-talk. And, he claims, the structure of turns-at-talk is *emergent* and *incrementally achieved*.

> Talking in turns means talking *in real time, subject to real interactional contingencies*. Whether articulated fluently or haltingly, what results is produced piece by piece, incrementally, through a series of "turns-so-far."
>
> (Schegloff 1996: 55)

The "turn-so-far" can thus consist of even just a sentence-initial particle or an interjection, which may now be treated as a turn-constructional unit (TCU) in its own right (Schegloff 1996: 56–57). On the other hand, even if the turn-so-far consists of a full clause with a clear completion point and a transition relevance place (TRP) at the end (based on final intonation, syntactic completeness and pragmatically completed action, cf. Ford & Thompson 1996), speakers nevertheless frequently add on a syntactic unit that can retroactively be integrated into the previous clause as a grammatical constituent. Ford, Fox and Thompson (2002b) present compelling evidence for two types of turn increments, extensions and unattached NPs; extensions are more relevant for our discussion here, while unattached NPs by definition indicate that the increment only consists of a syntactically independent noun phrase and not a full clause. Of extensions the authors say that they generally continue the action of the extended turn, by specifying when, where, or with whom the event being re-

lated took place. In the following example, *these days* can be seen as a temporal adverbial of the preceding clause.

Example from Ford et al. (2002b, originally analyzed in Goodwin 1981: 134–135)

John: An' how are you feeling?
(0.4)
these days,
Ann: Fa:t. I can't- I don't have a waist anymore,

John's utterance is possibly complete syntactically, prosodically, and pragmatically at the end of *feeling*. The extension that he adds after this 'host TCU' (cf. Schegloff 2002) is designed to deal with the problem that upon completion of the TCU he does not have a gazing recipient and there is no uptake from Ann (note the 0.4 second pause). The extension now offers a new point of completion where the recipient might meet the gaze of the speaker and start speaking, which indeed she does. Grammatically, extensions are said to include NPs used as temporal phrases (as in the above example), PPs, temporal or locative adverbials, infinitival clauses, relative clauses, and other types of subordinate clauses. By comparison, Schegloff (2000) estimates that three quarters of turn increments are either lexical or phrasal, while a smaller number consist of clauses and sometimes sentences.

One interactional motivation for adding an increment after a host TCU is indeed an attempt to deal with lack of recipient uptake. But Schegloff (2000) argues that such turn increments potentially have as many types of interactional functions as there are interactional junctures to be managed; they can be used to manage problematic turn transition, but also more generally to manage recipient design problems, such as redesigning the turn for some other recipient. If we wish to describe those functions in detail, and make connections between the functions and the structure of sentences and clauses as they emerge through time, we need to be very aware of how speakers produce the chunks that make up the sentence or clause. It can be argued that the way we transcribe our data already affects this to a large extent; it is clearly very advantageous to transcribe data into IUs, because the very visual representation, with IUs lined up on separate lines, immediately alerts us to the possibility that the construction of a turn is incremental rather than produced as one long chunk (as any data example in this study will make apparent).

However, not just turn increments as described above are indices of the emergent nature of turns. All units that turns consist of, or all TCUs, are emergent but also *directional*, available to participants as they unfold and not only once they have been produced and completed (Lerner 1996: 307). For example,

same-turn self-repair and other types of on-line modifications of the emergent turn by the current speaker are clearly directional and can be shown to be sensitive to intonation units: in my data they regularly start a new IU, so that a TCU that started out as being produced in one IU ends up being produced in two. I will show at several points in this study (e.g. with examples (12)–(19)) that modifying or repairing one's speech by inserting an epistemic marker in the TCU-in-progress takes place by inserting the item IU-initially. The following is an example of this (represented as example (18) below).

(1) Telljury 835–840[1]

	REBECCA:	.. a man would never do that.
		[Bec]ause,
	RICKIE:	[Mhm].
		[2(SNIFF)2]
	REBECCA:	[2(H)2] number one they pick out,
⇒		.. ***I think*** .. more vulnerable people.

This is interactional work that faces forward and frames a (new) stance on the rest of the utterance, usually for very clear interactional reasons (see example (54) for a full description of what these might be). Treating such cases as primarily "clause-medial" rather than "IU-initial" would not bring out the emergent nature of talk at all; such epistemic items are not "randomly" inserted in the middle of a clause but qualify the immediately following part of the utterance. If we take seriously the emergent, incremental and directional nature of TCUs and turns as a whole, it becomes very likely that the piece-by-piece construction of turns has a great deal to do with intonation units. Even though we do not wish to go as far as to claim that intonation units are coextensive with TCUs (cf. Lerner 1996 for compound TCUs which are likely to be produced as two or more IUs), there is clearly a need to carefully explore the connection between them.

Finally, in my analysis it became at times problematic to view especially epistemic phrases such as *I think* and *I guess* in relation to a grammatical unit such as the clause. For example, it would be difficult to say in the following example which clause the epistemic phrase *I guess* is part of, since this epistemic item constitutes an intonation unit of its own (cf. Chapter 4 for a definition of epistemic phrase).

(2) Lambada 858–867

	MILES:	But uh,
		(H) I was just remembering being surpri=sed,

cause,
(H) I didn't realize,
.. I don't know anything about Brazilian music.
you go to the- .. Brazilian club,
and they're singing .. songs,
(H) ... apparently ***I guess*** that's the popular stuff.
⇒ .. ***I guess***.
... I'm so used to hearing those songs,

In this example, the phrase at the arrow is preceded by final intonation, i.e. what looks like a complete clause (which is in any case already qualified by *I guess*). The separate intonation unit appears to constitute a clause on its own, added on after a complete clause. There are some epistemic phrases that frequently occur as separate intonation units, which, as we will see, may have a direct bearing on the interactional function of the given phrase.

3.3 Conclusion

Because of the above, I find it both relevant and convenient not to account for the occurrence of epistemic items primarily in relation to clauses, even though I fully acknowledge that 'clause' is a relevant category for spoken discourse. Instead, I focus on the intonation unit as the locus or relevant unit for the expression of epistemic stance. Such a focus allows, and even forces, me to approach the expression of epistemic stance from an entirely new perspective, taking the emergent and directional construction of turns and TCUs fully into account. Such an approach represents a move away from a grammatically-oriented view of the marking of epistemic stance, towards an interactional one. An important theme in this book will be to explore epistemic IUs, or intonation units that contain or consist of epistemic stance markers, in view of the interactional constraints that may be evident in their construction and sequencing. My finding, to be presented in Chapter 4, that the marking of epistemic stance is above all done at the beginnings of intonation units, and the concomitant observation that there is a difference in function between IU-initial realization and encoding as separate IUs, would not have been possible without starting from the intonation unit as the locus of the expression and qualification of speaker commitment. In Chapter 5, the interactional motivations of epistemic IUs will be explored in more detail.

Finally, some support for my approach can be found in recent literature that has taken intonation units into consideration, at least in passing, as potentially interactionally relevant. They have been examined as loci of interactional phenomena by Iwasaki and Tao (1993), Ono and Thompson (1995) and Ford and Thompson (1996), for example. Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996b: 16–17) also consider it likely that prosodic phrases are variously shaped because of the participants' need to project turn completion. They further consider it likely that prosodic phrases are sensitive to interactive requirements such as recipient design and local fit, and that they are in themselves subject to repair. And Du Bois (2003: 54) states that the IU plays an important role in much current research on spoken discourse and grammar, because of its status "as perhaps *the* fundamental unit of cognitive processing, social interaction, and other domains."

Note

1. The figures after the transcript name refer to the intonation unit numbers.

Chapter 4

Routinization of stance marking at the linguistic and interactional level

4.1 Introduction

I proceed to that part of the study which serves as a first characterization of the system and distribution of epistemicity in American English from an interactional point of view. An extensive overview of the expression of epistemic stance in the database is given, to provide an idea of the overall frequency of these items in conversational American English. Also, an outline is given of the linguistic expressions commonly used and of the semantic meanings preferred by the speakers in the database. As a second and partly simultaneous aim, the recurrent linguistic and discourse patterns are mapped out that emerge for the expression of epistemicity in the data, first in terms of the grammatical classes and syntactic types of expressions used, and then in terms of occurrence in intonation units, in sequences of intonation units, and in conversational turns. Thus, I move from a distinctly linguistic orientation towards a more interactional orientation.

My main claim in this chapter is that stance-taking can be viewed as *highly regular* and *routinized* (a) in terms of the linguistic forms used, as only a limited set of linguistic items tend to be used by speakers with any frequency, and (b) at the level of interaction, in that stance marking predominantly comes before the actual issue or question at hand.

This part of the study is both quantitatively and qualitatively oriented. It acts as input for the subsequent inductive and strictly qualitative analysis of the functions of *I think*, since we begin to see the diversity of the interactional functions of epistemicity already here. Furthermore, this overview will make clear that a very important analytical unit in terms of which epistemic stance is profitably described is the intonation unit. Section 4.4 indeed focuses on this aspect of prosody, or the occurrence of epistemic items in terms of intonation units, with less attention paid to other prosodic parameters. Epistemicity in re-

lation to sequences of intonation units and conversational turns-in-interaction will be discussed in Section 4.5.

4.2 Grammatical classes and syntactic types

This section presents some quantitative information on the grammatical classes and types of tokens that are the most common manifestations of epistemic modality in the data, including an analysis of the kind of syntactic types and patterns that they thereby constitute.

In an earlier study (Kärkkäinen 1991) I identified markers of epistemic stance in a cross-cultural body of data: 48 simulated task-oriented conversations between native speakers of English of various nationalities (mainly British) and advanced Finnish speakers of English. Of the total of 899 items found in the talk of native speakers of English, three main types of epistemic markers were prevalent. In order of frequency, these were modal adverbs (*really*, *perhaps*, *of course*, *maybe* etc.), epistemic phrases (*I think*, *I suppose*, *I don't think*, *I know* etc.), and modal auxiliaries (*might*, *will*, *should*, *may* etc.). Epistemic adverbs were clearly most common. Of these, especially *really* used as an evaluater, in other words as a disjunct and appearing clause-finally or in a separate tone unit (Stenström 1986: 149–163), was very frequent (98 instances). There were no great differences between epistemic phrases and modal verbs in terms of frequency, however.

My data on conversational American English show a slightly different pattern (I will comment on possible reasons below). Here it is clearly the epistemic phrases that are the most common. Modal auxiliaries are by no means the most frequent category of grammatical forms, even though they have been the focus of much semantic research so far (cf. Section 2.1). Modal adverbs are quite common in these data, too. Table 1 presents the grammatical classes that represent epistemic modality in the present database, in order of frequency.

As we can see, epistemic phrases are by far the most common group, even without the group of hearsay evidentials (I present separately the so-called hearsay evidentials that contain an utterance verb, in all 104 occurrences, to make comparison possible with Kärkkäinen 1991 where they were not included at all). Epistemic adverbs and modal auxiliaries come next. But there are only a handful of inherently epistemic adjectives, nouns or participial forms in the whole database.

Table 1. Grammatical classes representing epistemic modality

Grammatical class	*No. and percentage of occurrence*
Epistemic phrases	**242** (60.7%) + **104**
Epistemic adverbs	**75** (18.8%)
Epistemic modals and semi-modals	**71** (17.8%)
Epistemic adjectives	**6** (1.5%)
Epistemic nouns	**3** (0.8%)
Epistemic participial forms	**2** (0.5%)
	Total **399** (100%) [**503** in all]

Table 2. The most common epistemic markers and their frequency of occurrence in the database

I think	**46**	I can't believe	8
s/he said	**34**	looks like/to me	8
I don't know	**28**	of course	7
maybe	**26**	sure (adverb)	7
I said	**26**	I feel like	7
I don't know +compl.	**23**	seems like/to me	6
I guess	**20**	I don't think	5
I thought	**18**	I'm sure	5
probably	**17**	I figure	5
I'm thinking	11	true (adjective)	5
I remember(ed)	11	I know	5
would	11	s/he goes	5
must	10	I imagine	4
might	9	I know + compl.	4
could	9	I was thinking	4
will	9	should	4
may	8	(not) necessarily	4
apparently	8	definitely	4

In Table 2 we can see the most common epistemic markers in the database, regardless of which grammatical class they represent, plus the number of times each marker occurs in the corpus.

The items in bold are the ones that occur with high frequency. As can be seen from Table 2, there is a preference for epistemic stance to be expressed by a relatively *limited set of items* in the spoken American English of my database. On the other hand there are markers that only show one or two occurrences and are not included in Table 2. Such markers include *I bet*, *I assume*, *possibly*, *surely*, *I have no idea* etc., and some hearsay evidentials like *s/he told me*, *these*

men say, etc. that have considerable variation in form but which only occur a few times in the corpus.

Since both my databases (Kärkkäinen 1991 and the present one) represent conversational discourse, I assume that the differences observed between the relative frequencies of certain grammatical types are largely due to differing cultural preferences. Certain types of markers, especially the adverbs *really* and *perhaps*, are much more prevalent in British speech. I could not find one clear instance of *really* used as an evaluater in my present data (even though *really* used as an intensifier or as a reactive token occurs quite commonly), nor did *perhaps* occur once in these data.[1] These two markers alone may account for the fact that in my earlier data epistemic adverbs were so much more frequent than epistemic phrases, whereas the reverse is true of the present data.

In the following, I will comment on the relative frequency (or infrequency) of the various grammatical classes in the database, and also spend some time defining my criteria for the identification and (non)inclusion of certain "problematic" markers or borderline cases, especially within the groups of epistemic phrases and epistemic modal auxiliaries.

4.2.1 Lexical verbs: Epistemic phrases

In my database, the most common type of occurrence of epistemic modality was a cognitive or perception or utterance verb (cf. Givón 1993 for P-C-U verbs) with a first-person subject, with no complementizer *that* following.[2] Holmes (1982: 27, 1988: 43) proposes the following grammatical patterns expressing epistemic modality that may include a lexical verb:

a. I (think/believe/guess etc.) that p – personalized
b. It (seems/appears) to me that p – personalized
c. It (seems/appears) that p – impersonalized
d. NP (argues/claims etc.) that p
(NP is animate + 3rd person) – depersonalized

We can see in Table 2 that group (a) is by far the most frequent group of epistemic markers in the American English spoken discourse represented in my database. This group consists of personalized markers that clearly make reference to the speaker's subjective stance, such as *I think*, *I guess*, *I know*, *I feel* (*like*), *I found* etc. This finding gains strong support from two recent studies based on spoken language corpus data, those of Biber et al. (1999: 667–669) and of Thompson (2002). Also, groups (b) and (c) are quite common in my data: *seems* (*to me*), *looks* (*to me*), *sounds* (*to me*). But in all these groups the epistemic

construction is usually *not* followed by the complementizer *that* (in group c it is most likely to be followed by *like*), which has implications for the grammaticization of these markers (cf. immediately below). Group (d), finally, does not occur in my data; it is a depersonalized way of expressing stance, by which Holmes appears to mean that this form does not involve the speaker's own personal stance but somebody else's. As we will see below, attributions of stance to a third party are most commonly achieved by other utterance verbs in the data (cf. *s/he said*), in other words by a rather limited set of epistemic phrases.

The verbal categories (a), (b) and (c) proposed by Holmes have elsewhere been treated under the term 'parenthetical clause' or 'comment clause' (cf. Urmson 1963; Markkanen 1985; Quirk et al. 1985; Thompson & Mulac 1991a, 1991b; Givón 1993; Biber et al. 1999). Parenthetical clause, or simply, parenthetical, is a wider term than epistemic modality and may comprise non-epistemic types as well, such as pragmatic particles (*you know*, *I mean*). According to Quirk et al. (1985: 1112), 'comment clauses' are "content disjuncts that serve to express the speakers' comments on the content of the matrix clause, or style disjuncts that convey the speakers' views on the way they are speaking." Yet according to a widely held (grammatically based) view that was put forth by Urmson (1963: 221), parenthetical verbs are psychological or mental verbs which in the first person present can be used followed by *that* and an indicative clause, or else can be inserted at the middle or end of the indicative sentence; thus, whether the first person subject + verb construction can be moved from the initial position to the middle or end of the sentence works as a test of the parenthetical use of the verb (Markkanen 1985: 47). Quirk et al. (1985: 1113), finally, claim that the meaning of the verb can be criterial for what counts as a comment clause: in comment clauses the verb may only have a hedging or tentative meaning and no longer a more definitive (compositional) meaning:

> Quirk et al. (1985: 1113)
> *I believe that* there is a God. – matrix clause + *that*-clause
> ['I assert the belief that there is a God' or 'There may be a God.']
> There is a God, *I believe*. – main clause + comment clause
> ['There may be a God.']

Parenthetical clauses have presented a problem for syntactic analysis – another good reason for us to focus on intonation units rather than clauses. Markkanen (1985: 45, 57) observes that they are not independent sentences and yet are only loosely connected with the sentence within which they occur. Many researchers have also encountered problems in deciding what constitutes the main vs. sub-

ordinate clause in the case of initially-occurring comment clauses. Quirk et al. (1985: 1112–1113) observe that when a comment clause occurs initially, it becomes very hard to distinguish it from a main clause, the only difference between them being intonation. In other words, the authors consider comment clauses to be subordinate to the rest of the sentence. Givón in turn regards epistemic quantifiers (as he calls these 'seemingly parenthetic constructions') as main clauses that may obtain a complement clause (1993: 37). Biber et al. (1999: 864–865) consider initially-occurring comment clauses like *I think* main clauses taking a *that*-complement clause (with, as they say, *that* regularly omitted in conversation); however, when these markers are not integrated into the clause structure and occur in medial or final position, they are termed 'finite clause stance adverbials.' In contrast to the above grammatical treatments, Thompson (2002) argues that in many cases the complement in fact overrides the 'main clause', which simply serves as a frame for the clause that it occurs with. The complement taking predicates (CTPs) and their subjects are stored and retrieved as schematic epistemic/evidential/evaluative *fragments* by speakers, to be used and reused as entire turns-at-talk or parts of turns. The epistemic/evidential/evaluative fragment simply provides a stance towards the actions, the assessments, claims, counterclaims and proposals, being made in the associated utterance. The most frequent CTP phrases become relatively *fixed epistemic formulas* (e.g. *I think / I don't think / I thought / I didn't think*), notably with 1st person subjects, while the less frequent ones show more diversity of form (e.g. *make sure*, *tell*, *be interesting*). Thompson and Mulac earlier (1991a, b) discussed two such formulas, *I think* and *I guess*, which have grammaticized into *epistemic phrases* that act in the same way as adverbs, i.e. as adverbials, and behave much like epistemic morphemes in other languages. The authors argued that when there is no complementizer *that*, the main clause subject and verb functions as an epistemic phrase, not as a main clause introducing a complement clause; a reanalysis by speakers has taken place here. Epistemic phrases are then in principle freely transportable to positions other than clause-initial position.

However, the claim about the grammaticization process resulting in *I think* without *that* is questioned by Rissanen (1991): he hypothesizes that *that* deletion or zero has simply been closely linked to spoken expression and may in fact have been the "unmarked link in speech throughout the Old and Early Middle English period" (Rissanen 1991: 283; cf. also Aijmer 1997). In light of this claim, then, we could not really speak of *that*-omission in the first place, but the emphasis should rather be on the functional explanation of cases where the complementizer does occur in conversation. Indeed, Aijmer (1997: 9–10)

hypothesizes that when *that* does appear, it may simply perform a specific function, e.g. mark the text type as more formal and prepared, or to mark the speaker stance as objective and fact-indicating rather than expressive.

The debate over the history of *that*-deletion notwithstanding, I find the term epistemic phrase syntactically most accurate, and least binding, and have adopted it in this book. This choice is also motivated by my overall focus on the sedimented, high-frequency stance markers in everyday language use. As will become apparent, a large majority of these are items that consist of the 1st person pronoun and a perception/cognition/utterance verb without *that*. What is more, such items turn out not to be "parenthetical" at all, but show a distinct preference for initial placement in the utterance.

As the few cases in the data where a complementizer is actually present are functionally equivalent to cases where it is not present in the sense of marking speaker stance, I have also included those in the analysis. We may indeed take the criteria of a first person subject, present tense form of a P/C/U verb, and no complementizer as applying to a prototype of epistemic phrase. Yet there are cases in actual spoken language data that look more or less like such phrases but do not meet these exact criteria. For example, speakers may exploit the (semantic) difference between a main verb and an epistemic phrase very fluently, so that it becomes quite difficult to say whether the verb is being used with a definitive meaning or with a hedging meaning. Compare the following, where *know* seems to be used in its more definitive literal/lexical meaning ('to have cognition or understanding of'), yet there is no *that*:

(3) Death 154–163

1	PAMELA:	You haven't read the book,
2		so you don't know.
3		... [I haven't read the book so I don't know,
4 ⇒	DARRYL:	[Yeah but ***I do know***,
5		it it's an awfully,
6		it's it's] an awfully presumptuous thing,
7	PAMELA:	but (H)],
8	DARRYL:	to sit down and write a book about [death,
9	PAMELA:	[d- - -
10	DARRYL:	when you haven't died].

There is clearly some semantic substance to *know* beyond a mere hedge, as it is here used by Darryl effectively to contradict what Pamela had claimed about his state of knowledge (by echoing Pamela's words and even emphasizing them with *do*). In other words, the distinction between a 'complement-introducing

main clause' and an 'epistemic phrase' does not appear to be valid for the speakers in actual interactions. On the other hand, there are many other forms in conversational English that *act in the same way as epistemic phrases*, that meet the important criterion of generally not showing *that* as complementizer and appear as more or less fixed formulae. I have therefore qualified the definition of 'epistemic phrase' in the following way. In this book, an epistemic phrase may show the following features and have the following constituents:

(1) Not only verbs (or, rarely, adjectives) of *perception* or *cognition,* but also an *utterance* verb. As we saw in Table 1, there are a total of 242 instances of phrases that contain a verb of perception or cognition such as *know*, *think*, *believe* or *remember*, or an adjectival construction like *be sure*. In addition, there is also a large group (104 instances) of utterance verbs that occur in introductions of direct reported speech (in the great majority of cases) or in attributions of indirect reported speech to some second-hand source, e.g. *s/he said*, *s/he goes*, *s/he told me*. Direct reported speech has recently been shown to be a common interactional device used by speakers in the current speaking situation to convey their stance towards some past state of affairs and also towards the reported speaker (Holt 1996, 2000; Clift 2000). My data provide evidence that utterance verbs are used in discourse as epistemic phrases that simply frame the stance expressed in the actual direct speech sequence that follows – indeed they regularly occur without a complementizer. The most common utterance verb that appears in my data is *say*. This is in line with Biber et al.'s finding that *say* is the second-most frequent verb after *think* in their database of all verbs controlling *that* (somewhat paradoxically they then state that both *think* and *say* as 'main clause' verbs trigger *that* omission quite regularly in conversation – Biber et al. 1999: 668, 681–682).[3] The following is a rare case in my data, however, where a complementizer *that* introduces indirect speech.

(4) Lambada 654–664

1	MILES:	[This infectious][2disease2] [3woman,
2	HAROLD:	[3or males under thirty I think it3] is.
3	MILES:	at San Francisco General3],
4	PETE:	Mhm,
5 ⇒	MILES:	***she said*** that,
6		... this doesn't ***seem*** like it can be ***true***,
7 ⇒		but ***she said*** that,
8		... ninety percent of gay men,
9		... are HIV positive,
10		... and fifty percent of a=ll males,
11		... are HIV positive.

Here we have Miles reporting on what looks like a very high percentage of HIV positive men in San Francisco, and at the same time qualifying his own commitment to the accuracy of the numbers. He attributes the numbers to a third party, by way of reporting the (alleged) words of the infectious disease person at the hospital. Rather than speculating on whether the words reported in lines 8–11 are in direct or indirect speech (they could actually be both), our attention should be on the way these intonation units are produced, namely in rather deliberative speech and with frequent pauses between the IUs. It seems very likely that the presence of *that* can be accounted for simply by the speaker's attempt to distance himself and to make his stance more objective and fact-indicating, as is claimed by Aijmer (1997). Apart from the most common verbs *say* and *tell*, other idiomatic expressions occur, similarly without *that*, such as *be like* (and *I was like <Q oh god,* – Telljury 229), *go* (*he goes <Q why didn't you tell him to go and w=ake me up Q>* – Tree 206), *be all* (*he's all <Q okay come with me come with me Q>* – Telljury 879), and even a few very specific types like *testify*.

(2) Generally a 1st person subject (*I think*, *I guess*, *I don't know*), but in the case of hearsay evidentials also a 3rd person subject (*s/he said*, *they say*, *Deon told me*). The subject in hearsay evidentials deserves some special treatment here. Even though it is theoretically possible that their subject is something other than a pronoun, i.e. a proper noun or a common noun, in practice such subjects seldom occur. In most cases the referent has already been introduced into the discourse and is subsequently referred to by *he* or *she* (and in a couple of cases *they*) plus an utterance verb.[4] In view of the fact that the most common verb is *say* and that the most common hearsay phrase *s/he said* occurs without a complementizer, we may hypothesize that at least this form is grammaticizing into an epistemic phrase. We will find more evidence for this grammaticization process from the actual discourse patterns that this hearsay phrase forms. It is significant, finally, that utterance verbs do occur with a 1st person pronoun quite frequently (36 instances of all the 104 utterance verb constructions mentioned in Table 1), and such examples often form a chain with the 3rd person evidentials (*I said – he said – I said*). Quotatives where the speakers quote themselves are not generally given the status of true evidentials, yet there is some justification in doing so. As with the 3rd person constructions, *I said* can likewise be treated as an evidential phrase that indicates that "fresh talk has momentarily ceased" (Goffman 1981b: 150). As pointed out by Goffman and also by Chafe (1994: 200), much of what goes on in conversation takes place in a displaced mode.

> ... unrestricted displacement in time and place becomes possible, such that our reference can be to what we did, wanted, thought, etc., at some distant time and place, when, incidentally, we were active in a social capacity we may currently no longer enjoy and an identity we no longer claim.
>
> (Goffman 1981b: 148)

Thus, we can *embed* either ourselves or an entirely different speaker into our utterance; Goffman refers to this as a 'change in footing' (1981b: 151).[5] In this book I regard hearsay evidentials as a group that contains both 1st and 3rd person subjects.

(3) Generally a present tense form of the verb, but utterance verbs are again different in that they mostly take the past tense (*she said*). In addition, I also include progressive (*I'm thinking*), past tense (*I thought*) and past progressive (*I was thinking*) occurrences of some common mental verbs, because they appear to *act in the same way as* present tense phrases, namely as epistemic markers (evidentials) rather than main verb + complement clause constructions (notably, they do not show the complementizer *that*). Such mental constructs are regarded as one type of evidential by Willett (1988: 53, cf. Section 4.3 below). Examples in my data include:

(5) Death 285–292

1 ⇒	PAMELA:	(H) <A ***I'm thinking*** A> one thing my mother always used to say=,
2		when I wouldn't go bicycling with my [father],
3	DARRYL:	[<@ Pamela],
4		you are [2@@@,
5	PAMELA:	[2she would say2],
6	DARRYL:	You are @@@ @>2] - -
7	PAMELA:	She would say,
8		(H) <Q you'll be s=orry when we're dead Q>.

(Cf. Thompson and Mulac 1991a:
I'm thinking that it's time to go. – ordinary subject-verb combination)

(6) Tree 458–463

1	ALICE:	... So he knew that the oil was leaking?
2	MARY:	No,
3		... (TSK) we knew we were losing oil,
4		but we didn't know where.

5 ⇒ <A ***I just figured*** it was from= A> that valve cover gasket.
6 ... Just from lifting up the hood and looking at it.

(Cf. also Tree 422 in talking about the same engine trouble:
MARY: ***I figure*** w- if it was losing that much oil,)

(7) Tree 692

ALICE: ... <A Cause I told him ***I thought*** A> he was too young to be ... so involved.

We will see more evidence later for the possible grammaticization process of some non-present-tense forms into epistemic phrases.

(4) A small group of lexical verbs, representing Holmes' groups (b) and (c) above, such as *seems* (*to me*), *looks* (*to me*), *sounds* (*to me*), are also included under epistemic phrases, notably because these constructions are usually *not* followed by the complementizer *that* in the database (in fact they are most likely to occur with *like*), which implies that such phrases may also be grammaticizing into unitary epistemic phrases.

In conclusion, starting from an initial observation of similarities in discourse patterns, I include a variety of syntactically different constructions under epistemic phrases. What these have in common is the semantic meaning of the verb involved (a perception, cognition or utterance verb), a subject that is most commonly either a 1st or a 3rd person pronoun, a verb most commonly in the simple present or simple past tense form, and above all the fact that they seldom take a complementizer (*that*) in spoken discourse.

4.2.2 Adverbs

Sentential adverbs are almost equal in frequency to modal auxiliaries in my spoken language data. As we can see from Table 2, some of the most commonly occurring epistemic items in the database are adverbs, e.g. *maybe*, *probably*, *apparently*, *of course* and *definitely*. This is in agreement with Biber et al. (1999:869), in whose American English database the order was but slightly different: *probably*, *maybe*, *of course*, *certainly*, *definitely* and *perhaps*.

Epistemic adverbs do not contain any explicit subjective element indicating that this is the personal stance of the current speaker. In this sense they resemble impersonalized expressions of epistemicity such as *it seems*, since they do not explicitly involve the stance of *any* agent (even though in most cases they do

convey the stance of the current speaker). Yet some adverbs are highly frequent markers of epistemic stance in American English, namely *maybe*, *probably*, and *of course* – strikingly, a very limited set of items accounts for a large proportion of occurrences. The frequencies offered by Biber et al. (1999: 869) for the three most common adverbials support my findings: *probably* 900 occurrences, *maybe* 800 occurrences, *of course* 200 occurrences per million words. The next adverbials in their database, *perhaps*, *certainly* and *definitely*, each with some 100 occurrences per million words, involve a dramatic drop in numbers. The three items alone, *maybe*, *probably*, and *of course*, are then responsible for making 'reliability of information' the most common semantic meaning expressed in my database, as will be seen below in Section 4.3. *Apparently*, on the other hand, is one of the rare markers of 'induction' in my database (based on visual evidence), but almost equally it appears as a hearsay evidential, as in:

(8) Lambada 621–625

MILES:	.. @
	... I didn't know this,
⇒	but ***apparently*** in .. Brazil,
	they have a very very high AI=DS infection rate.
HAROLD:	Really?

The syntactic mobility, and consequent "usefulness," of sentential adverbs may also in part explain why some are exceedingly common in the database. Several researchers observe that such sentence adverbials have considerable freedom of occurrence, so that they may also follow propositions or even occur within the proposition (Quirk & Greenbaum 1982: 203; Holmes 1982: 27; Stenström 1986 on *really*; Biber et al. 1999: 854). This, then, may in part explain why epistemic adverbs are relatively common in conversational American English; conversation involves on-line planning, and such planning may be facilitated by markers of stance that can be inserted at any time when they are needed. However, as we will see below, even most adverbs tend to stick to one position in the utterance, namely to the beginning of the intonation unit.

4.2.3 Modal auxiliaries and quasi-auxiliaries

As we saw in Table 1, modal auxiliaries and semi-modals are only the third most frequent way of expressing epistemic stance in my data. This is in contradiction to some other corpus-based descriptions of spoken English, such as Holmes (1982) or Biber et al. (1999), where they are by far the most common group (cf.

the discussion below on weak epistemicity as the most likely reason for this). We can try to present some reasons for the relative infrequency of modals in conversational American English.[6]

Firstly, even though modal auxiliaries are the most highly grammaticized type among the different grammatical classes expressing epistemicity, and have therefore been claimed to be more central to the system of English (Perkins 1983), they are simultaneously highly integrated into the clause structure (e.g. *Well he **may** or **may not** be a schmuck,* – Death 757). They cannot move around freely, their occurrence is quite restricted to a certain clause-medial position, i.e. before the main verb, even though semantically they provide a stance for the entire clause. In light of what will be established below as the preferred position for indexing epistemic stance in the data, namely intonation-unit initially, it is perhaps not surprising that modal auxiliaries are relatively infrequent.

Secondly, we have seen that modality in general involves (the grammaticization of) the speaker's subjective attitudes and beliefs. But there is no explicit subjective element, in the form of a 1st person pronoun, in the modals and quasi-modals (Holmes 1988: 25), i.e. the subjectivity expressed is implicit rather than explicit. It appears that speakers show a preference towards more explicitly personalized markers of stance such as epistemic phrases.

Thirdly, and relatedly, modal auxiliaries have been grammaticized into expressing many different types of meaning, deontic, dynamic and epistemic, and are in themselves ambiguous as to their exact semantic meaning. The polysemy of the modals has been noted by Leech and Coates (1980) and Coates (1983), for example, who claim that a modal verb may be ambiguous especially between an epistemic and a non-epistemic meaning, and also indeterminate between two meanings, in which case even the context may fail to exclude one of the possible meanings.[7] It is possible that the modals are not used for epistemic meaning simply because there are other types of markers that unambiguously express epistemic meaning (cf. constructions like *I'm sure*, *I guess*). Also, it is sometimes very difficult to ascertain how much epistemic meaning or stance is involved in a given instance of a particular modal. Compare *will*, *won't* and *going to* when these indicate primarily a future meaning, but with some subjective speculation involved.

(9) Tree 283–287

1	ALICE:	... this darn dog keeps ... breathing,
2		<X and like X> ... dreaming,
3		I wonder if we should wake her up?
4	MARY:	... No,

5 ⇒ .. she***'ll*** *get scared* and want to go outside.

(10) Telljury 264–276

1	REBECCA:	.. (H) What I have to do is,
2		submit all of this to our accounting department,
3	RICKIE:	[Okay].
4	REBECCA:	[and they] give you ... the,
5 ⇒		.. they***'ll*** *mail* you the .. reimbursement.
6	RICKIE:	Okay.
7	REBECCA:	(H) So you guys hang on to [that],
8	RICKIE:	[Ok][2ay2].
9	ARNOLD:	[2O2][3kay3].
10	REBECCA:	[3so3] you can get out.
11	RICKIE:	Alright.
12	REBECCA:	And then,
13 ⇒		... (H) I imagine it ***will be*** about .. five dollars [or so].

A prototypical example of epistemic *will* that is often offered in the literature is *They'll be on holiday* (Palmer 1986:216), where the predication is of a present rather than future state of affairs; such examples virtually never occur in my data. In example (9), it is the speaker's personal judgment that the dog will get scared (in the future) if woken up in the middle of its sleep; in other words the speaker's commitment to what she is saying is quite strong. But even in this example an epistemic interpretation is largely possible because of the overall meaning of the whole utterance in its actual context, rather than strictly from the modal alone. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, the basic meanings of modal forms may be extremely general and these forms may therefore derive a great deal of meaning from the actual context in which they are embedded. In example (10), Rebecca, a lawyer, is talking to Rickie and Arnold, a couple who have arrived from out of town to be prepared to act as witnesses in a trial, and she is estimating how much the reimbursement for traveling expenses, especially the parking fee, will be. Her personal commitment is not very strong in the first occurrence in line 5 (*They'll mail you...*), where *will* seems rather to indicate a planned action that will take place in due course (cf. Palmer 1986:216). (Note that she started out without any modal at all: *and they give you ... the*). Such occurrences of *will* were not included under epistemic in the present study. By contrast, Holmes (1982) and also Biber et al. (1999) include such weakly epistemic cases; this decision increases the number of epistemic modals considerably in proportion to other stance markers and the category of modals ends up being the largest in both studies.[8] By comparison, in line 13 (*I imagine*

it will be...) the speaker's personal evaluation is already clearly seen. But this is no doubt also due to the occurrence of another epistemic marker, *I imagine*, and the hedges *about* and *or so* in the same clause; these all serve to indicate that the speaker is only giving an estimate and is not quite sure of the exact amount. It is not clear that *will* alone would have indicated any speaker stance at all (cf. *It will be five dollars*); the utterance would rather have had the interpretation of expressing factual information and pre-existing knowledge of the issue, a planned action with no room for speculation. In sum, polysemy of some modals may in part account for the preference for some other, less ambiguous, markers of epistemic stance in spoken English, while a "low" or "unclear degree" of epistemicity of some modals explains why they are not the most frequent group in the present data (since numerous such cases were discarded altogether).

Fourthly, the types of epistemic meanings that modal auxiliaries have grammaticized for are different types of judgments by the speaker, i.e. the range of epistemic meanings that they can express is narrower than for example that of the German modals, which may also have an evidential meaning (cf. *sollen* 'it is said that', *wollen* 'X claims to'; Palmer 1986: 51–53, 72). Indeed, one reason why epistemic modal auxiliaries are not exceedingly frequent in these spoken discourse data may be that with the exception of *may* and *might* they express knowledge arrived at through induction and deduction (cf. below Section 4.3).

In conclusion, I have proposed the following factors to account for the relatively few occurrences of epistemic modal auxiliaries in my data: high degree of syntactic integration and consequent low mobility within the clause/utterance/intonation unit, lack of explicit personalization of form, polysemy of semantic meaning as well as low degree of epistemicity of some modals, and a general tendency by speakers to mark other modes of knowing than those most commonly expressed by modal auxiliaries.[9] The emphasis even in recent (semantically oriented) linguistic research has been on modal auxiliaries alone, but my data clearly show that there are other means of showing commitment toward what one is saying that are far more prevalent in spoken discourse.

4.2.4 Adjectives and nouns

There is a whole array of grammatical patterns with adjectives and nouns that have been claimed to express epistemic modality in speech and writing. According to Holmes (1982: 27–28), constructions with adjectives include the following (where p is a proposition):

a.	That p is (certain/likely etc.)	– impersonalized
b.	It is (certain/likely etc.) that p	– impersonalized
c.	NP is (certain/likely etc.) to VP	– impersonalized
d.	It is (clear/apparent etc.) to me that p	– personalized
e.	I am (sure/convinced etc.) that p	– personalized
f.	NP is (certain/convinced) that p (NP is animate + 3rd person)	– depersonalized

Those with nouns include the following:

a.	There is a (certainty/likelihood etc.) that p	– impersonalized
b.	It is my (guess/opinion etc.) that p	– personalized
c.	In my (view/assessment etc.)	– personalized

As Holmes herself states, many of these are either impersonalized (not involving a reference to the first person, i.e. *I* or *me* – (a), (b), (c) of adjectives, (a) of nouns) or depersonalized (involving not the speaker's own personal stance but somebody else's – (f) of adjectives). Such forms are not at all likely to occur in highly interactive conversational discourse, but are forms of rather detached written style (cf. Chafe 1982 for the linguistic expression of detachment and involvement). It is not surprising, then, that they hardly occur at all in my data. The only form involving an adjective that does occur with some frequency is the personalized construction (e), in which the most common and really the only adjective that shows up in the data is *sure* (*I'm sure*, 5 occurrences). It is worth pointing out that, contrary to Holmes' claim, this construction prevalently *does not* involve a complementizer *that*, however. The other common pattern involving an adjective is *that's true* (4 occurrences), where the whole phrase refers to some proposition in the previous speaker's talk. Otherwise even adjectives like *probable*, *likely* or *apparent* simply do not occur in the database at all, even in the personalized construction (d) (It is *apparent* to me that p), while the corresponding adverbs do occur fairly frequently (cf. Table 2). Finally, of nominal constructions, explicit expressions of speaker opinion (*in my view / opinion* etc.), i.e. (b) and (c), do not occur in my data. This may be due to the fact that they seem stylistically somewhat weighty and emphatic, and are replaced by expressions like *I think* and *I guess* in casual speech, which may convey the subjective stance of the speaker in a way that does not draw explicit attention to the speaker's opinion.

4.2.5 Participial forms

Similarly, participial forms like *it is said/claimed/maintained that* practically do not occur at all in my data, and probably for the same reasons as was the case with many of the above nominal or adjectival constructions: they are quite formal and impersonal, and usually occur in written style. They are also syntactically heavy and fixed in position. The one exception is *NP is supposed to* (*be*), which occasionally occurs as a hearsay evidential (*... he's* ***supposed to be*** *awesome.* – Lambada 25).

4.2.6 Conclusion

Even though the overall number of epistemic markers studied above is not very large (503), there are already certain very clear trends to be seen in the data, which generally find strong support from the recent quantitative study by Biber et al. (1999) based on an essentially larger corpus of spoken American (and British) English. Clearly the most common means for speakers to mark their epistemic stance is through epistemic phrases, with *I think* and *I don't know* and the hearsay evidentials *s/he said* and *I said* the most frequent. Biber et al. (1999:667–669) also found that the single most common verb controlling *that*-clauses in conversation is *think* (with *that* regularly "omitted"), with a frequency of about 2,000 per million words – this extremely high frequency is said to be largely due to the use of the clause *I think*. The verb *say* is second in frequency in their database, occurring about 1,250 times per million words, while *know* comes third with some 750 occurrences, and *guess* (in American English only) fourth with 500 occurrences. In my data (as also in Biber et al.'s), a small group of adverbs are also very common, notably *maybe*, *probably*, *apparently*, and *of course*. Epistemic modals are relatively common, too, but adjectives, nouns, and participial forms virtually never occur. What clearly emerges from my data, but which is not commented on by Biber et al., is that a fairly *limited set of items* accounts for a large proportion of expressions of epistemic stance. Indirect evidence for this can be found in the Biber et al. grammar, however, as there is a dramatic drop in frequency after the fourth epistemic verb *guess* in their statistics: the next verbs, *see*, *find*, *believe*, *feel*, *suggest* and *show* only occur less than a hundred times in million words of talk. Overall, then, my findings provide strong evidence for epistemic stance in everyday spoken American English to be a *highly regular* and *routinized* phenomenon in terms of the linguistic forms used.

There are possibly multiple factors involved in accounting for why certain types of markers are more common than others: the kind of modality favored by speakers (cf. also below Section 4.3), the degree of personalization of the outward form (so that personalized forms are favored over impersonalized ones), formality of some markers over others, semantic ambiguity (so that forms that may be ambiguous between an epistemic meaning and a non-epistemic meaning tend not to be used), and syntactic mobility (forms that are more mobile syntactically may be more common). The fact that epistemic nouns, adjectives and participial forms are rare in conversational discourse probably has to do with the formality of many such constructions, with the lack of personalization of the forms concerned, and with the relative syntactic immobility of constructions involving these grammatical classes.

4.3 Semantic meanings expressed

In order to establish the range of semantic meanings expressed by modals as well as the other epistemic markers in Table 2, i.e. the most common markers in my database, I followed Chafe's (1986: 262–265) presentation of attitudes toward knowledge. He distinguishes two dimensions of such attitudes. Thus, knowledge may be regarded as more or less reliable by speakers, and it is possible to place epistemic markers on a continuum from very reliable to unreliable (cf. *undoubtedly*, *surely*; *maybe*, *probably*, *might*, *may*). Secondly, speakers may code their mode of knowing, or various ways in which knowledge is acquired. These include belief, in which case the source of knowledge is unclear, sometimes only that the speaker wants to believe something. Belief is commonly marked with phrases such as *I think* and *I guess*, but less so with the modals. In the case of induction, the source of knowledge is evidence (cf. *must*), while with hearsay evidence the source of knowledge is language (*people say*, *they say*, *X told me*), and with deduction it is hypothesis (*should*, *could*, *would*). In addition to these categories, there are some markers in my data, such as *I imagine*, which refer to a mental construct (a thought, a belief, a dream) by the speaker and therefore also mark a mode of knowing. Willett (1988: 96) indeed further specifies that mental constructs are an instance of indirect evidence, and more specifically inferring evidence, evidence from reasoning, whereby "the speaker infers the situation described on the basis of intuition, logic, a dream, previous experience, or some other mental construct." I therefore include mental construct as another attitude toward knowledge, i.e. an evidential. Each mode of knowing can then move up and down on the scale of reliability; on the

Table 3. Semantic meanings most commonly expressed in the data

Reliability (136)	**Belief** (89)	**Hearsay evidence** (69)	**Mental construct** (48)	**Deduction** (33)	**Induction** (24)	**Sensory evidence** (15)
I don't know	I think	s/he said	I thought	would	must	looks like
maybe	I guess	I said	I'm thinking	could	apparently	I feel like
I don't know + compl.	I can't believe	s/he goes	I remember	will	seems like	
probably	I don't think		I was thinking	should		
might	I'm sure		I imagine			
may	I figure					
of course	...					
...						

other hand some markers, such as *probably*, *maybe*, *might* or *may*, only indicate reliability and do not code mode of knowing at all.

Following Chafe's categories and with the addition of 'mental construct' as a new category I divided up the epistemic items in Table 2 according to their semantic meaning.[10] Since semantic meaning as such is not the focus of my study, I paid only limited attention to the actual discourse context when assigning a semantic category to each item, even though the context could have affected the results somewhat; Chafe himself points out that some of these evidentials can be "borrowed" from one function or mode of knowing to another, e.g. *it seems* was originally a marker of induction but may sometimes be used as a hearsay evidential. Table 3 shows the most common attitudes toward knowledge expressed, as well as some of the most common items expressing those attitudes, in my database.

The figures in parentheses indicate the total numbers of occurrences of a given semantic meaning, covering over 80 percent of the whole database. Chafe (1986) observes that in his conversational data, markers of deduction, hearsay or induction are not very common at all, and the types that are commonly used by speakers are those coding reliability and belief, or what Palmer refers to as confidence markers (Palmer 1986: 64). As we can see, my results are in line with Chafe's study as far as reliability and belief are concerned: these are the semantic meanings that are expressed most commonly in my data. According to Chafe, speakers may be aware at a not necessarily conscious level that some knowledge is more reliable than other, and they mark their utterance for the likelihood of its being a fact; they do so apparently without any concern for evidence (1986: 264). Chafe further claims (1986: 266) that belief is a mode of

'knowing' in which concern for evidence is downgraded, and speakers believe things because other people do or simply because they want to believe them. In the most usual case, then, speakers in my corpus only indicate their assessment of the *reliability* of what they have to say, or their *belief* that such and such is the case. What is more, they tend to express *low* rather than high reliability, and a *weak* rather than strong belief, and thus generally express a low degree of confidence. In any case they do not "bother" to indicate evidence for their claims, or to indicate that they have arrived at some piece of knowledge via induction or deduction.

However, in clear contrast to Chafe's results on spoken language there is a strong tendency in my data to mark speech as being based on *hearsay*. Speakers commonly attribute speech to other people, or to themselves, as my data contained a total of 104 attributions of indirect speech and introductions to direct speech (of which only the three most common items are included in Table 3). Recall that the English modal auxiliaries do not carry such meaning, as opposed to the German *sollen* and *wollen*. And finally, as we can see in Table 3 below, reference to a *mental process* or *construct* is also a rather large category in my data, which is similarly marked by items other than modal auxiliaries in English.

Reliability, belief and hearsay evidence, then, are the most likely semantic meanings that tend to find expression in casual spoken interaction, and with these the weak or low end of the scale rather than the strong or high. Hence, the most common markers in the database include personalized and semantically unambiguous epistemic phrases that indicate the speakers' conception of the reliability of the expressed proposition, or state that the knowledge was arrived at through belief only, or convey that the information was based on hearsay. Similarly, epistemic phrases that make reference to some mental process, such as *I thought* and *I'm thinking*, are quite common in the data. There are only a couple of impersonalized items that occur with any frequency, *maybe* and *probably*, which both mark the reliability of the expressed proposition.

Having now examined how epistemic stance is expressed in terms of types and tokens of epistemic markers in my data on conversational American English, I proceed to give an idea of the larger analytical unit epistemicity should be viewed in terms of. First, in Section 4.4 the analytical unit will be the intonation unit, while in Section 4.5 this is expanded to include sequences of intonation units and conversational turns.

4.4 Position of epistemic markers in intonation units

In this section I examine where the marking of epistemic stance is done in view of intonation units as interactionally relevant units of speech. I will show that the construction of epistemic IUs, or intonation units that contain or consist of epistemic markers, can be regarded as interactionally motivated, and perhaps primarily so: there is an interactional advantage in marking stance before the actual issue at hand, while encoding epistemic markers as single independent IUs is also occasioned by the immediate interaction between conversational coparticipants and does some special interactive work in the unfolding dialogue.

Chafe (1994: 65–66) has shown that some 60 percent of English substantive IUs consist of a single clause; such IUs are then differentiated from those containing only referents (noun phrases), as they are also differentiated from regulatory IUs of the type *well*, *you know*, *mhm*, *let me see*, or *I think*. On the basis of earlier syntactic research on the mobility of epistemic phrases and epistemic adverbs, and in view of Chafe's finding that English intonation units predominantly coincide with clauses, it would be predictable that epistemic modality occurs equally at the beginnings, middles and ends of IUs (since epistemic phrases and adverbs account for the majority of occurrences of epistemic modality in the database and may occur initially, medially and finally in clauses, and since modal auxiliaries occur in mid-clause position). But it is also possible that the more mobile epistemic markers, especially epistemic phrases and epistemic adverbs, may constitute IUs of their own, namely a subtype of regulatory IUs that Chafe (1994) calls 'validational intonation units.'[11]

A clear result emerged in my study that does not conform to this initial hypothesis: epistemic marking *predominantly comes at the beginning of intonation units*. Table 4 shows us that 50.2 percent of all epistemic markers occurred at the beginning of (substantive) IUs, and 60.1 percent of epistemic phrases occurred in this position. Here I am also including cases where the epistemic marker was preceded by a connective like *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *well* or *I mean* (as defined by Chafe 1988).

We can see that it is the epistemic phrases that account for the great majority of IU-initial occurrences (208 of 251) as well as of the separate IUs (106 of 123); epistemic phrases tend to go to the beginning of IUs, while a smaller proportion appear as separate IUs. But note that epistemic phrases seldom occur IU-medially (4.9 percent). Similarly, IU-final occurrence of epistemic markers as a whole is in general quite rare (4.6 percent), while again epistemic phrases

Table 4. Position within IUs; all epistemic markers vs. epistemic phrases

Position of all epistemic markers within IUs			Position of epistemic phrases within IUs		
IU-initial	251	(50.2%)	**IU-initial**	208	(60.1%)
IU-medial	103	(20.6%)	**IU-medial**	17	(4.9%)
IU-final	23	(4.6%)	**IU-final**	15	(4.3%)
separate IU	123	(24.6%)	**separate IU**	106	(30.6%)
	500	(100%)		346	(100%)

Table 5. Where do different grammatical classes of epistemic markers go in IUs

	Epistemic phrases	**Adverbs**	**Modals**	**Other**	**Total**
IU-initial	208	33	6	–	247
IU-medial	17	26	61	5	109
IU-final	15	1	4	1	21
separate IU	106	15	–	5	126
	346	75	71	11	503

are the ones that are capable of sometimes occurring in this position (4.3 percent). Note, however, that this is a marked position and not at all common.

Table 5 shows us where all the major grammatical classes of epistemic markers occur in terms of intonation units in the database. We can see that epistemic adverbs, while also occurring IU-initially and as separate IUs, may occur in the middle of IUs (but the likelihood is a little higher for IU-initial occurrence). Thus, epistemic adverbs have a degree of mobility in terms of intonation units, even though they are by far outnumbered by epistemic phrases in the database. Finally, as can be seen from Table 5, IU-medial epistemic markers mostly consist of epistemic modal auxiliaries (61 of 109) that are syntactically quite restricted to a certain position before the main verb (*...But that **shouldn't** make any difference.* – Tree 421). However, these are not very interesting as objects of study. I will in general pay more attention to the group of epistemic phrases and compare others against it.

To find further justification for my analysis of (some) hearsay evidentials as in effect similar to other epistemic phrases, or in some cases grammaticizing into such, I present in Table 6 the figures for hearsay evidentials and juxtapose them with those for the other types of epistemic phrases. If we compare these two sets of figures, we can see striking similarities. The tendency for hearsay evidentials to occur IU-initially and as separate IUs is in line with that of other epistemic phrases. As for IU-medial and IU-final occurrence, the percentages

Table 6. Position within IUs; markers of hearsay evidence and other types of epistemic phrases

	Hearsay evidentials	Other epistemic phrases	Total
IU-initial	59 (56.7%)	149 (61.6%)	208
IU-medial	6 (5.8%)	11 (4.5%)	17
IU-final	8 (7.7%)	7 (2.9%)	15
separate IU	31 (29.8%)	75 (31.0%)	106
	104 (100%)	242 (100%)	346

are a little higher for hearsay evidentials (especially with IU-final occurrence), but the differences are not great. Of the IU-medial hearsay evidentials, most are attributions of indirect speech using the utterance verb *tell* (... *(H=)... Gwen* ***was telling*** *me that*, – Tree 680). As we can see, in terms of intonation units, hearsay evidentials form the same sort of *discourse patterns* as other epistemic phrases. Interestingly, such evidentials frequently form a chain, where a long stretch of discourse is related in an *I said – s/he said* format. This is different from unmediated narration or simple reporting of events or facts or opinions, as such chaining involves a change in footing by explicitly embedding the current speaker and also another "displaced" speaker (i.e. displaced in time and place) into the discourse at this point (cf. Section 4.2.1 above). Compare the following example.

(11) Death 467–524

1	PAMELA:	Natalie asked me about Santa Claus today.
2	DARRYL:	What did she,
3		[what did she say],
4	PAMELA:	[In the laundro]mat.
5 ⇒		***She said,***
6		.. mom,
7		Santa Claus isn't,
8		... I mean,
9		d- is there a for real Sa- Santa Claus?
10 ⇒		.. ***I said*** a for real Santa Claus,
11		you mean a man who lives .. at the north pole?
12 ⇒		.. (H) ***She said*** yeah,
13 ⇒		***I said*** no.
14 ⇒		... (H) And ***she said***,
15		well,

16 who are the other ones.
17 ⇒ ***I said*** well,
18 they're the spirit of Santa Claus,
19 and,
20 ... (H) they represent Santa Claus.

(30 intonation units omitted)

21 ⇒ ... (H) And ***I said***,
22 ⇒ ***she said*** but some adults= talk about Santa Claus,
23 ⇒ ***I said*** that's because,
24 .. they wanna believe in Santa Claus.
25 (H) And that's what I told her,
26 ⇒ ***I said***,
27 I wanna believe in Santa Claus.

We can immediately see that speakers have a choice as to whether they encode the introductory phrases *I said* and *she said* as separate IUs (lines 5, 14, 21, 26) or as IU-initial (lines 10, 12, 13, 17, 22, 23). This stretch of discourse contains a number of direct quotes, or what is usually labelled as direct (reported) speech but is in fact more likely an invention of the current speaker (Mayes 1990; Chafe 1994; Holt 1996). Direct speech is indeed much more common than speech reported indirectly in my data, the proportions being something like 74 percent vs. 26 percent. With indirect speech there is still some vacillation about which form to choose, so that in some 10 cases we still have a complementizer (cf. example (4) above, where Miles reports on what the "infectious disease woman" had said), but there are also many cases without one. There is therefore some evidence that the grammaticization of especially *s/he said* (and possibly also *I said*) into an epistemic/evidential phrase marking mostly *direct* (*but also indirect*) *speech* is quite advanced, and not in any substantial way different in type from phrases like *I think* and *I guess*, about whose grammaticization into an epistemic phrase there is not much doubt. I will examine later in example (43) why such evidentials should sometimes be realized as separate IUs and at other times as part of longer IUs (IU-initial); what is significant is that they *can* be so realized.

I now proceed to examine the marking of epistemic stance at the beginnings, middles and ends of intonation units, as well as in separate IUs, in more detail.

4.4.1 IU-initial position

I will initially present some rather persuasive examples below in (12)–(19) of IU-initial positioning of both epistemic phrases and epistemic adverbs, in cases where the IU is *not* a full complete clause, to give evidence for this slot as a preferred and interactionally relevant position.

The epistemic phrase *I think* is by far the most common epistemic item in the database (46 instances), and it predominantly occurs IU-initially (37 instances).

(12) Retire 852–863

1	DORIS:	... (H) I'm not a very good pill taker,
2		I'm re- - -
3 ⇒		.. ***I think*** I'm [resenting,
4	ANGELA:	[I'm not either,
5		but I have] - -
6	DORIS:	(H) I'm re]senting this [2medicine2].
7	SAM:	[2(COUGH)2]
8 ⇒	DORIS:	And ***I think*** it's contributing to my problems.
9		I really do.
10 ⇒		... (H) ***I think*** that .. the .. cardazam is,
11 ⇒		.. ***I think*** that the .. d- diarrhetic is,
12		... (H) % ... (Hx)

The preference for IU-initial occurrence of *I think* becomes quite clear from the above segment, as all four instances consistently appear in this position. More specifically, in lines 2–3 we can see that the speaker initiates a self-repair: when she restarts she inserts this epistemic phrase at IU-initial position, rather than continuing straight on with *I'm resenting this medicine* and tagging *I think* at the end of the intonation unit. Such examples are not uncommon in the data; there is a clear preference by speakers for IU-initial as opposed to IU-final/separate IU verbalization of epistemic stance.

Of all the 26 occurrences of *maybe*, 18 are clearly IU-initial, while another 5 occur in self-repairs as separate IUs that are consequently followed by an IU-initial occurrence:

(13) Death 359–361

PAMELA: % n- n- - -
Maybe I - -
<HI ***maybe*** I'm HI> just eager to get back to where I wa=s.

(14) Death 739–748

1	DARRYLL:	[<@ X You're] just [2really interested in dea=th @>.
2	PAMELA:	[2My yearning,
3		my yearning2],
4	DARRYLL:	@@@@@@2]
5	PAMELA:	my yearning is n- - -
6 ⇒		.. [2***maybe***2] not to run ahead and,
7	DARRYLL:	[2(H)2]
8	PAMELA:	.. and,
9		... and,
10		and get to the exit.

In lines 5–6 in (14) the speaker is again involved in self-repair and inserts *maybe* in IU-initial position, but does not abandon the syntactic structure of the clause that she is producing. Again the epistemic marker ends up coming first in the new intonation unit.

(15) Telljury 1268–1271

1	RICKIE:	(H) Well that's the Daly City one,
2		so he *would* .. get on,
3		.. when I *would* get on,
4 ⇒		but ***I think*** .. ***probably*** like a different car,

This example illustrates a clustering of epistemic markers at the beginning of an IU (line 4) that here consists only of a noun phrase; even *like* can be regarded as a hedge that comes before what it modifies. A rather similar example of on-line planning of the utterance is (16), where there is a prepositional phrase that is part of a longer clause but which is qualified through an IU-initial epistemic phrase (and through *like* and *or something*).

(16) Telljury 402–403

	RICKIE:	He got on the trai=n o=n like,
⇒		(THROAT) ***I think*** Twelfth Street or something?

Further similar examples of epistemic phrases coming IU-initially, where the IU is a clause fragment or a noun phrase, are in (17)–(19).

(17) Tree 624–626

⇒	ALICE:	... Yeah ***I think*** that'd,
⇒		... ***I think*** that'd um,
		... (TSK) work out,

(18) Telljury 835–840

REBECCA: .. a man would never do that.
[Bec]ause,
RICKIE: [Mhm].
[2(SNIFF)2]
REBECCA: [2(H)2] number one they pick out,
⇒ .. ***I think*** .. more vulnerable people.

(19) Lambada 1233–1235

MILES: he comes over there,
and is talking with that woman.
⇒ .. ***I don't know*** about what,

On the basis of the above examples, we can see that when speakers feel that they need to qualify their commitment to something that they have already *begun to verbalize*, or when they are involved in *self-repair* and *on-line planning*, this is done so that the epistemic marker of stance appears in the initial slot in the IU and simultaneously *before what it qualifies*. Such examples do not usually involve the abandonment of the TCU and the syntactic construction in progress (in contrast to many other types of same-turn self-repair, cf. Kärkkäinen, Sorjonen and Helasvuo in press); the speaker simply continues it but for various interactional reasons adds a necessary on-the-fly qualification. The above IU-initial instances then mostly occur in rather special interactional environments, which clearly highlight the special work that speakers do to indicate that they are qualifying the immediately upcoming rather than preceding component of the utterance. The IU-initial position is thereby the preferred and interactionally relevant position. Now we might claim that the IU-initial position simply reflects problems in the cognitive processing of information, but as we will see later (especially in connection with *I think*), there are mostly very powerful interactional reasons for placing epistemic items immediately before the items that they qualify. Those reasons will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 5; suffice it to say here that in (18), for example, the recipient has just been seen to be very vulnerable herself, and it becomes crucial for the current speaker to redesign her utterance to take this into account.

Many of the above examples might of course also be interpreted as simply highlighting clause-medial expression of stance (cf. 'comment clauses' inserted in the middle of clauses, as has been claimed in much earlier research, cf. Simon-Vandenbergen 2000): when an epistemic marker appears IU-initially, this does not preclude it from simultaneously appearing in the middle of a

clause, as is the case in (14), (16), and (18) – but in only a handful of examples in the data. Treating these cases as primarily clause-medial rather than IU-initial would simply miss the mark: in all of these cases interactionally particularly demanding work is being done, and the forward-oriented epistemic marker frames a (new) stance upon the upcoming utterance or part thereof. It is not "randomly" inserted in the middle of a predesigned clause.

And in actual fact the great majority of epistemic intonation units in the database are full complete clauses, i.e. the epistemic marker appears clause-initially. Below are some further examples of the most common epistemic items in IU-initial position (cf. Table 2), in cases where the rest of the intonation unit is a complete clause.

I don't know and *I know* are epistemic phrases that can still take a *wh*-complement (with the latter also *that* is possible, even though not necessary). *I don't know* can also take a conditional complement with *if* or *whether*.[12] When these phrases do take a complement, they will obviously appear in IU-initial position.

(20) Tree 306–307

⇒ ALICE: ... <A ***I don't know if*** A> she'd do it.
⇒ MARY: ... <A ***I don't know if*** A> she would either.

(21) Retire 946–947

ANGELA: (H) I phoned her and said,
⇒ ... ***I don't know whether*** I can sit in the chair at a=ll or not.

I don't know + complement actually occurs quite often (23 instances), while *I know* + complement is less common (4 instances). Even though they are followed by a complementizer, these epistemic phrases then semantically convey an epistemic stance equivalent to other epistemic markers. The form without the complementizer of *I don't know* is also exceedingly common but always constitutes an IU of its own (cf. Section 4.4.4).

Further common types of IU-initial epistemic phrases are *I guess* and *I thought* (cf. Table 2).

(22) Lambada 43–46

MILES: And they were talking about how,
... he's teaching [these] cla=sses,
PETE: [Hm].
⇒ MILES: and ***I guess*** he really goes fa=st.

(23) Death 529

PAMELA: (H) [<F <A But ***I thought*** A>] it was very pragmatic of her
to ask about that in June F>.

While *I guess* as a typical marker of belief may also occur elsewhere in the intonation unit, *I thought* as a mental construct is still pretty much restricted to IU-initial position (but can occur as separate IU, too, cf. Section 4.4.4). *I remember* also similarly mostly occurs IU-initially (cf. also example (38) below).

(24) Tree 634–637

⇒ MARY: ... (H) ***I remember*** I was pregnant with Nicky.
... (SWALLOW) And uh=,
Boots's little boy,
... he really liked me.

We already noted above that hearsay evidentials in general follow the same pattern as other epistemic phrases in that they most commonly appear IU-initially (but may also constitute a separate IU, cf. Table 6). Of such evidentials, *s/he said* tends to occur IU-initially (20 of 34 cases in all): cf. example (11) above for such instances. This is in contradiction to what Givón (1993:28) proposes, namely that direct-quote complements are separated by a pause from their main clause, in which case the introductory phrase would be encoded as a separate IU.[13] *I said*, however, can be encoded as a separate IU equally often as IU-initially (10 initial vs. 13 separate instances): cf. again example (11). All in all there seems to be more variation in how the most common hearsay evidentials are realized in terms of intonation units; we will see in Section 4.4.4 that such variation may be serving some special purpose in conversational story-telling, for example.

There is some evidence that some of the most common epistemic adverbs similarly tend to occur in IU-initial position in clause-like IUs. In fact, Leech and Svartvik (1975:202) claim that the normal position for most sentence adverbials is the front position, and Biber et al. (1999:971) also note that the large majority of stance adverbials occur in initial or medial positions, even though the authors do not differentiate between the three types, epistemic, attitudinal, and style-of-speaking stance adverbials here. I observed above that *maybe* predominantly occurs IU-initially. Further, of the 7 instances of (*of*) *course* 6 are IU-initial.

(25) Lambada 1307–1309

MILES: So I don't know what's going on here.
⇒ ... And ***of course*** later on I find out,
.. that's not her husband.

With *probably* and *apparently*, however, there is a fairly even spread between IU-initial, IU-medial and separate IUs. But the tendency for the most common epistemic adverbs to occur IU-initially (adverbs being the second type of epistemic marker that has been claimed to be syntactically mobile) seems to lend further support to the predominance of IU-initial positioning.

Apart from epistemic phrases and adverbs, the rest of the IU-initial occurrences are a few exceptional cases of epistemic modal auxiliaries, as in self-addressed questions while thinking aloud (in lines 2–3 in the following).

(26) Telljury 1265–1271

1 RICKIE: .. <P I'm trying to think,
2 ⇒ ***would*** he get o=n,
3 ⇒ or ***would*** he already be on P>.
4 (H) Well that's the Daly City one,
5 so he ***would*** .. get on,
6 .. when I ***would*** get on,
7 but ***I think*** .. ***probably*** like a different car,

Summary

We have seen examples above of IU-initial marking of epistemic stance. One type consisted of clause fragments or prepositional and nominal phrases that are being qualified by an epistemic marker which tends strongly to precede what it modifies, and therefore ends up being IU-initial (examples (12)–(19)). This kind of pattern becomes especially obvious in cases of self-repair and online planning, as well as when speakers need to qualify their commitment on the fly (i.e. when they are already well into the utterance). Another, more common type, are IU-initial instances followed by a full complete clause (examples (20)–(25)). We saw that with many epistemic markers IU-initial position is the preferred position: some are IU-initial because they take a *wh-* or *if-* complement, others simply show a preference for IU-initial position (*I think*, *I guess*, *I thought*, *I remember*, *maybe*, *of course* and *s/he said*) even though they can also appear elsewhere in the intonation unit and/or constitute an intonation unit on their own. The latter type, those that tend towards IU-initial position, constitute the large majority of epistemic markers used by speakers

in the data as a whole (cf. again items in boldface in Table 2), in other words IU-initial marking of epistemic stance is by far the most common pattern in my data on conversational American English.

On the basis of the above, the conclusion is warranted that IU-initial position is the *unmarked position* for the marking of epistemic stance. IU-initial positioning may in fact be the more crucial positioning than clause-initial, although it is true that they often coincide. As was seen in

example (14): my yearning is n- - - .. **maybe** not to run ahead and,
example (16): He got on the trai=n o=n like, (THROAT) **I think** Twelfth Street or something?
example (18): (H) number one they pick out, .. **I think** .. more vulnerable people.

when an utterance is not qualified right at the outset, the qualification is "precision-timed" to come immediately before the relevant issue, simultaneously starting a new intonation unit at that point. In effect the construction of the intonation units themselves is then subject to repair (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996b: 17), as something that started out as being produced (most likely) in one intonation unit ends up being produced in two. Note that this is in contradiction with the 'afterthought' claim that is commonly made; Biber et al. (1999: 972), for example, say that final position of 'comment clauses' like *I think* and *I guess* suits the difficulties that speakers face in on-line production, as they may qualify a proposition *after* presenting it. Such qualification seldom happens in my database. It may in any case be a feature of educated speech and possibly also more common in British than American speech. In my data the speakers are much more likely to qualify their propositions either before or in the course of verbalizing them. Finally, it is possible to view even the turn-initial cases, to be discussed below in Section 4.5, simply as a consequence of IU-initial positioning, as conversational turns often consist of only one IU/clause.

We may find further evidence for the unmarkedness of the IU-initial position in the *prosodic realization* of these markers in this position. It is indeed quite common for IU-initial epistemic markers to be *unaccented* (36 percent in a sample of three transcripts out of the total of five in this study), or to receive only *secondary accent* (49 percent in the same data); *I think*, *I guess* and *I don't know* (+ complement) appear so, and so do many hearsay evidentials. Another fairly conspicuous prosodic feature of epistemic markers, especially when they appear IU-initially, is that they often tend to be *in rapid speech.* Thus, some 28 percent of IU-initial markers (in the three transcripts) are uttered with clearly faster tempo than the rest of the IU;[14] such items include especially *I thought*,

maybe, *I'm thinking*, *I don't know* (+ complement) and various hearsay evidentials (*he goes*, *he said*, *he's all*). Such realizations then often become reduced in phonetic form as well; Bybee et al. (1994: 20) indeed observe that there is "a link between frequency of use and phonetic bulk such that more frequently used material, whether grammatical or lexical, tends to be shorter (phonetically reduced) relative to less often used material." Relatedly, Givón (1993: 38) observes of 'epistemic quantifiers' (cf. epistemic phrases) that "the conventionalized subject pronoun is so specific to particular verbs, that it is often dropped in rapid speech," as in:

(I) think she's there.
(I) guess you were right.

Traugott (1995: 39) similarly points out about *I think* that "the subject is losing referential (objective) properties, and becoming simply the starting point of a perspective." She further suggests that the first person pronoun may eventually become eroded, in which case only a discourse particle remains (in the same way as *please* is a reduced form of *if you please*; 1995: 38). Even though I did not find much support for these claims in the database (but see example (61) below), I did find an example of *say* where the subject *he* was omitted:

(27) Tree 554–558

MARY: ... Then daddy said something about the steering column on my car needing ((MATCH_STRIKE))_work?
ALICE: .. Mhm,
⇒ MARY: ... <*A* ***Said*** *A*> long as I don't drive it fast, it should be alright.

If speakers are used to marking their epistemic stance through a limited set of commonly occurring phrases (cf. Table 2), and this at an "expected" place, namely IU-initially, then it is natural that such markers tend to become reduced in form or prosodic realization: they are not strongly accented, they may be produced faster than the surrounding speech, and even their subjects may be dropped.[15] Here we may find yet another piece of evidence for some of the mental construct phrases, notably *I thought*, and also the most common hearsay evidential *s/he said* as grammaticizing into evidential phrases, on a par with epistemic phrases like *I think* and *I guess*. We have noted that they predominantly occur without the complementizer *that* and that they show a similar pattern in terms of occurrence within intonation units as other epistemic phrases (cf. Table 7 below for more details). In addition, they share the

general unemphatic realization with some other epistemic phrases, to the point that *s/he said* may even appear without an overt subject, leaving only *said* as a starting-point for a perspective from which something is told.

The pattern observed in the data clearly carries some significance: there is work that needs to be done or is conveniently done at the beginning of an IU or right after a connective that serves to link the current IU to a preceding one. The speaker's epistemic stance becomes clear at its proper place, before what is being qualified, an entire proposition but also a smaller chunk such as a clause fragment, an NP or a PP. We may speculate for a moment on a cognitive as opposed to an interactional motivation for the prevalence of IU-initial positioning. The cognitive constraint of one new idea per intonation unit (Chafe 1987, 1994, 1998) can explain to some extent why it is so common for epistemic phrases to be embedded within a longer intonation unit, rather than appearing on their own. These markers do not contribute much information content or semantic substance to an utterance and do not therefore bring in any new information into the discourse (cf. Ono & Thompson 1995). It is therefore natural that they should appear as parts of intonation units that have a more substantial semantic content. We can find further support for this claim when we look at the group of hearsay evidentials. Even if it is possible that the subjects of hearsay evidentials may show variation, in that the subject can be a pronoun but also a proper noun or a full common noun, in practice there are only a handful of non-pronoun subjects in the corpus data (cf. Kärkkäinen 1996): 6 proper nouns (representing referents who had already been introduced into the discourse or were otherwise identifiable to participants) and 5 common nouns like *daddy*, *guys*, *her sister*, *this psychotherapist* (i.e. kinship terms and general nouns). In the overwhelming majority of cases the subject is the pronoun *I* or *s/he* that clearly conveys given information.

But it is significant that epistemic phrases do appear both as parts of longer IUs and as separate IUs. Yet there is no obvious reason why this should be so; the epistemic item in question is not necessarily even strongly accented or emphatic, thus "warranting" a separate intonation unit, for example. The one-new-idea constraint cannot explain this pattern. Nor can it explain why epistemic phrases and even many adverbs tend to go to beginnings of longer IUs rather than just anywhere within the IU. Recall the cases of self-repair, on-line planning and on-the-fly qualification above, where the utterance is broken into several intonation units so that an epistemic phrase is placed in initial position in an IU. There is more going on than mere information processing, and various interactional factors enter the picture here: IU-initial position is the most suitable for the expression of (qualification of) speaker commitment,

because it is here that the speaker conveniently *sets up an orientation towards the utterance, or parts of the utterance, for the recipients*. If the current speaker's stance becomes clear before, rather than after, what it has in its scope, the recipients are more likely to observe this orientation and align with it, and are able to design their own subsequent contribution accordingly. This view also finds support in some other recent studies. Biber et al. comment in passing on the general precedence of stance markers over the actual matter or issue at hand.

> In most cases the stance marker precedes the structure expressing the informational proposition. [..] This ordering of constituents reflects the primary function of stance markers as a frame for the interpretation of the propositional information. In most cases, speakers and authors first identify their personal perspective – their attitude towards the proposition, the perspective that it is true from, or the extent to which the information is reliable – thereby encouraging listeners and readers to process the following propositional information from the same perspective. (Biber et al. 1999: 971)[16]

Similarly, Thompson (2002) observes that the epistemic/evidential/ evaluative fragments generally project a stance on the following, rather than preceding, utterance. My data show, in addition, that not only is the precedence of stance marking in general interactionally relevant, but IU-initial marking of stance is so prevalent a pattern that we may posit a general "formula" of epistemic intonation units:

Epistemic IU =
(connective) + stance marker + [proposition / clause fragment / PP / NP]

The fact that speakers design their utterances in such a way that their recipients can safely orient to (even parts of) them in advance, rather than having to change their orientation after the unit in question, indicates that the *shape of epistemic IUs is to a high degree recipient-oriented* (cf. the hypothesis by Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996b: 17 that the basic prosodic phrase is sensitive to interactive requirements such as recipient design and local fit). As Goodwin (1979) and Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) have shown, recipients actively attend to the emerging structure of the speaker's utterance as consequential for the organization of their own actions. Finally, we may also hypothesize that the IU-initial marking of epistemic stance is somewhat iconic with turn-initial position, where speakers commonly do special work to align their contribu-

tion with what went on before. As Schegloff (1996: 95) observes, "generally the starts of turns are designed to connect to their prior turns, and their ends are designed to provide projections and connections for their following turns." By comparison, IU-initial epistemic markers act to secure alignment with what follows, and how what follows is to be taken by the recipients, not as a fact but as a more or less uncertain suggestion, only heard of from other sources, only believed in by the speaker without any evidence to support it, and so on. When epistemic phrases then appear *elsewhere* in whatever unit we are looking at, clause or IU, this is significant and may do special interactive work – as will be seen below.

4.4.2 IU-medial position

IU-medial position is really only common for epistemic modal auxiliaries, which have been grammaticized to only appear after the grammatical subject and before the main verb, i.e. in the middle of at least clausal IUs (61 of the 71 occurrences of modals occur in this slot). Compare above example (26), where in lines 5–6 *would* appears thus.[17] An example of *must*, which is among the most common epistemic modals in the database, is seen in (28):

(28) Lambada 1368

MILES: .. <HI that ***must*** have been [quite a shock] HI>.

Apart from the modals, it is epistemic adverbs that occur IU-medially with any frequency (26 of 75 in all). Such adverbs include e.g. *probably*, *apparently*, *(not) necessarily* and *definitely* of the ones in Table 2. It is significant that these are longer sentence adverbials ending in *-ly*: these very items are also claimed by Quirk and Greenbaum (1982: 244–245) to normally occur immediately before the lexical verb rather than in initial position in the clause. In my data they occur IU-medially in 22 instances, while in 8 cases they occur initially and in 6 cases as separate IUs. In other words such adverbs strongly tend to appear in the middle of the utterance, while the more common shorter attitudinal disjuncts seldom occur IU-medially (e.g. *maybe* only in 2 cases).

(29) Tree 323

MARY: ... (TSK) (H) She was ***probably*** lonely when she was doing it,

(30) Lambada 1138

MILES: .. They had ***apparently*** just come from Oba Oba.

Similarly, there are a handful of epistemic phrases (10) that occur in the middle of IUs, but on closer examination these are constructions mostly involving *seem*, *sound* or *look*, i.e. syntactically fairly bound markers of epistemicity.

(31) Lambada 659

MILES: ... this doesn't ***seem*** like it can be true,

Only two occurrences are of the explicitly personalized type such as *I think*.

(32) Telljury 198–202

REBECCA: (H).. U=m,
.. a=nd,
you know like%%,
⇒ for some reason ***I think*** he likes students,
or people who look like students=.

Even here it is possible to view *for some reason* as only a hedge on *he likes students* that indicates that the speaker wants to formulate her opinion or guess in a less strong way (this is supported by *you know* and *like*). In that sense *for some reason* is not unlike *I think* here: they are both forward-oriented qualifying items and therefore come IU-initially. The other example occurs in an instance of self-repair.

(33) Lambada 639–655

HAROLD: Have you heard these figures.
that like=,
um,
... it's something like forty percent of males,
in .. the Bay Area,
are supposed [to be infected]?
>ENV ((MUSIC STOPS))
MILES: [Well,
last Ju][2ly=2],
PETE: [2Oh really2]?
MILES: .. [3this is what3] –
JAMIE: [3Of homosex3]ual males,
or of males.
PETE: [Of all males].
HAROLD: [Of males][2in general2].
MILES: [This infectious][2disease2][3woman,
⇒ HAROLD: [3Or males under thirty ***I think*** it3] is.

Even though the reply in line 15 is basically "correct" in that the figure (40 percent) does not only refer to homosexual males but to all males infected by the HIV virus, Harold needs to further qualify his reply. It might be argued that there really is no other place for the modulating element *I think* (line 17) to occur in a self-correction that starts with the foregrounded repairing item (*males under thirty*). A very likely reason for the repairing item to appear initially is that the speaker wishes (consciously or subconsciously) to retain a parallel syntactic structure with line 15 (and with 12, 13, and 14 for that matter), where *Of males* started the original answer. Had he not started with the repairing item, it is conceivable that he would have chosen another syntactic pattern: *Or I think it's males under thirty*. This finding of IU-medial *I think* as being generally restricted to rather special interactional/linguistic environments finds support in Simon-Vandenbergen (2000: 49), where she states that *I think* in clause-medial position is often accompanied by self-repair and disruption of syntactic structure, or appears after an unexpected element in the thematic position in the clause which is thereby emphasized.

Summary

All in all, we may conclude that epistemic phrases really are not so mobile in my data on American conversational English as might be expected: they hardly occur medially at all in clauses or intonation units. Those epistemic markers that commonly appear in the middle of an intonation unit (or clause), namely modal auxiliaries and some verbal constructions (involving *seem*, *sound*, *look*), are constrained syntactically to appear in that position and have grammaticized in such a way that this is their only position. This is also reflected in the fact that IU-medial epistemic markers on the whole seldom receive stress and are *unaccented* in more than half of the cases (57 percent in a subset of three transcripts of all five in my database; these are mostly epistemic modal auxiliaries), or they may receive only *secondary accent* (33 percent in the same subset). As for certain epistemic adverbs, namely the longer sentence adverbials ending in *-ly* that tend to appear IU-medially rather than IU-initially, it is significant that they still have a choice, i.e. they have more discourse mobility than the modal auxiliaries and the verbal constructions mentioned above. That the more common adverbs, especially *maybe*, then tend towards initial position only, can be seen as yet another indirect piece of evidence for the prevalence of IU-initial marking of epistemic stance.

4.4.3 IU-final position

Those few IUs in the database where the epistemic marker occurs at the end (a total of 23) are mostly cases where the speaker finishes in mid-utterance or redirects his/her utterance, or where the rest of the predicate is ellipted because it was expressed before (in which case even modal auxiliaries can end up being IU-final). Thus, this is more of an "accidental" pattern, to do with specific features of speech. With hearsay evidentials we occasionally get examples like the following, where the introduction of indirect speech is still tagged on at the end of a longer IU (in rapid speech) rather than forming an IU of its own.

(34) Telljury 897–899

RICKIE: and then,
⇒ .. we just made a report <A and ***he said*** A>,
.. he'll submit it and everything.

Note, however, that this is not a usual pattern. Thus, we may again conclude that epistemic phrases are not quite so mobile as has hitherto been believed. Recall that in earlier syntactically-oriented research it was claimed that parentheticals can appear initially, medially and finally in a sentence, but in my data final position practically does not occur for any markers, and therefore also not for epistemic phrases.

4.4.4 Separate IUs

It appears that some markers are more likely to constitute separate intonation units (cf. Chafe 1994 for validational intonation units), of which there were a total of 92 in my data: of epistemic phrases (in all 75 instances) these include *I don't know* (on its own without a question word or conditional complement; this particular phrase accounts for one third of all epistemic phrases occurring as separate IUs), *I'm thinking*, *I think*, *I guess*, *I know*, *I thought* and *I was thinking*, plus some individual cases, and of epistemic adverbs (only 15 instances) *probably*, *sure*, *apparently*, *definitely* and *of course*. In general, such intonation units can be oriented backward or forward in discourse, while in some cases it is hard to tell which way they are facing. I will come back to a discussion of separate intonation units in Section 4.5.2, where I will examine such units when they constitute conversational turns (as it turns out, only in 11 cases of the 92 do we also have a separate turn).

Now if we think of the overall *sequential position* of separate intonation units, there are many environments where they can occur. One group is formed

by replies to a question or other directive in the previous speaker's turn, or other reactions to that turn, as in:

(35) Death 217–218

DARRYL: ... (H) So why are you reading a book about dying,
⇒ PAMELA: ... <P ***I don't know*** P>.

(36) Tree 280–281

MARY: ... Man that's pretty ba=d.
⇒ ALICE: ... ***I know***.

Such examples, either separate turns or turn-initial instances, in fact constitute a majority of the cases that face backward in discourse; they can form turn-constructional units (TCUs) on their own (cf. Section 4.5.2 below). If we ignore replies in which the cognitive or perception verb is used in a more literal sense (as in example (35) above), it is a relatively small group of items that can appear as reactive tokens: in my data these include *I don't know*, *I know*, *I bet*, *that's true*, *probably*, *definitely* and *sure*. In addition, *I guess*, *I* (*don't*) *think* and *I don't believe* can appear with the pro-form *so*, but these particular tokens have grammaticized so that they cannot appear as reactive tokens on their own. The question as to whether such reactive tokens then function as mere continuers or assessments, rather than as separate conversational turns, will be dealt with in Section 4.5.2.

Another common position of separate IUs is in a fairly close relationship to a clause or an NP that either follows or precedes, usually within the current speaker's extended turn, but also turn-initially.

Of separate IUs that are connected to an NP or a clause, one rather distinct category is formed by a group of cognition verbs (*remember*, *think*, *figure*) that may act as story-telling devices. Epistemic phrases involving these verbs appear within stories told by participants in the course of the conversation. Such IUs then usually face forward in discourse. It is significant that such cases could have been realized by the speakers as one intonation unit, with the epistemic phrase appearing at the beginning of the longer unit, but for some reason they were not. The following starts a story and appears turn-initially.

(37) Lambada 566–567

⇒ MILES: ... Cause ***I remember***,
he came to Bahia after one of his shows one night.

A possible explanation is that when it frames a longer story that the speaker launches into immediately afterwards, as in example (37), *I remember* may be

encoded separately, whereas if it only has an IU in its scope which brings up some background information relevant for the upcoming story, it appears as part of that unit, as in the following example.

(38) Telljury 1251–1261

1	REBECCA:	... (TSK) ... what happened,
2		tell me about the ... year ago incident.
3	RICKIE:	.. U=m,
4		.. that one was at night time.
5		... And,
6		um,
7		I was working la=te,
8		and it was around,
9 ⇒		.. (H) <A ***I remember*** A> I used to get off r- around nine,
10		and I used to get to um,
11		.. (H) the Bart station around ten o'clock?
12		... A=nd,
13		... he would be=%,
(story about exhibitionist continues)		

Even though there are not enough instances in the database to find clear support for this hypothesis, it is likely that uttering the frame, *I remember*, as a separate IU has something to do with the rhetorical force with which a story is being told. The separate intonation unit serves to separate the teller from what is being told; when the remembering and what is remembered are not in one unit, this lends the storytelling a more leisurely pace, allowing the personal perspective to be highlighted. In (38) *I remember* is clearly not emphasizing the role of the speaker as a storyteller, not focusing on the actual act of remembering very much (the phrase is actually in rapid speech and phonetically quite reduced): it occurs here in a sequence where the speaker is trying to retrieve from memory the exact time of the incident as necessary background information for the telling prompted by the previous speaker. Ono and Thompson (1995) hypothesize that sentential complements are realized as more than one IU when the main predicate (here *remember*) contributes more semantic substance than mere quoted, evidentiary or repeated information (in which case it is used as a mere epistemic phrase). Even though ostensibly there is no more semantic substance in *I remember* in example (37) than there is in (38) (in both we have the same epistemic phrase without the complementizer *that*), it is possible to claim that the very slow and deliberate delivery of (37) lends more semantic substance to *I remember* and warrants its production as a separate IU.

That the narrator's voice gets to be heard more clearly by way of being encoded in separate intonation units is clearly illustrated by the next example. Miles tells a story about a psychotherapist who goes dancing in the same dance club as he and who regularly meets a "guy" there.

(39) Lambada 1293–1317

1	MILES:	and they're kinda like all over each other (Hx).
2 ⇒		.. And ***I'm thinking***,
3		we=ll,
4		... ***I guess*** that's her husband,
5	JAMIE:	.. Uh-oh [did you] say @something?
6	MILES:	[but I-] - -
7	JAMIE:	@@
8 ⇒	MILES:	but ***I was thinking***,
9		(H) but the thing is,
10		... you know she's kind of all sophisticated and everything,
11 ⇒		and ***I'm thinking***,
12		you know,
13		this guy%,
14		%= ***I can't .. really believe*** that guy's her husband.
15		So ***I don't know what***'s going on here.
16		... And ***of course*** later on I find out,
17		.. that's not her husband.
18		... (H) ... <% <HI So=,
19 ⇒		***I'm thinking***,
20		you know HI> %>,
21		***I don't know what***'s going on here.
22		@@ (H) @
23		(H) But uh=,
24		...%= (Hx)
25		.. bizarre.

We can see a number of markers of personal stance and involvement in Miles' commentary about the goings-on at the club. In fact this seems almost to be a story about Miles himself, as he is trying to figure out what is going on at the dance club (to add to its vividness, the story is told in the present tense). The frame *I'm thinking* (and, once, *I was thinking*) stands in marked contrast to all the other epistemic items because it regularly appears as a separate IU, whereas the others are IU-initial. The effect of encoding it as a separate IU seems to be an emphasis and shift in the discourse back to the storyteller. It also adds

a definite rhythm to the story, as it appears at regular intervals and is always realized in the same way (note incidentally that it is always followed by another personal judgment of the situation, as lines 2–4, 11–14, 19–21 form neat pairs).

A further frequent stance marker in conversational stories is *I thought* used as a frame for reporting the speaker's own thoughts, either actual or imaginary, in some earlier interaction or situation. Thus, even though the actual judgment is thereby shifted into the past, this epistemic phrase still lends a subjective flavor towards what is being told in the present situation. It is through this personal filter that the narrator tells the story, and the filter allows his/her personal self to be highlighted at crucial moments; the narrator "breaks the narrative frame at strategic junctures" (Goffman 1981b: 152). *I thought* may be realized both IU-initially and as a separate IU.

(40) Retire 377–396

1	DORIS:	...(TSK) (H) I wanted to order that muumuu,
2		... I think it was around twenty-nine dollars,
3		or something like that,
4		.. (H) and two pairs of short pajamas.
5		... One for Sam,
6		and one for me.
7		... (H) A=nd (Hx),
8		... I looked at the postage .. attached to it,
9	ANGELA:	(H)
10 ⇒	DORIS:	.. (H) and ***I thought*** good heavens.
11		It would have been around eight dollar-.
12		It's by .. amounts of <<POUND +money ++.
13		... Not +weight.
14		It's by +money.
15		... + +How much +mo=ney this costs.
16		... And it's +geared according to +that POUND>>.
17 ⇒		... (H) And ***I thought***,
18		% forget it.
19		I could take that eight dollars,
20		and buy another whole .. outfit.

Rather than simply conveying unmediated information about the postage for the goods that the speaker was going to order, she tells a story and makes her point about the peculiar postage (by how much the goods cost, not how much they weigh) through embedding herself and her emphatic personal judgment

into the ongoing story (cf. Goffman's 1981b term 'change in footing'). *I figured* may also be used in the same way.

(41) Lambada 1147–1163

1	MILES:	there was this guy in his fifties,
2		.. out there dancing,
3		... <BR by himself BR>.
4		... And the woman was just looking at him,
5		making eyes,
6		then she went out there,
7		got on her knee=s,
8		... in front of him.
9		... in this skirt that's this short,
10		... (H) takes her hands,
11		.. and goes along his toes,
12		and then up,
13		and is just .. d=oing like that.
14 ⇒		.. ***I figured***,
15	JAMIE:	[Oo=].
16	MILES:	[oh,
17		they ***must*** know each] other.

The above examples clearly illustrate the general subjectivity of everyday language use discussed in Section 2.1: as shown by Scheibman (2002), speakers seldom report bare facts, events or actions in an unmediated manner, but consistently convey their points of view, evaluations, opinions, and attitudes while doing so. And as we have seen, conversational stories may be interspersed with the speaker's epistemic and evaluative commentary throughout (cf. example (39) above), not only at some "strategic junctures." It is significant that the epistemic stance markers involved in examples (37)–(41) tend strongly to be realized as separate intonation units, in other words the very fact that they are so encoded may act as an additional rhetorical device to highlight the storyteller's personal involvement and role in the ongoing story, and also thereby involve the recipients in the telling.

In addition to the above types, a total of 33 hearsay evidentials appear as separate IUs in my data, similarly acting as story-telling devices. They are practically always forward-oriented introductory phrases of the type *I said* or *s/he said*, introducing direct reported speech. As we saw earlier in this chapter, with *s/he said* IU-initial position is the most common, however, while with *I said*

there is no great difference between these two positions. Compare the following examples (42) and (43).

(42) Telljury 1423–1430

1	REBECCA:	(H) He testified in a trial,
2		... u=m,
3		... about five years ago.
4		Sa- identical ... situa[tion],
5	RICKIE:	[R=]eally,
6 ⇒	REBECCA:	(H) and ***he said***,
7 ⇒		.. <A ***his testimony was*** A>,
8		my momma didn't raise me to do things like this.

Here the utterance in the last line is really quite dramatic, since these are the words of the exhibitionist who had tried to deny in court that he had such an inclination. The direct quote (or, rather, the current speaker's rendition of one) is focused upon, by being introduced in two different ways in lines 6 and 7. The introduction in line 6 is "upgraded" by the lawyer Rebecca in line 7; *his testimony was* is in effect an evidential marker, even though not likely to occur frequently in everyday conversation. Here we have an example, then, of drawing explicit attention to and highlighting (the source of) the direct quote.

With such introductory phrases the realization often seems to be related to the form of the direct quote, i.e. whether the following utterance is quite short (a single NP, a discourse marker like *well*, or simply *yes* or *no*), in which case the introductory phrase tends to be incorporated in that utterance and appears IU-initially, or whether the utterance is longer or more weighty and dramatic in effect, in which case the introductory phrase is often realized on its own. Compare the following example (already given above as example (11)).

(43) Death 467–486

1	PAMELA:	Natalie asked me about Santa Claus today.
2	DARRYL:	What did she,
3		[what did she say],
4	PAMELA:	[In the laundro]mat.
5 ⇒		***She said***,
6		.. mom,
7		Santa Claus isn't,
8		... I mean,
9		d- is there a for real Sa- Santa Claus?
10 ⇒		.. ***I said*** a for real Santa Claus,

11	you mean a man who lives .. at the north pole?
12 ⇒	.. (H) <*A* ***She said*** *A*> yeah,
13 ⇒	<*A* ***I said*** *A*>no.
14 ⇒	... (H) And ***she said***,
15	.. well,
16	<HI who are the other ones HI>.
17 ⇒	***I said*** well,
18	they're the spirit of Santa Claus,
19	and,
20	... (H) they represent Santa Claus.

In lines 10, 12, 13 and 17 we can see examples of the evidential phrase occurring IU-initially. For example, in lines 12 and 13 the phrase is in rapid speech (in line 12 *she* is almost inaudible), and the emphasis is clearly on the words *yeah* and *no*. In the most usual case, forward-looking hearsay evidentials that introduce direct speech do not get emphasized in any way, and are very often faster than the surrounding speech. They provide a frame on the following utterance, namely that it is not the product of the current speaker in the here-and-now, but was produced by the current speaker or some other reported speaker in some earlier speaking situation. The emphasis is more on what was said and not on who said it.[18] But speakers may convey some very delicate nuances of meaning by varying the way in which they choose to code the introductory phrase. In lines 14–16, Natalie's puzzlement (clearly conveyed by her high pitch on *who are the other ones* in line 16) is in part conveyed by breaking her speech into several IUs, thereby separating *she said* and *well* from each other intonationally (by a very short pause before *well* and by a pitch reset). By comparison, when Pamela hastens to reply in lines 17–18, this is done in a less fragmentary way; the evidential phrase and the discourse marker *well* occur in one IU, and both come in a slightly faster tempo than the surrounding speech. There is thus a choice as to whether such common hearsay evidentials are encoded IU-initially or as separate IUs, but the choice is not done randomly: it is motivated by the desire of the narrator to highlight certain aspects of the story.

Further, of separate IUs that appear in close connection to an NP or a clause, instances of on-line planning are fairly common. Epistemic markers then mostly face forward within the current speaker's turn, and one of their functions seems to be to give the speaker an opportunity to think ahead.

(44) Telljury 889–895

1	RICKIE:	(SNIFF) That was that,
2 ⇒		and then ***I think***,
3		uh=,
4		.. couple of days after,
5		.. one of the uh,
6		.. detectives,
7		(H) called me and then I made a report.

In this example, the hesitations and pauses as well as the verbalization of the clause over several IUs seem to indicate that the speaker is planning the utterance as she goes along. *I don't know* and *I guess* also appear in similar environments.

Finally, some separate-IU epistemic phrases may face backward and at least ostensibly qualify something in the immediately preceding discourse in the current speaker's talk.[19] This is the 'afterthought' position which is claimed to be quite common with epistemic phrases in conversational data (cf. Biber et al. 1999; Simon-Vandenbergen 2000 on *I think*), but which in fact turned out to be quite rare in my data: *I don't know* (3 instances), *I guess* (3), *I think* (3), *probably* (2) and *I noticed* (1). In some of these cases the marker actually occurs turn-finally, while in others it does not (cf. *I think* in example (45) and *I guess* in (46) below). Compare the following example, where the topic is a group of senior citizens who go to a Tucson mall every morning and walk around it a number of times.

(45) Retire 585–602

1 ⇒	SAM:	What outfit is this from.
2		Oasis?
3	ANGELA:	.. (H) No,
4	DORIS:	(H) [no,
5	ANGELA:	[it's a-] - -
6	DORIS:	it's just] a neighborhood thing.
7		.. [2It's just people2] around in that area,
8	ANGELA:	[2it's n=e-2] - -
9	DORIS:	(H) and they go there to walk.
10	SAM:	(H)[=]
11 ⇒	DORIS:	[***I think***].
12 ⇒		...(1.5) (H) <P ***I think*** that's it P>.
13		...(2) But uh=,
14		...(1.5) (H) I- - -

15 uh - -
16 we've been over there,
17 and we've seen em go in,
18 ... and all they're doing is just walking.

I think appears in a context where the speaker adds it to what looks like an unmodified claim complete in itself, *and they go there to walk.*, which ends in a final intonation contour (a fall to a low pitch indicated by the period) signaling that the speaker could have stopped there. *I think* then extends the turn past this complex transition point, a CTRP, in the turn, while there is another CTRP at the end of *I think*. According to Ford and Thompson (1996: 164–170), speakers may extend a turn past a CTRP for a variety of interactional motives. One of these motives is pursuing a recipient response when uptake does not occur, which may be done by adding on a tag question, by communicating uncertainty, by adding support to some prior claim, by adding specification or elaboration, and so on.[20] The speaker, Doris, seems definitely ready to yield the floor after line 11, as can be seen from the hesitations, restarts, and the rather long pauses before the following intonation units (lines 12–14). But since no other speaker selects to talk, she continues with another TCU, and repeats the qualified claim <*P I think that's it P*>. Note that the speaker thereby reverts back to the more unmarked pattern of IU-initial *I think*. As will be argued below in Section 5.5.1, one function of post-positioned *I think* when it occurs as a separate IU, i.e. as a turn extension, may be simply to manage problems in turn transition and to pursue a recipient response. I offer a deeper sequential analysis of this example in (76) below. Here there is no recipient uptake at all after the two epistemic stance markers, and Doris struggles onward by reasserting her claim and the type of epistemic evidence that she has for it (*and we've seen em go in,*) in lines 16–18.

A somewhat different example of *I guess* in this position is the following.

(46) Death 96–105

1 DARRYL: .. I didn't like the book,
2 the way I - -
3 the minute I looked at it.
4 PAMELA: ... You didn't.
5 DARRYL: No.
6 PAMELA: That's cause you,
7 DARRYL: ... That's because I have my own ideas about it,

8 ⇒		***I guess.***
9		That I'm .. pretty comfortable with.
10	PAMELA:	... ah.

There is evidence in the data that *I guess* may similarly occur as a turn extension as *I think* in example (45) above. Here, however, *I guess* does *not* appear to be one, nor is its function geared towards managing problematic turn transition. In this example *I guess* appears clause-medially and clearly does not end the turn. I argue that this epistemic phrase here appears at the earliest possible point in the interaction and functions to soften the claim made by Darryl. On line 6 Pamela clearly orients to an explanation or an account from Darryl for disliking the book that she herself has been reading (which deals with rather sensitive topics like death, heaven and hell): she starts to offer a candidate reason by uttering *That's because you,*. She does not finish this utterance, however, but prompts Darryl himself to provide the account; the unfinished *(be)cause* clause also strongly projects that Darryl should pick up and continue the same syntactic structure or frame. But as Darryl does so, IU-initial placement of *I guess* is blocked, and the earliest possible place where any qualification of Darryl's argument can be made is precisely after the causal schema has been brought to completion. *I guess* is thereupon produced without a pause, and it seems indeed to have been designed to follow (line 7 was not designed to end the speaking turn, as it ends in a continuing intonation contour). Further support for the likelihood that the sentence in lines 7–9 was intended to be produced as a chunk can be found in the way the speaker again continues without a pause into the following IU on line 9, which pragmatically completes the action of offering an adequate account (even though the turn would have been syntactically complete already in line 7). What becomes obvious from this example is that the speaker does not add *I guess* as an 'afterthought', as though realizing after the fact that his claim needs softening – he simply did not have the choice of starting out with the qualifying item. This example illustrates the powerful tendency towards IU-initial (or clause-initial) marking of stance; only when that position is blocked will a later position in the utterance do.

In the following example we see post-positioned *probably* that occurs turn-finally.

(47) Lambada 607–619

1	MILES:	.. I'm sure a lot of women throw themselves at em,
2		so that's what they expe=ct from women.
3	HAROLD:	... A lot of groupies.

4	MILES:	.. Yeah.
5		... Fringe benefits.
6	PETE:	Hm.
7	MILES:	.. @@@ (H)
8	JAMIE:	.. The only fringe benefit <X of X> being a dancer,
9 ⇒		***probably***.
10	HAROLD:	.. Well [in San] Francisco,
11	MILES:	[But then again],
12	HAROLD:	.. @you never know if it's a benefit or not,
13		either.
14	JAMIE:	That'[s] true.
15	PETE:	[@]

Miles and Harold cooperate in making a slightly provocative claim, that male dancers are justified in expecting a lot of attention from women, nor does Pete explicitly disagree with this claim. Jamie, a professional dancer herself and the only woman present, does not join in the laughter but makes a remark in line 8 that sounds somewhat resentful. She then tags on *probably* with a final intonation at the end of this IU. Again, there is some evidence that she appears to have planned to produce *probably* as a direct continuation of the turn: the IU on line 8 ends in a fall to mid rather than low pitch, indicating that the speaker was not going to stop speaking at that point, and the stance marker follows immediately in the next beat, without a pause. As she had chosen to start the utterance by the emphasized element *The only fringe benefit* rather than by *Probably*, there is linguistically no other place for her to insert this sentence adverbial except at the end of the whole long NP. Significantly, by placing *The only fringe benefit* in initial position in the utterance she ends up emphasizing this element, and by then tagging *probably* at the end she is able to soften the strength of her remark. In this sense the 'afterthought' interpretation is not far off the mark, but it does not capture the interactional motivation for this phenomenon: speakers in interaction may want to redesign what they are saying, while in the process of saying it, to ensure a certain kind of response or reaction from the recipients. What is more, they actively monitor that response while talking. By way of encoding *probably* separately and in final intonation, Jamie also signals that she has come to the end of her turn. Indeed, her claim is then picked up and developed by Harold, who now aligns with Jamie in lines 10 and 12–13. Hence, we may hypothesize that epistemic markers in this position, as separate IUs and coming after what they modify, may acquire some special functions in the interaction, either discourse-organizational or oriented towards recipient de-

sign, rather than simply being tagged on as afterthoughts (cf. also example (49) below on *I don't know)*.

Summary

I have dealt with separate intonation units at some length, also suggesting some of their possible interactional functions. We have seen that there are two main types of sequential positions for separate IUs to appear: (1) as replies to a question or as reactive tokens to prior turns in discourse (when they face backward in discourse), and (2) in close connection to a clause or an NP that either follows or precedes (in which case they may face either forward or backward in discourse). Under (2), firstly, some epistemic phrases (*I remember*, *I'm thinking*, *I thought*, *I figured*) and some hearsay evidentials (*s/he said*, *I said*) may act as story frames, as rhetorical story-telling devices that allow narrators to highlight some aspects of the discourse, including themselves as subjective storytellers, and to involve their recipients in the story-telling. Secondly, some epistemic markers (*I think*, *I guess*, *I don't know*, *probably*) face either forward or backward in discourse. When they face forward, one of their functions is to allow the speaker some time to plan their utterance. When they face backward (appearing either in mid-turn or turn-finally), they ostensibly allow the speakers to qualify their commitment after verbalizing it but may thereby acquire a function over and above this, such as to soften assertions, pursue a recipient response, manage problems in recipient design, or to signal completion of the turn-at-talk. Upon closer inspection, too, it often turns out that they have no real "choice" as to their placement but, because of some linguistic and/or interactional constraints, have to appear after the unit in question rather than in their unmarked position or IU-initially. In all, then, the exact interactional functions of each of the above epistemic markers can only be established through careful qualitative analysis of the sequential and activity contexts in which they occur.

Finally, the difference between encoding something as a separate IU vs. IU-initially is also reflected in the way separate IUs are realized prosodically. Separate IUs may obtain *primary accent* relatively speaking much more often than IU-initial or IU-medial occurrences (in 46 percent of the cases in the subset of three transcripts), while a *secondary accent* is possible too (32 percent in the same set); only in 22 percent of the cases is there no accent at all (these are mostly hearsay evidentials of the type discussed above, namely *I said* and *s/he said*).

Note, again, that we cannot find much support in the data for the assumed syntactic mobility of epistemic phrases; in principle separate IUs could be ex-

pected to occur initially, medially or finally *in relation to clauses*, but with a few exceptions (when they face backward in discourse) they tend strongly to occur initially in my data.

4.4.5 Summary of intonation unit positions

So far in this chapter I have examined the marking of epistemic stance in terms of intonation units (rather than clauses), and have established some pervasive and recurrent discourse patterns for the marking of epistemic stance in the data. We have seen a great deal of evidence that the IU-initial positioning is the unmarked place for speakers to express their stance. The speaker's commitment or lack of commitment towards the expressed proposition tends to become clear in this position, i.e. before what the speaker is about to say, and this positioning is claimed to be interactionally motivated: it is here that the speaker conveniently sets up an orientation towards the utterance for the benefit of the recipients. As we saw further, IU-medial and IU-final positions are quite rare for most types of epistemic markers. Encoding epistemic stance as a separate intonation unit, finally, performs some specialized interactional functions to do with planning one's speech, the rhetoric of conversational storytelling, softening assertions, marking completion of conversational turns, and pursuing and monitoring recipient response. Again, the recurrent discourse patterns established in the data highlight the *regularity* and *routinized marking of stance* at the level of interaction (and not just linguistic form), namely at the level of intonation units as interactive units of discourse.

We have seen that the intonation unit is indeed a relevant unit of analysis: there are clear trends and recurrent patterns observable in the data as to how epistemicity is encoded in terms of the basic prosodic phrase, and these patterns can be shown to be interactional in motivation. One such recurrent phenomenon is the prevalence of marking epistemic stance in a predictable slot, namely IU-initially, whether such IUs then occur turn-initially or anywhere within an extended turn. An extension of this pattern is formed by precision-timed qualification through epistemic markers in cases of on-line planning and same-turn self-repair: such qualifications regularly start a new IU. On the other hand, epistemic markers produced as separate IUs are effectively tagged onto the turn-in-progress as turn increments of various kinds. IU-related encoding of epistemic stance is thus an indication of the emergent and incremental nature of turns, or of speech produced in real time and piece by piece. We are thus alerted to the interactional possibilities of these encodings, given that our transcription system has made them apparent to our analytical eye. Syntacti-

cally speaking, then, we also avoid having to take a stand on whether epistemic phrases are (parenthetical) clauses or not, or whether they are parts of clauses, and if so, which clauses they are part of (and are they then subordinate or superordinate clauses in view of the rest of the sentence). We can zoom in on epistemicity in a completely different way by treating intonation units as the natural loci for the expression of epistemic stance, and by viewing intonation-unit encoding as not only cognitively but interactionally meaningful.

But in the above treatment I only laid out the interactional functions of epistemic markers in rather general terms, with a focus on the differences between these functions depending on encoding in terms of intonation units. As far as the IU-initial position was concerned, I did not elaborate on the exact interactional functions of epistemic markers at all, but only concentrated on the significance of this position in general for the marking of speaker commitment, the exact type of which will differ according to type of epistemic marker. I almost completely ignored positing interactional functions for markers appearing in IU-medial and IU-final position, as these are so rare in the data (and my focus is not on epistemic modal auxiliaries). Finally, I described in some detail the range of discourse functions of epistemic items when they are encoded as separate IUs; this was done to highlight the interactional significance of such encoding, as opposed to the unmarked IU-initial expression of epistemic stance.

The following table shows once more the intonation unit positions that are possible for the most frequent epistemic markers in the database (as listed in Table 2).

Table 7. Intonation unit positions of the most frequent epistemic markers

	IU-initial	**IU-medial**	**IU-final**	**Separate IU**
I think	x	x	–	x
s/he said	x	–	(x)	x
I don't know	x	–	–	x
maybe	x	x	–	–
I said	x	–	(x)	x
I guess	x	–	–	x
I thought	x	x	–	x
probably	x	x	–	x
I'm thinking	x	–	–	x
I remember(ed)	x	–	–	x
must	–	x	(x)	–

The epistemic items that have the most mobility in terms of intonation units include *I think*, *I thought*, and *probably*, with items like *I don't know*, *I guess* and *maybe* showing slightly less variability.

Having established the occurrence of epistemicity in terms of individual intonation units, I now turn to a larger sequence of intonation units and also to epistemicity in relation to conversational turns.

4.5 Position within intonation unit sequence and in conversational turns

In this section I expand the unit of analysis of epistemicity to cover also the previous intonation unit, to establish whether epistemic stance is likely to be expressed after points of intonational (and pragmatic) completion or not. Relatedly, I examine whether epistemic markers then come after an actual speaker change, i.e. at turn-initial position, or whether they are more likely to be part of the current speaker's extended turn and possibly also come at the end of such turns.

4.5.1 Finality vs. lack of finality of what precedes; speaker change or not?

To explore whether there is a possibility of a change of speaker at (or really immediately before) the point where an epistemic marker occurs, I examined the type of transitional intonation of the preceding intonation unit in the database. My initial hypothesis was that epistemic (including evidential) markers are more to be expected after points of intonational completion. As we have seen, they tend to appear at the beginnings of IUs, and very often simultaneously at the beginnings of clauses, and may therefore be expected to occur after the completion of some conversational action, i.e. after a pragmatic (and intonational) completion point. Relatedly, they may also be expected to occur at turn-initial positions, i.e. after an actual speaker change. I therefore coded the data for the transitional continuity of the preceding intonation unit, and also for whether that intonation unit is part of the current speaker's turn or is produced by a different speaker.

For English, a final intonation contour has been established to be a fall to a low pitch at the end of the IU, generally marked with a period [.]. But an appeal contour, i.e. a marked high rise in pitch at the end of the IU, which is marked with a question mark [?], may also be final in the sense of seeking a validating response from the listener and yielding the speaking turn to another speaker

(Du Bois et al. 1993; Ford &Thompson 1996). Hence, a turn transition may occur at the end of such an intonation unit.

Yet we do not necessarily have speaker change taking place after such completion points; as many as 31 percent of the CTRPs in Ford and Thompson's study (1996: 165) were not accompanied by actual speaker change. The current speaker may continue to talk even beyond such points. It is therefore conceivable that the marking of epistemic stance is not confined to points after actual speaker change, i.e. to turn-initial position. We have also seen some evidence that epistemicity may play a part in extending a turn past a CTRP (as in example (45), where *I think* comes after an intonational completion point). Ford and Thompson (1996) give an example of *I don't know* in (48) below, where this epistemic phrase, marking low reliability of the offered information, extends the turn past a CTRP, and simultaneously ends the side sequence dealing with the brother as topic. In other words, this epistemic marker acts as a topic closing.

(48) Ford and Thompson (1996: 169)

21 ⇒ V: I don't think my- my brother's so a:ctive/.>
22 ⇒ I mean ***I don't know***/.>
23 (0.2)
24 ⇒ Anyways his leg turned/ (0.2) thirteen de- he was
25 bowlegged/... <continuation of talk about father>

It is worth noting that such a function of this particular epistemic marker does not presuppose that it actually occurs turn-finally, as it does not in the above example: in line 24 the same speaker still continues to talk. The current speaker may mark the completion of some sub-sequence in the discourse and, if speaker change does not occur, proceed to talk about something else.

Somewhat against my initial hypothesis, I found that epistemic markers as a whole were only slightly more likely after points of intonational completion than after IUs that end with a continuing intonation (53.3 percent vs. 46.7 percent).[21] Epistemicity is not confined to points in the discourse where a speaker change is possible and could have preceded, but can be expressed throughout conversational turns after points of non-completion as well. The expression of epistemic stance is dispersed throughout the discourse, it is not confined to some limited sequential positions like turn beginnings.

Relatedly, I then looked more closely at whether a speaker-change actually preceded or not: in 33.7 percent of cases a speaker change had just occurred (and the epistemic marker occurred turn-initially or as a separate turn on its

own, cf. Table 8 below), while in as many as 66.3 percent of cases no speaker change was involved (and the epistemic marker occurred turn-medially or turn-finally, cf. Table 8 again). In fact the most common environment for epistemic stance to be expressed was *after continuing intonation within the current speaker's turn*. The next most likely environment was after an utterance by the previous speaker that ended with a final intonation contour, i.e. after a point of completion and an actual speaker change. But it was also fairly common to find epistemic markers after points of completion in the current speaker's turn, i.e. after a possible CTRP. The only position that was not very likely was after continuing intonation of the previous speaker, which in effect would often constitute an interruption. It therefore seems that if we think of the aspects of sequential organization that are relevant for an interpretation of the functions of epistemic markers in discourse, there is definitely reason to look beyond adjacency pair relations or sequences of two consecutive conversational turns (cf. Tsui 1991, who describes *I don't know* primarily in these terms), into longer stretches of discourse and into extended turns by one primary speaker, such as stories or other types of extended turns. For example, the role that epistemicity may play in extending a turn past a completion point can only become evident under such an examination. Also, some epistemic markers may play a role in the organization of discourse (cf. discourse markers like *anyway*, *well*, etc.), marking some larger discourse unit over and above the single utterance. As was mentioned above, when *I don't know* appears at the end of an extended turn or some sub-sequence in the turn, it may mark topic closing (cf. Scheibman 2000:119). The same marker, when it appears early in a turn, may also act as a "prefatory epistemic disclaimer" projecting "more to come," i.e. a multi-unit turn (Schegloff 1996:61–62). On the other hand, it is conceivable that the finality vs. lack of finality (or intonational completion vs. non-completion) of what went on immediately before in the discourse, as well as whether a speaker change actually preceded, will bear on the discourse functions of epistemic markers.

4.5.2 Turn-internal vs. constituting a turn

In what follows I lay out, albeit from a somewhat static perspective, the discourse profile of epistemic markers in view of conversational turns. I examine more closely whether epistemic items are more likely to be embedded within a turn and, relatedly, whether they then occur at the beginning, middle or end of a turn. This is contrasted with those cases where an epistemic item may constitute a turn-constructional unit, or TCU, and simultaneously a turn on its own.

We will see that epistemic modality mostly constitutes parts of TCUs rather than complete TCUs.

This aspect of epistemicity of course ties in with speaker change: a turn is typically considered to change whenever there is a speaker change. However, I have modified this notion of turn in the following way. Following Goodwin (1986a) and Schegloff (1982), I do not consider short responses like *yeah*, *okay*, *mhm*, *unhunh*, *oh* or *really*, made by recipients especially during extended talk by another speaker, as turns, but as *continuers* or *assessments* (in other words I am adopting a functional rather than technical definition of a turn). The former are defined by Goodwin (1986a: 207) to be displays of recipients' understanding that an extended turn-at-talk is in progress but not yet complete, while the latter assess what was said by treating it as something remarkable. Continuers are said to occur at the boundaries of turn-constructional units, and they frequently bridge the end of one unit and the beginning of a next, i.e. occur in overlap. Assessments, on the other hand, "can take the form of talk with clear lexical content (for example 'Oh wow' and assessment adjectives such as 'beautiful'), they can also be done with sounds such as 'Ah:::"' (1986a: 214). The main criterion that Goodwin proposes for distinguishing between the two is that assessments, while also occurring during ongoing talk of another, do not intrude into subsequent units but come to completion before a new unit is entered. Now for my initial purposes it is not essential to be able to distinguish between continuers and assessments so much as to be able to say that they do not constitute speaking turns (even though Goodwin does not explicitly address this issue).[22] Instead, such tokens indicate a *passing turn*, i.e. the recipient does not want to take a turn, or may be passing the opportunity to initiate repair (cf. Schegloff 1982). I have treated such tokens as continuers/assessments *unless* the primary speaker pauses for a noticeably long time (longer than 0.5 seconds) before s/he proceeds to talk again, in which case I consider a new turn to begin there. What is worth noticing already here is that some epistemic markers themselves can constitute separate entities of their own within the flow of talk, entities that look a lot like continuers or assessments.

Table 8 illustrates the occurrence of epistemic markers in terms of conversational turns. I have expanded the notion of turn-initial somewhat to mean 'anywhere in a turn-initial intonation unit' (i.e. to include cases where the epistemic item comes at the very beginning of the intonation unit, may constitute a separate intonation unit, or can come later in the intonation unit). The motivation for doing this is to cast our net as wide as possible: since epistemic items other than epistemic phrases (i.e. modals and some verbal constructions) re-

Table 8. Occurrence of epistemic markers in conversational turns

	Turn-initial	Turn-medial	Turn-final	Separate turn	Total
IU-initial	86	163	–	2	251
IU-medial	24	78	1	–	103
IU-final	4	16	3	–	23
Separate IU	33	65	9	16	123
Total	147 (29.4%)	322 (64.4%)	13 (2.6%)	18 (3.6%)	500 (100%)

ally only appear IU-medially, I want to examine whether they still tend to come relatively close to the beginnings of turns. Also, I again ignore any connectives that may be in the IU under consideration.

We can see in Table 8 that epistemic stance tends to be expressed *above all within extended turns*, as 64.4 percent of all epistemic markers occur turn-medially. There is no overly strong tendency for epistemic markers to occur at turn-initial position (29.4 percent), even though the notion of turn-initial is quite wide. And there is even less of a tendency for epistemicity to cluster at the ends of turns (2.6 percent). Finally, some but not many epistemic markers can occur on their own as separate turns (whether we then call them turns will be discussed below), but the proportion is not large (3.6 percent). Now if we compare these results to Table 9, which shows epistemic phrases only, but excludes hearsay evidentials, we can see that the overall proportions are almost exactly the same.

If we compare the above patterns with that formed by hearsay evidentials, it turns out that there is an even stronger tendency for the latter to cluster in extended turns rather than to occur turn-initially: the proportions are 15.4 percent for turn-initial occurrence but 83.7 percent for intra-turn occurrence (while there are virtually no turn-final or separate-turn occurrences). This is not surprising, since, as we have seen, such hearsay evidentials often

Table 9. Occurrence of epistemic phrases (other than hearsay evidentials) in conversational turns

	Turn-initial	Turn-medial	Turn-final	Separate turn	Total
IU-initial	55	92	–	2	149
IU–medial	–	11	–	–	11
IU–final	2	5	–	–	7
Separate IU	24	37	6	8	75
Total	81 (33.5%)	145 (59.9%)	6 (2.5%)	10 (4.1%)	242 (100%)

appear in conversational stories told through extended stretches of directly quoted speech.

In the following, I will take a closer look at which epistemic items in the data occur turn-initially, medially, finally and as separate turns.

Turn-initial occurrence of epistemic markers

We can calculate from Table 8 that approximately one third (34.3 percent) of all IU-initial cases of epistemic markers are simultaneously turn-initial (86 of 251 instances), while two thirds (64.9 percent, or 163 of 251) occur within an extended turn. Thus, we do not have much evidence for the significance of turn-initial positioning of even IU-initial epistemic markers. A detailed discussion of the interactional functions of the most common marker, *I think*, in this position will be left for Chapter 5. For the moment we may simply conclude that the functions of epistemic markers do *not* seem to be dependent on initial position in the turn, and that their occurrence at the beginning of a turn may even be a "coincidence," i.e. due to the fact that turns may consist of only a single utterance (clause or IU), and the item in question happens to occur IU-initially or as a separate IU. Epistemic markers can in general be scattered throughout the turn to perform their interactional functions.

Of the epistemic markers presented in Table 2, nearly all can and do occur turn-initially in the database (recall that the definition of turn-initial also included cases where the epistemic marker comes later in the intonation unit, and this is why even modal auxiliaries could be viewed as turn-initial). Examples of turn-initial cases include (17), (20), (24), (35) and (36) above.

Turn-medial occurrence of epistemic markers

This is the *most common* environment for epistemic markers in general, and also for epistemic phrases (the percentages being around 60 percent, and for hearsay evidentials even higher, as we saw above). This is not surprising, since conversational turns frequently consist of more than a single utterance, and if epistemicity is not confined to turn-initial (or turn-final) position, then we can expect to find a greater number of turn-medial than turn-initial (or turn-final) instances, simply because there are fewer turn beginnings than there are intonation unit or utterance beginnings. Again, of the epistemic markers laid out in Table 2, nearly all can and do occur turn-medially. We have already seen several examples above of intra-turn positions of epistemic markers: (11), (12), (21), (25), (26), (32), (34), (38), (39), (40) and (41).

Turn-final occurrence of epistemic markers

We have already discussed the issue of separate intonation units appearing turn-finally in Section 4.4.4; these are virtually the only types that do so occur. Of the overall number or 12 turn-final instances in the data, 9 cases constitute a separate IU (*I don't know* 3, *I think* 2, *probably* 2, *I guess* 1, *I noticed* 1). An example of *probably* occurring in turn-final position was presented in (47). An example of *I don't know* is seen in the following.

(49) Lambada 520–535

1	PETE:	.. cause I think Indo- Indonesians],
2	JAMIE:	think (H)]?
3	PETE:	or,
4		.. people who've been to Indonesia,
5		.. think that those guys,
6		like the two top ones,
7		... have really European characteristics.
8		... [compared] to Indonesians.
9	JAMIE:	[Uh],
10	PETE:	... Just cause their eyes are real [2big and their noses are big2].
11	HAROLD:	[2Their eyes are rou=nd2].
12	JAMIE:	... Oh [3really=3]?
13	PETE:	[3And Indonesians3] have real thin eyes,
14		and,
15		... and flat noses and stuff.
16 ⇒		... <***P I= don't know P***>.

Here the conversation is centered around some Indonesian masks on the wall, and Miles has just offered as his opinion that one of the people portrayed looks black (Miles is African American himself). Pete has found this interesting, because a more common view among Indonesians seems to be that such persons look European rather than black. He offers further support for his opinion in lines 10 and 13–15, and then, by adding *I don't know* (in soft speech), hands it over to the other participants to evaluate or validate. In other words, *I don't know* here signals completion of the turn by way of indicating uncertainty (cf. Ford & Thompson 1996: 170). Scheibman (2000: 120) indeed considers it likely that signaling speaker change is the most conventionalized or ritualized use of this expression in conversational interaction.

There were three further cases in the data where an epistemic marker appears in the middle or at the end of a turn-final intonation unit: *for sure* (as in *That was* ***for sure.***), *probably* (as in *She* ***probably*** *was.*), and *must* (a case of an el-

lipted main verb in connection with a modal auxiliary, as in *I guess she **must**.*). In the following example, turn-completion is marked by way of indicating a degree of certainty.

(50) Retire 1–23

1	DORIS:	... Sam has been,
2		.. has taken such an interest in this retirement bit.
3		(H) ... That it - -
4		it really surprises me.
5	ANGELA:	.. Well she's begun to listen.
6	DORIS:	Yes she has.
7	ANGELA:	You know,
8		(H)
9	DORIS:	She has.
10	ANGELA:	... uh=,
11		she used to .. (H) go over and [read a book,
12	DORIS:	[%=_Yeah or],
13	ANGELA:	or something].
14	DORIS:	b- turn a deaf ear.
15 ⇒		That was ***for @sure***.
16		[@@@@@]
17	ANGELA:	[(H) Bu=t uh],

In sum, even according to a very wide notion of what constitutes turn-final, the percentage is very small (2.6 percent for all epistemic markers and 2.5 percent for epistemic phrases). Yet, the interactional significance of the turn-final position is quite well established; as pointed out by Sacks et al. (1978) and by Schegloff (1996: 95), the ends of turns provide projections and connections for the following turns. As we have seen, epistemic items may perform different functions here from other positions in the turn; we have seen evidence for the function of signaling turn completion and/or pursuing and monitoring recipient response (examples (47), (49), and (50)). It appears, though, that such functions are not the most typical ones for epistemic markers in the data, as epistemic stance is mostly expressed elsewhere in conversational turns. Even *I don't know*, which is one of the most mobile epistemic phrases and as a consequence has acquired more versatile interactional functions, occurs in turn-final position rather infrequently (3 out of 28 occurrences in the data).

Occurrence of epistemic markers as separate turns

As was noted earlier in Section 4.4.4, certain items, namely *I don't know*, *I know*, *I bet*, *that's true*, *probably*, *sure*, *of course* and *definitely* (when they appear as separate intonation units) may constitute separate turns in my data; in other words they can function as turn-constructional units on their own. Their function then seems to be (apart from replies to questions, such as *I don't know/remember*) as some kind of discourse particles or reactive tokens. By comparison, many others, even common ones such as *I think*, *I guess* and *I don't think*, cannot occur as TCUs in the same way without the pro-form *so*, indicating that almost similar syntactic forms have grammaticized slightly differently.[23] The question whether such reactive tokens then constitute separate speaking turns, as we have labelled them so far, or whether they function as mere continuers or assessments (cf. Goodwin 1986a) or yet something else, will be discussed here. Consider the following example.

(51) Lambada 918–931

1		MILES:	I mean,
2			I am not kidding.
3			.. It - -
4			It is a different [sensation] entirely.
5		JAMIE:	[(H)]
6		PETE:	@@@@@
7		MILES:	[When you're dancing] with the=m.
8	⇒	HAROLD:	[***I bet***].
9		PETE:	@ [2@ @(H)2]
10		MILES:	[2And the- - -
11			% only way2] to learn how is to dance with them mo[3=re.
12	⇒	JAMIE:	[3***That's true***3].
13		MILES:	But I3] feel like I can start dancing with them now.
14			... But uh,

The issue is that of getting to dance lambada with Brazilian women, rather than just with any partner at a dance club. The items *I bet* in line 8 and *That's true* in line 12 are not followed by further talk by the person who uttered them, and they are therefore reactive tokens of some kind. The recipients, Harold and Jamie, seem to be treating Miles' appreciative account as something that they completely agree with, even though not necessarily as something remarkable. According to Goodwin's definition of assessments (1986a), they should not intrude into the subsequent unit. Yet *I bet* is a reaction to *It is a different sensation entirely* rather than to *when you're dancing with them*, i.e. the reactive

token intrudes into the next unit rather than overlaps with the utterance that is being assessed in line 4. And the same happens with *That's true*. According to a definition based only on sequential placement, such tokens are continuers rather than assessments, since continuers are said to bridge separate units (Goodwin 1986a). Yet, from their semantic meaning it seems clear that they do more than display the recipient's understanding that the extended turn-at-talk is not yet complete. These tokens seem to give unqualified support to the main speaker, as do *sure* and *of course*. On the other hand, *probably* and *I wouldn't think* as reactive tokens seem to qualify that support somewhat (cf. Arndt 1979 on supportive and contradictive responses), as in the following.

(52) Retire 428–440

1	DORIS:	... It should be geared according to weight.
2		... Now.
3		That g- ... cotton - -
4		.. two pairs of cotton pajamas,
5		... and that cotton .. muumuu,
6		.. ain't gonna weigh up to eight <@ dollars worth,
7		[Believe @> you me].
8 ⇒	ANGELA:	[***I wouldn't think***,
9		No].
10	DORIS:	I know better.
11		.. (H) So,
12		... I thought th-,
13		.. I just won't ... order from em.

Yet *I wouldn't think* is uttered in complete overlap with and intrudes into the next unit in line 7, rather than overlapping with what it reacts to and supports, namely line 6. Angela does not take a full speaking turn, however. Such *epistemic reactive tokens* do not then fall squarely under assessments or even continuers as defined by Goodwin. Again, any further refinement of function should be based on close sequential analyses of each epistemic reactive token (for example, *I don't know* does not fit nicely into the picture in that it is not necessarily produced in overlap). In sum, it is evident that separate turns constitute a distinct case among epistemic items. Their distinctness is also reflected in the fact that they are mostly different items from the ones that commonly occur turn-internally (except for *I don't know* and *probably*, they are absent from Table 10 below).

Table 10. Distribution within conversational turns of the most frequent epistemic items

	Turn-initial	Turn-medial	Turn-final	Separate turn
I think	x	x	x	x*
s/he said	x	x	–	–
I don't know	x	x	x	x
maybe	x	x	x	–
I said	x	x	–	–
I don't know + compl.	x	x	–	–
I guess	x	x	x	x*
I thought	x	x	–	x*
probably	x	x	x	x
I'm thinking	x	x	–	–
I remember(ed)	x	x	–	–
must	x	x	x	–

* Only with the pro-form *so*.

4.5.3 Summary of turn positions

I have observed that there are some high-frequency epistemic items that appear to be quite flexible in terms of both IU-related behavior and occurrence within or as conversational turns. In Table 10 I present a summary of which items these are, following again the order in Table 2 where the most frequent items in the database were listed.

As for the rest of the epistemic markers in Table 2, nearly all can appear turn-initially and turn-medially, but not turn-finally (the only turn-final markers are listed in Table 10). As for separate turns, we have already noted that the items that occur as turn-constructional units are for the most part different from the ones listed in Table 10, and are markers that hardly occur elsewhere in the turn (cf. *that's true*, *sure*, *I bet*) in the data.

4.6 Conclusion

In the preceding discussion, we have seen which epistemic markers tend to be used by the speakers of conversational American English in my database, as well as where these markers occur in terms of intonation units, in terms of a sequence of intonation units and in conversational turns.

The expression of epistemic stance has been established to follow a very regular and routinized pattern in everyday speech. In terms of linguistic form, epistemic stance is expressed by a fairly small set of items by the speakers in

the data, mostly explicitly personalized and unambiguously epistemic phrases, conveying most commonly the semantic meanings of 'reliability' and 'belief.' Some non-personalized epistemic adverbs are also common, similarly marking 'reliability' of information. New phenomena that emerged in this study are the prevalence of certain mental constructs, or evidential phrases that indicate some kind of (indirect) evidence from reasoning (*I'm thinking*, *I thought*, etc.), as well as the high frequency of some hearsay evidentials (especially *s/he said*) in the data. These, especially the first group, are not always considered instances of epistemic modality at all.

The notion of what constitutes an epistemic phrase is quite wide in the present study (because of the inclusion of the semantically relevant meanings of 'mental construct' and 'hearsay evidence'), including some non-present-tense, non-first-person cases as well. However, it was possible to find some evidence that the most common mental-construct and hearsay phrases actually behave much like, and form discourse patterns similar to, some prototypical epistemic phrases such as *I think* and *I guess*. If we understand grammaticization in a wider sense than simply reanalysis of lexical material as grammatical material, and think of it as the reanalysis of a common discourse pattern as a structural pattern, as is suggested by Du Bois (1985), then we seem to have such reanalysis taking place with *I'm thinking*, *I thought*, and *s/he said*. Firstly, the most relevant criterion is of course the loss of the complementizer *that*. Secondly, there is some versatility in terms of position within intonation units: they can occur both IU-initially and as separate IUs.[24] This is in effect saying that they have some discourse mobility, even though we have seen that epistemic phrases (even prototypical ones) do not really exhibit much syntactic mobility but tend strongly to appear clause-initially only. Thirdly, these items as well as other epistemic phrases may show accelerated tempo, and they often receive no accent or only secondary accent, and they may appear in a phonetically reduced form. Fourthly, however, the position that mental construct phrases and hearsay evidentials can take in conversational turns is not so versatile as with *I think* or *I guess*; the former cannot appear turn-finally. But in all we may say that there is some evidence that such items may be *grammaticizing into epistemic phrases* that are equivalent to grammatical evidentials in some other languages. Recall that English emphasizes the system of judgments but lacks evidential distinctions in its grammatical system (as opposed to German, for example).

In terms of recurrent patterns at the interactional level, one of the clearest findings in the present corpus analysis was that speakers tend to express their epistemic stance initially, i.e. stance markers are routinely placed before the ac-

tual issue or question at hand, and thereby simultaneously at the beginnings of intonation units. We did not see very much evidence for the syntactic or even discourse mobility of epistemic phrases, which are supposed to be as mobile as adverbs, while adverbs themselves, when they are used as sentence adverbials, also tend towards initial position in the clause and/or intonation unit. If we think of *I think* and *I guess* as the prototypical epistemic phrases, even these do not occur IU-medially or IU-finally (or, if you like, clause-medially or clause-finally) except in rare cases. Even when they occur as separate IUs, they mostly face forward (and could therefore be viewed as clause-initial in many cases). One possible explanation could be that their grammaticization process has not advanced far enough: these phrases are really not yet like adverbs, of whose mobility in terms of IUs there is in fact more evidence in my data, but have preserved the erstwhile main clause + complement clause syntactic pattern. But a more plausible way to account for the bias towards initial stance marking and the lack of syntactic mobility and relatively low discourse mobility is to look for the interactional motivations behind such patterning. We have indeed seen ample evidence that speakers tend to start with a marker of stance to guide the interpretations and ensure the alignments of their recipients. A very powerful indication of this was witnessed in certain special interactional environments where speakers were seen to clearly qualify their commitment to the upcoming (rather than preceding) component of the utterance: when they "precision-time" their qualification in the course of verbalizing a proposition, or when they are involved in self-repair and on-line planning. We have also seen that deviations from initial stance marking often take place for a reason: other more marked positions are a result of some special interactional or syntactic configuration, such as a necessity to retain a prior syntactic structure or to place an emphatic element in thematic position. Other encodings, such as post-positioned separate intonation units, may also involve a functional divergence and are manifestations of some special interactional work being done, such as pursuing (a certain type of) recipient response or signaling completion of the turn.

We also evidenced some rather strong prosodic tendencies in the data that were considered natural corollaries of the unmarkedness of IU-initial position: IU-initial markers tend to be unaccented or receive only secondary accent, are often said with a distinctly faster tempo, and may become reduced in form. In contrast, separate IUs tend to receive primary accent in addition to secondary accent, they are generally not said in rapid speech and are not reduced in phonetic substance. Yet these are only tendencies, and it is possible for any given

marker in IU-initial position to receive even primary accent and not be any faster in tempo – arguably there is then a difference in function involved.

Finally, we made a brief excursion into the discourse patterns of epistemicity at the levels of consecutive intonation units and conversational turns. It was established that speakers most commonly express their epistemic stance within extended turns, but less so at turn-initial position. And only relatively seldom do epistemic markers occur at turn-final position or as separate turns. Yet the different positions of the turn vary in their interactional relevance, and we have seen some evidence that the functions of a given marker will differ according to position in the turn. It is indeed necessary to take these positions and larger sequential aspects into account in a functional analysis of epistemic stance: what do epistemic markers achieve within extended turns by one primary speaker, what do some markers that are more mobile in terms of turns achieve at the beginnings of turns as opposed to in the middles or ends of turns, and so on. Relatedly, markers that are most varied in terms of discourse mobility seem most likely to have developed multiple discourse functions (cf. *I don't know*). These functions, such as marking completion in order to pursue a recipient response, were only alluded to in this chapter, but will be pinned down in more detail in the next.

Notes

1. This is not to say that *perhaps* is not used at all in American speech. Biber et al. (1999:869) indeed found some 100 occurrences of *perhaps* in their database of 2.5 million words of American English conversation.

2. Initially, I included *all* occurrences of such verbs, to see whether they take a complementizer or not.

3. In addition, co-referential subjects and a personal pronoun as subject in the *that*-clause are said to be conducive to *that*-omission (Biber et al. 1999:681–682). In the same vein, Thompson and Mulac (1991b:248) propose that when the complement clause subject is a pronoun, *that* is less likely to be used than when it is a full noun phrase. This, the authors claim, has to do with topicality; when the complement subject is the discourse topic (and pronouns are usually highly topical), *that* tends not to occur. Topicality is therefore said to correlate with the verb construction being interpreted as an epistemic phrase.

4. See Kärkkäinen (1996) for a fuller discussion of the kinds of subjects that typically occupy the intransitive subject or S position in American English conversation.

5. Even multiple embeddings are possible, cf. Goffman's example:

To the best of my recollection,

(1) I think that
(2) I said
(3) I once lived that sort of life.

where (1) reflects something that is currently true of the speaker, (2) is an embedded animator who is an earlier incarnation of the present speaker and (3) is a doubly embedded figure (Goffman 1981b: 150).

6. Biber et al. (1999: 487) also found that in conversation many modal verbs are more common in British English than in American English.

7. Ambiguity between epistemic and non-epistemic meaning is exemplified in the following (Coates 1983: 16): *He **must** understand that we mean business.* = 'Surely he understands that we mean business' (epistemic) and 'It is essential that he understand that we mean business' (non-epistemic or deontic). The following utterance, however, can remain indeterminate even in context:

A: Newcastle Brown is a jolly good beer.
B: Is it?
→ A: Well it *ought to be* at that price.

8. Biber et al. (1999: 979) do so somewhat apologetically: "The modal verb *will* and the semi-modal *be going to* with future meaning are included in the frequency counts, since they can be interpreted as marking a kind of epistemic stance (..). That is, they are used to predict that a proposition will be true at some future time – a departure from a simple assertion of the proposition." Yet they concede (1999: 496) that *will* is frequently ambiguous between volition and prediction – in fact this is the case in the overwhelming majority in their database, as is clearly shown by figure 6.14 (page 496): of some 5,000 occurrences (per million words) of *will* in the database, some 3,700 are ambiguous!

9. Interestingly, Biber et al. (1999: 981) regard all of these factors, lack of direct attribution of stance to the speaker/writer, limited range of meanings of the modals, their polysemy and their grammatical simplicity (in that they only involve a modification of the verb phrase), as factors contributing to their *frequent* use in conversation – but this is precisely because their category of modals is the largest due to their inclusion of *will* and *be going to* to mark future tense rather than clear epistemic meaning (cf. Note 8).

10. I ended up putting *I think* on the one hand and *I thought*, *I'm thinking* and *I was thinking* on the other in different groups, the first marker in 'belief' and the other three in 'mental construct'. This is to some extent an artificial division, and the only criterion for doing so was the notoriously indeterminate semantic meaning of *I think*, which does not appear to have much to do with cogitating in most contexts of use, whereas the latter three do. In my data the latter markers occur almost exclusively in contexts where a speaker is acting as a narrator and quoting his/her own thoughts and opinions on the narrated incident (cf. example (39): *and they're kinda like all over each other (Hx). .. and **I'm thinking**, we=ll, .. I guess that's her husband*,), and some mental activity therefore seems to be involved.

11. In Chafe's cognitively oriented treatment, regulatory intonation units are claimed to have a regulatory function in discourse, i.e. their primary function is to regulate interaction or

information flow, while validational IUs are judgments of the validity of the information being offered (Chafe 1994:64).

12. According to Givón (1993:35–36), it is verbs of low rather than high certainty that are likely to take a conditional complement. However, the negative counterparts of high-certainty verbs may, according to him, also take one; an example of such is *I don't know*.

13. Givón (1993) in fact makes the point that the pause is what differentiates an indirect quote (where there is no pause) from a direct quote (where there is one). But this does not hold for my data, as direct quotes may or may not be preceded by a pause, or in other words an intonational break that signals whether the introductory phrase is IU-initial or a separate IU.

14. Of course we might say that this is simply an instance of anacrusis, or the general phenomenon of accelerated syllables characterizing the beginnings of intonation units (cf. Section 1.3 for the five criteria for defining intonation units). Yet anacrusis by no means always occurs, while there may be interactionally-motivated reasons for its occurrence vs. non-occurrence, as will be seen in Chapter 5.

15. This finding, as well as the overall finding of the placement of epistemic stance in general in American English conversation, finds clear support in Weber and Bentivoglio's study (1991:206–207) on verbs of cognition in spoken Spanish. They find that over 90 percent of cases of *creer* 'believe' and *pensar* 'think' precede their sentential objects (cf. IU-initial position), and that none of these verbs are then stressed. Moreover, they are bound to their complement clauses under a single intonation contour. Of the remaining cases, some 6 percent follow their sentential complements, and are then claimed to serve as hedges on the preceding statements. The verb and its complement have separate intonation contours and are separated by a pause.

16. They note (Biber et al. 1999:971) the fact that even modal and semi-modal verbs occur before the main lexical verb and "thus typically before the presentation of new information in the clause."

17. It is debatable whether epistemic modal auxiliaries should be regarded as IU-medial and not IU-initial when taken together with their subjects; cf. in example (26) where *he would get on* and *I would get on* both appear immediately after a connective that links the current IU to the preceding one. However, since it is the speaker's rather than the grammatical subject's stance that the modal verbs provide for the clause or utterance, I do not regard the grammatical subject + epistemic modal as forming a unitary phrase in the same way as epistemic phrases do, but only examine the epistemic modal verb *per se*.

18. Even though on occasion such quotatives may effectively construct a contrast and opposing positions between the reported parties, as is shown by Clift (2000) in a complaint sequence.

19. Thompson (2002) indeed considers the occurrence in medial or final position in respect to the associated clause as strongest possible evidence for considering items like *I think* or *I guess* epistemic fragments for speakers of English, rather than complement-taking predicates followed by an object complement.

20. I have adopted the term '(turn) extension' from Ford and Thompson (1996), who use it in a rather general way to refer to additions to the current turn, while Ford, Fox and

Thompson (2002b) restrict it to specific types of additions that generally continue the action of the extended turn, by specifying when, where, or with whom the event being related took place. In this book I use the term 'extension' in the more general sense and somewhat interchangeably with 'increment'.

21. The percentages are fairly similar for epistemic phrases other than hearsay evidentials, 59.5 percent vs. 40.5 percent, while with hearsay evidentials they are "reversed," 48.1 percent vs. 51.9 percent; the latter in fact tend to occur after non-final intonation units and therefore possibly within the current speaker's extended turn, most likely in conversational stories.

22. I find that the strict adherence to the different sequential placement of these two as their only defining criterion is too limited. Even though in most cases these tokens are produced in overlap with the main speaker, there are cases in my data that do *not* occur in overlap and are yet realized by exactly the same kind of items and seem to be doing just the same thing, namely displaying understanding or treating something as remarkable.

23. But note that *I wouldn't think* can occur on its own, without a pro-form.

24. Note that there was no evidence for the IU-medial occurrence of even *I guess* but only of *I think* in the data (even though it seems possible for *I guess*). IU-medial position cannot therefore be considered equally important as a criterion. IU-final position cannot be taken into account, either, since it is so rare in general.

Chapter 5

Stance-taking as an interactive activity
The case of *I think*

5.1 Introduction

As was established in Chapter 4, not only is the marking of epistemic stance linguistically very regular and routinized, but the position of epistemic markers within intonation units also shows regular patterns that appear interactionally highly motivated. In the present chapter, the relevance of intonation unit position will be pursued further. Yet, it is clearly necessary to go beyond the intonation unit as the analytical unit or local environment of epistemicity, and our focus here will indeed be on the sequential role of epistemic markers in talk-in-interaction. Within the framework of conversation analysis, I offer a detailed inductive analysis of the most common epistemic marker in American English speech, *I think*, in the sequential and activity contexts within which it occurs in the data.

What clearly emerges from this analysis is that stance-taking is an *interactive activity*, as the presence of *I think* arises from the immediate speaker–recipient interaction: the need to mark for the recipient certain boundaries in the flow of talk, the need to routinely deal with minor interactional troubles in certain recurrent sequence types (such as first assessments–second assessments), and the need to take the recipient's or the speaker's claims to maintaining face into consideration. Displaying stance is thus engendered by what happens between the interlocutors in prior discourse. It is worth emphasizing that *I think*, due to or as a concomitant of its high frequency and fair amount of discourse mobility, has developed a range of different functions in discourse, many of which are indeed highly *routinized* and *institutionalized* ways of organizing one's speech. It is these functions that have hitherto not been accounted for, as emphasis in previous analyses of *I think* has largely been on issues of politeness and face work. While it is true that *I think* can be used for face saving, this is by no means its only function in interaction.

I will briefly recapitulate here the most important aspects of the *context* within which *I think* will be examined in this chapter.

(1) The assumption about the two-fold contextual orientation of each utterance is central for the interpretation of communicative actions in conversation analysis (Heritage 1984a, 1989). An action is context-shaped because it cannot be adequately understood except by reference to the immediately preceding context, i.e. the preceding action. An action is context-renewing because every current action in turn provides a context for the interpretation of a next action. Somewhat more widely, instances of *I think* will be viewed in terms of the relevant conversational *activity* or activities that the participants orient to in a given situation, i.e. the larger environment or activity within which a given action occurs. Following Heritage and Sorjonen (1994: 4), by activity I mean "a relatively sustained topically coherent and/or goal-coherent course of action," which may be achieved across a sequence or series of sequences. *Sequence*, in turn, is not a very well-defined unit in CA. Heritage and Sorjonen (1994: 4) define sequence as an adjacency pair or an expanded adjacency pair; in much of CA research, the starting-point is a recurring interactional pattern identified in terms of type of sequence, such as question–answer, assessment–second assessment or request–compliance. Tsui (1994: 8) points out, however, that a sequence in CA may sometimes consist of as many as four turns, and that its validity as a descriptive unit is undermined precisely because of lack of adequate definition. In this book I use the term sequence somewhat loosely, to include adjacency pairs but also utterances that may stand in a relationship of conditional relevance to each other, or utterances that are simply adjacent in placement and therefore relevant for the participants' interpretation of an utterance, while extended turns (e.g. conversational stories) by one primary speaker also constitute a type of sequence. This is because my point of departure is a linguistic item which may occur in rather diverse conversational sequences, rather than a certain typical sequence type in which it may be predicted to occur.

In sum, the focus in the present chapter is on the sequential and activity context of *I think*, i.e. the conversational sequences and activities that it occurs in. We saw some evidence in Chapter 4 that epistemic phrases may work both *locally*, at the level of intonation units and individual utterances or utterance–actions, and at the level of adjacent turns, but also more *globally*, at the level of extended stretches of talk, topics or other relevant interactional units. This means that the relevant analytical unit may be the current and preceding or following turn (an adjacency pair for example), but it may also include a larger segment of discourse.

(2) The encoding of *I think* in terms of intonation units will be of fundamental importance in the analysis of the functions of this marker. Importantly, the construction of intonation units themselves can be viewed as one type of *contextualization cue* (Gumperz 1992: 232). A great deal of evidence was found in Chapter 4 that the choices made by interactants to place epistemic phrases in certain positions in the IU or to code them as separate IUs is highly significant and determined by interactional factors. It is worth noting, then, that the focus will be on encoding *I think* in terms of intonation units, rather than in terms of (its syntactic position in) clauses or sentences.

(3) Furthermore, there are certain (other) *prosodic* and *paralinguistic* contextualization cues that are relevant for a qualitative analysis of the functions of *I think* (Gumperz 1992: 232): prosodic features (stress, intonation, pitch register shifts), and paralinguistic cues (tempo, rhythm, pausing, hesitation, conversational synchrony, tone of voice).[1] In the same vein, Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996b: 21) argue that intonation and prosody have a contextualizing function in that they cue frames for the situated interpretation of utterances, but prosodic contextualization cues at the same time constitute the context within which language is to be interpreted. Quirk et al. (1985), for example, claim that comment clauses (cf. epistemic phrases) are generally marked by increased speed and lowered volume. However, this is an oversimplification that is not supported by my data, as these cues do not appear with such regularity in my database. Yet, all prosodic cues need to be taken into account to arrive at situated interpretations of the functions of *I think* below. Ultimately, as Goodwin and Goodwin (1987: 24) put it, the emerging structure of the speaker's utterance, and the details of the way in which it is spoken, constitute one aspect of the context that recipients actively attend to within the turn as consequential for the organization of their own actions.

(4) The notion of context that is relevant here may also contain aspects like relating a given epistemic marker to other epistemic markers used by the same speaker within the same turn or within a larger sequence (cf. *I have no idea*, *probably*, *I think* and *I'm sure* to express a shift in point of view towards one and the same propositional content, while the speaker worked towards an answer to a question during a conversational segment), relating epistemic markers to those used by other participants during an activity that they orient to, and relating epistemic markers to other discourse markers (such as *but* and *well*) and hedges (such as *or something*, *kind of*, *and stuff*) used by participants.

(5) In addition, utterances and sequences following the one that contains *I think* are carefully inspected in the analysis, as participants' analyses of the target utterances and sequences are likely to be displayed there (ten Have 1990:34). Finally, aspects of the extralinguistic context will be drawn upon if they are made relevant in the interaction, i.e. are brought to the interactional surface by the participants.

On the basis of the discourse patterns established for epistemicity in Chapter 4, I identified all occurrences of *I think* in the data and analyzed them in terms of the relevant conversational activities that this marker is embedded in, starting from the local organization of discourse, but also bearing in mind the larger sequential and extralinguistic context. I will present below in Sections 5.4–5.5 what the functions of this item are in conversational interaction as well as what generalizations can be made and what is common to all or most uses of *I think*, i.e. why it is appropriate to have the same item occurring in quite different sequential slots. As will become clear, *I think* covers a whole range of functions in interaction and discourse organization, from a mere discourse marker equivalent to *you know*, *I mean* and the like, to a marker of stance with full semantic content.

5.2 Discourse profile of *I think*

As a first characterization of the kinds of discourse environments that *I think* occurs in, I will present some statistics on its occurrence within conversational turns (even though not yet in terms of the sequences that such turns are part of) and in intonation units. An analysis of 41 instances[2] of *I think* revealed that this item tends to occur in the middles and at the beginnings of conversational turns, but hardly ever at the ends of turns or as separate turns (except for *I think so* once), as shown in Table 11.

As Table 11 shows, the findings for *I think* are in line with those for all epistemic markers as well as all epistemic phrases (the occurrences of *I think* are of course included in the other two columns). We may thus expect that the interactional functions of *I think* are not dependent on strictly turn-initial occurrence, but that this item occurs throughout extended conversational turns, but not commonly at the ends of such turns.

Turning to IUs as laid out in Table 12, *I think* predominantly occurs at the beginnings of intonation units, or as separate intonation units, but hardly ever in the middle or at the end of IUs.

Table 11. Position of epistemic markers and of *I think* within turns[3]

	Position of all epistemic markers	Position of epistemic phrases	Position of *I think*
Turn-initial	147 (29.4%)	81 (33.5%)	14 (34.1%)
Turn-medial	322 (64.4%)	145 (59.9%)	25 (61.0%)
Turn-final	13 (2.6%)	6 (2.5%)	1 (2.4%)
Separate turn	18 (3.6%)	10 (4.1%)	1 (2.4%)
	500 (100%)	242 (100%)	41 (100%)

Table 12. Position of epistemic markers and of *I think* within intonation units

	Position of all epistemic markers	Position of epistemic phrases	Position of *I think:*
IU-initial	251 (50.2%)	149 (61.6%)	32 (78.0%)
IU-medial	103 (20.6%)	11 (4.5%)	3 (7.3%)
IU-final	23 (4.6%)	7 (2.9%)	–
separate IU	123 (24.6%)	75 (31.0%)	6 (14.6%)
	500 (100%)	242 (100%)	41 (100%)

As can be seen from Table 12, the pattern formed by *I think* is similar to the group of epistemic phrases as a whole (of which *I think* is a member). The only real difference is that *I think* does not show an equal tendency to occur as a separate IU as some other epistemic markers do; this is due to the grammaticization patterns of this item in that it cannot occur on its own as a reactive token, for example. Further, a comparison with the leftmost column shows some differences, which are largely due to the fact that in the group of all epistemic markers the modal auxiliaries contribute to a much higher IU-medial percentage and consequently lower percentages elsewhere.

In order to find further proof for these trends, I examined eight more conversational extracts of roughly 20 minutes each, involving in all 24 speakers, in addition to the five that form the actual database for my qualitative study. I found a total of 69 instances of *I think* in these extracts. Of these, 57 were clearly IU-initial cases, 10 were separate IUs, while only one instance was found of IU-medial and IU-final cases each; in other words the IU-related behavior of *I think* followed exactly the same pattern as that shown in Table 12. As far as conversational turns were concerned, there was an even higher tendency than that shown in Table 11 for *I think* to occur inside an extended turn (71 percent)

rather than turn-initially (29 percent), while no instances of turn-final *I think* or *I think* as a separate turn were found. It is therefore safe to conclude that the unmarked position for this epistemic item is *at the beginnings of intonation units*, marking epistemic stance *inside extended turns* and also *turn-initially*.

A further examination of the conversational extracts showed that *I think* predominantly occurs in conversational activities where the participants jointly orient to something or establish something together. Further, the types of sequences that it occurs in are predominantly adjacency pairs, expanded or unexpanded, and also of the kind where the relationship is rather loose between the parts. It may thus occur in first pair parts, such as first assessments or opinions, but especially in second pair parts, such as answers, second assessments, second opinions, weak agreements, acceptances of compliments and lengthy second evaluation sequences. What is more important, however, *I think* also appears in positions where it is not clear that any explicit reaction is expected of the recipient(s), especially within narratives and other longer speaking turns. It is therefore necessary to go beyond strict adjacency considerations when we want to account for the functions of *I think* – indeed, I will in general include a large segment of discourse in the examples and analyses below both before and after the actual utterance involving *I think*.

5.3 Semantic definitions and previous pragmatic research on *I think*

There is relatively little work on the semantics of *I think*, even though, as we saw in Chapter 2, epistemicity and evidentiality in general have been the focus of much earlier research, semantic and pragmatic. Aijmer (1997: 12) observes that the verb *think* is polysemous and its meaning is organized around a prototype, with 'cogitation' (= Swedish *tänka*; German *denken*) as the center; this general concept can easily be extended to 'belief', 'opinion' and 'intention' (the latter mainly in the past tense *I thought*) by inferencing. What is significant is that English lacks separate verbs for these meanings, which are still to be found in closely related languages. Thus, 'cogitate' is expressed by the German *denken*, the French *penser* and the Swedish *tänka*. However, 'belief' (also called 'insufficient evidence' by Arndt 1987) is conveyed by different verbs, by *glauben*, *croire* and *tro* respectively, while 'opinion' is expressed by *finden/meinen*, *trouver* and *tycka* (Aijmer 1997: 13–14; cf. also Persson 1993). An analogous distinction is made in Finnish: *ajatella* 'cogitate', *luulla* 'believe' and *tuntua* 'have as an opinion'.

A general observation about the English phrase *I think* can be made in view of spoken language use: it seldom involves thinking in the sense of cogitation, and more often something else (cf. also Chafe 1994: 220). Scholars have attributed at least two clearly different types of semantic meanings to *I think*, 'belief'/'insufficient evidence' (*I think* he's a carpenter = I assume he's a carpenter) or 'opinion'/'personal attitude' (*I think* he's a fool = In my opinion he's a fool) (Arndt 1987).[4] Now these studies do not make any reference to the potential difference in prosodic realization between the two meanings, but it is conceivable that prosody and especially accent must play a part in distinguishing them: in the first case, 'belief'/'insufficient evidence,' accent typically falls on *think* (***I ˆthink*** *he's a carpenter*), while in the second, 'opinion'/'personal attitude', it tends to fall on *I* (*ˆ**I think** he's a fool*). But as Simon-Vandenbergen (1996: 406, 2000: 52) concedes, even though it is in theory possible to distinguish between a psychological meaning (a fully committed statement of the speaker's personal viewpoint or opinion) and a modal (belief) meaning of this item, in practice distinctions may not always be easy to draw: some propositions are clearly opinions, while others may be partly verifiable and partly a matter of opinion, for example. Chafe (personal communication) also points out the difficulty of determining what this item means in an utterance like ***I think*** *it's time to go* – opinion or insufficient evidence? I think this is only possible to verify in its *context* of occurrence. When a token of *I think* appears in context, it becomes impossible to determine its precise semantic meaning out of context, on its own and independent of the utterance in which it occurs. As is observed by Simon-Vandenbergen (2000: 57), the linguistic context of the speaker's current turn provides clues as to which aspect of meaning, doubt or the speaker's (strong) commitment to the truth value, is foregrounded. In my analysis, too, the context tends to creep in on every possible occasion: the semantics of the clause that *I think* is embedded in (in other words, the type of proposition), the prosodic cues that co-occur with it, its position in the intonation unit, and intonation and stress within the whole utterance, and so on (cf. also Simon-Vandenbergen 1996: 405–406).

Yet, after an initial analysis of the functions of *I think* in my data it became obvious that there are indeed two distinct semantic extremes that this item appears to express, and those would certainly bear on its interactional functions. On the basis of the above semantic treatments of *I think*, namely those of Arndt and of Simon-Vandenbergen, it is possible to identify these meanings on a continuum between *'doubt/uncertainty'* (cf. 'insufficient evidence', 'belief') and *'lack of doubt/certainty'* (cf. 'personal attitude or conviction', 'opinion'). As far as the 'lack of doubt/certainty' end of the continuum is concerned, this

is also meant to include clear cases of opinion, but it is notably seldom that an instance can be said to convey that, i.e. the propositions involved are more or less opinion-like but not often of the "prototypical" kind (i.e. clearly non-verifiable). As far as semantic meaning is concerned, then, it seems preferable to treat occurrences of *I think* simply in view of the *degree of certainty* that they express, rather than in terms of whether they express an 'opinion' or a 'belief.' In my treatment of the interactional functions of *I think* below, I will make reference, where relevant, to its semantic meaning in these terms (i.e. where a given instance is located on the continuum between doubt/uncertainty and lack of doubt/certainty).

Previous treatments of the interactional functions of *I think* have predominantly viewed this item within the framework of linguistic politeness, especially as a hedge on Grice's maxim on quality (Grice 1975), or speakers not taking "full responsibility" for the truth of their utterances. By using *I think*, the speakers want to show respect for the 'negative face' wants of the recipients, or the need of every adult speaker to be unimpeded in his/her actions and retain freedom from imposition (Hübler 1983; Brown & Levinson 1987; Coates 1990; Kärkkäinen 1991; Nikula 1996; Aijmer 1997; Turnbull & Saxton 1997). Aijmer (1997), however, regards *I think* as an expression of both negative politeness, or social distancing, and positive politeness, or 'rapport'.

Simon-Vandenbergen (1996: 405–406) draws attention to the fact that expressions like *I think* may have different functions in different contexts, depending on a great number of factors including position, intonation and type of proposition. *I think* in her opinion does not automatically nor even typically convey lack of commitment. As was mentioned above, she claims that it is possible for *I think* to convey the meaning of personal conviction and commitment. In political interviews such usage is intended to show emotional commitment by the politician, i.e. that s/he is also personally involved in the policies and viewpoints that s/he advocates (Simon-Vandenbergen 1996, 2000).

Similarly, Holmes (1990: 187) observes that *I think* may express two distinct and contrasting functions, and that the functions of this pragmatic particle (as she labels *I think*) vary with the intonation contour it carries as well as its syntactic position in an utterance. Thus, it may have either a 'tentative' function, which can be broken down to (genuine) uncertainty on the one hand, and acting as a softener to express politeness on the other, as in the following examples.

> Holmes (1990: 187)
> it'd be about two o'clock *I 'think* (context: elderly man recounting past

experience to friends; signals his uncertainty about the precise time)
you've got that wrong *I 'think* (context: teacher to pupil, teacher has no doubt that the pupil's answer is wrong)

In both these cases *I think* appears in final position and is spoken with falling intonation (and sometimes with the fall-rise intonation). On the other hand, *I think* can have a 'deliberative' function, conveying certainty and reassurance, as in the following.

Holmes (1990: 187)
I think that's absolutely right// (context: statusful interviewee on TV)

Here *I think* appears initially and *think* gets level stress, and this phrase is used to add weight to and express emphasis and confidence in the statement rather than to hedge its illocutionary force (cf. Simon-Vandenbergen above). Holmes concludes that its function can only be determined in context, where the context includes such features as the relationship between the participants, the topic, and the formality of the interaction (Holmes 1990: 200).

Holmes' two-way classification of functions has been adopted by Aijmer (1997), who also notes that position in the utterance seems to be relevant for the function of *I think* (Aijmer 1997: 24; she calls *I think* a modal particle). Front position is by far the most important (1,377 instances out of 1,757), while end position comes next (221) and mid position is the least favored (159). As we have seen, this is in line with my findings (cf. Table 12), even though we bear in mind that her 'utterance' does not necessarily coincide with 'intonation unit' (she does not in fact define utterance in any way). Aijmer uses certain criteria in determining between the deliberative and tentative functions of *I think* in the London–Lund Corpus. This item is "classified as 'deliberative' if it has the nuclear tone or a prosodic booster [..] upgrading the prosodic prominence of the verb and occurs first in the utterance," in other words the criteria are prosodic, grammatical and positional (Aijmer 1997: 21). As I understand it, if there is no prosodic prominence on an utterance-initial *I think*, she labels it as 'tentative.' *I think* is also classified as 'tentative' if it appears in medial or final position even if it is prosodically prominent. She then finds that the tentative function is by far the most frequent one in her corpus (85 percent of a total of 1,757 instances). Even though her work can be criticized for the mechanical way in which she assigns function, it is still a first step towards taking both syntactic position and prosody into account in the actual analysis of a large body of data.

Aijmer (1997: 24–25) further points out that speakers have a choice between, for example, encoding *I think* as a separate intonation group or presenting it as a post-nuclear 'tail' in a low pitch:

> Aijmer (1997: 24–25)
> [\m]# -
> it's bound to come \/out though#.
> *I th/ink*# -
>
> that he I mean he's a very !{\interesting} c\andidate H/erman *I think*#
> although he h\e's be'coming/old#

In the first example, *I think* functions for Aijmer as an afterthought, qualifying some information that has been given immediately before (Aijmer 1997: 25). Such separate IU encodings can be found in my data, too, even though they are not frequent, while examples of the prosodic 'tail' type (cf. IU-final instances) practically do not occur at all in my data. Aijmer concludes that whether speakers code *I think* in mid or end position is ultimately their own choice and depends on speed of delivery and planning, for example. She is of the opinion that it is unlikely that the interactional function differs very much in these two positions (except that in one case *I think* is added more like an afterthought), which here would be that of tentativeness in both cases. In all, she appears to relate the different encodings of *I think* to speaker planning and speaker choice, but, as was already seen in Chapter 4 and as will be further shown in the sections below, this is not the whole picture and the 'afterthought' type may perform some very special functions in the interaction (as opposed to the IU-initial encoding – we cannot really compare with the 'tail' type/IU-final cases, since these cannot be found in my data).

From my point of view, then, Simon-Vandenbergen, Holmes, and Aijmer have made two important observations: the syntactic/tone-unit-related position and prosodic realization have a bearing on the interactional functions of *I think*, and the functions of *I think* are of dual nature. Yet, the two-way classification, or the overall functions of 'deliberative' and 'tentative' oversimplify the picture somewhat and ignore the multiple functions that instances of *I think* may have in different conversational contexts. Such a classification further ignores the interplay of the three factors involved, syntactic position, prosody and intonation, with the *sequential context* that each utterance is embedded in in interaction, and therefore does not capture the functions of *I think* in terms of the discourse structure and organization. And even though contextual factors of the type listed by Holmes, such as topic and degree of formality,

may certainly bear on the functions of *I think*, they cannot be assumed to be pre-given and static phenomena, as is implicitly assumed by both Holmes and Aijmer. They should rather be seen as possibly relevant for the interactants, who may or may not make them consequential for and visible in the interaction (cf. Drew 1991 for how speakers orient to asymmetries of knowledge, sometimes bringing them to the interactional surface and at other times not). These are issues that I will pursue below in my sequential analysis of *I think*.

Somewhat on a different level, finally, Schiffrin (1987: 24–29, 312–330) proposes an overall framework and a theory of discourse coherence, within which rather different types of discourse markers can be usefully described and analyzed (but Schiffrin does not include *I think* in her treatment of discourse markers). She views discourse as the product of several interlocking components or planes: exchange, action and idea structures, an information state, and a participation framework. A given marker may have a primary function on one of these planes, but may also function on other planes. Each marker has specific syntagmatic functions within the particular sequence in which it occurs, because of its role within the structure of that particular sequence. Yet she proposes that each marker only has one indexical function:

> It is because discourse is multiply structured, and its various components integrated with each other, that multiple relations hold between utterances – not because markers *themselves* realize a different function (one devoted to ideas, one to action, and so on) with each occasion of use. (Schiffrin 1987: 325)

Each marker has only one indexical function in view of indexing utterances to both participants and prior vs. upcoming text. It is at this level that commonalities between the different functions of a given marker can be described, as will be done in my treatment of *I think* in the sections that follow.

5.4 Functions of pre-positioned *I think*

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, *I think* predominantly occurs in IU-initial position in my data, and it is this position in particular that is made use of by speakers to establish their stance and display a certain orientation towards a proposition or parts thereof, or to a longer sequence of discourse. By establishing this stance *before* what it has in its scope, *I think* then helps recipients to align themselves to what is coming (rather than doing this *post factum*). Initial stance marking may thus be characterized as pursuing alignment between the conversational coparticipants: recipients are allowed more time to align

themselves properly after certain rather conventionalized formats in interaction, such as pre-positioned *I think*, whether we think of it as pre-positioned in terms of the intonation unit or in view of a syntactic entity ranging from a full clause to a clause fragment or even a word. Note, however, that even if the syntactic unit that *I think* has in its scope may vary, in most cases this marker still ends up being IU-initial (see discussion of examples (53) and (54) below).

The determination of *scope* of a marker like *I think* deserves some attention here. What lies within the scope of this marker when it appears IU-initially is in most cases easy to determine: *I think* has the upcoming proposition (a full clause, e.g. examples (53) and (61) below) or parts thereof (most commonly an NP, as in example (60) below) in its immediate, for the moment syntactically defined, scope.[5] This interpretation is supported above all by the prosodic encoding of the utterance, as *I think* falls under the same coherent intonation contour with the upcoming clause or NP. Further support can be found in the fact that in short conversational turns consisting of one clause or utterance, even the pragmatic scope can really only extend over the syntactic types listed above. But we will also see that in multi-clause turns *I think* may (at least weakly) *project beyond* the clause or utterance that it occurs in, and this more global pragmatic scope can then only be determined through an analysis of the sequential and activity context in which *I think occurs*.

As regards pre-positioned *I think*, there are a few cases in the data where it does not come under the same intonation contour but as a separate intonation unit before a clause or an NP. As we will see below in Section 5.4.2, such usage is restricted to rather special interactional environments, namely instances of on-line planning. The determination of the scope of *I think* in such cases depends on the design of the unfolding conversational turn: sometimes this marker quite clearly extends over a single NP only (as in example (55) below) while at other times it is not quite clear whether it targets an NP within the clause or the clause as a whole (which may be realized over several intonation units, as in example (73)). (The determination of the scope of *I think* when it is post-positioned and encoded as a separate IU will be discussed in Section 5.5.)

In many cases, then, both IU-initial *I think* and pre-positioned *I think* encoded as a separate IU may be doing some very *local work* in conversational interaction, as this marker commonly only has a clause or parts thereof in its scope. In other words, *I think* is capable of doing work at a more local level than in terms of the whole upcoming turn. IU-initial *I think* may guide the recipient's interpretation or reaction to a very small fragment of discourse, such as one NP, if need be. And, conversely, it is clear only in the case of single-

clause turns that *I think* is turn-initial and has the whole turn in its scope. I will illustrate the local working of *I think* in examples (53)–(55) below.

The following is an example of *I think* with a clause in its scope; in this case epistemic stance markers occur turn-initially. The topic is muumuus, or long dresses that Doris had seen at a store a few days earlier.

(53) ***I think** doing local work, with a clause in its scope* (Retire 450–473)

1	SAM:	[At Dillards].
2	DORIS:	.. They] - -
3		they were sure pretty.
4		... Pretty c- - -
5		.. pretty colors.
6		.. [Some of] em were [2dark2],
7	X:	[Yeah].
8		[2Yeah2].
9	DORIS:	but they had,
10		.. (H) oh,
11		.. purples and,
12		% re=ds an=d,
13		.. pinks and,
14		oh,
15		pretty [designs] in em.
16	ANGELA:	[Hm].
17		(H)
18	DORIS:	.. You didn't see em.
19	ANGELA:	... *I don't think* I was - -
20		(H) I was - -
21 ⇒		... ***I think*** I was concerned about your getting there and back.
22		[@]
23	DORIS:	[@Oh].
24	SAM:	Oh,

Doris' utterance on line 18, *You didn't see em.*, indicates that she assumes that Angela had not seen the muumuus at the store, even though it has become clear that the two were at the store together. Angela appears to have some trouble producing a response to this utterance, as she engages in self-repair and restarts several times. It is significant that already in line 19 she marks her stance towards whatever she meant to say at that point as coming before the proposition *(**I don't think** I was - -)*. And in line 21 the same happens when she finally comes up with a response: after another restart, *I was - -*, the clause

structure is modified and *I think* is inserted before the actual proposition (a clause), while the speaker simultaneously starts a new intonation unit. We will discuss later (in example (70) below) what kind of stance is displayed by *I think* here, but it is significant that Angela displays it towards her utterance right at the outset and thereby indicates to Doris that she also should interpret the upcoming proposition in a certain light.

In a minority of cases in the data, the rest of the IU is not a full clause but only part of one (a word, a noun phrase, a clause fragment etc.); such instances are generally confined to certain interactional environments, namely restarts and repair sequences, or halting and hesitant realization of the utterance in question, sometimes resulting in a complete redirection in the middle of the ongoing utterance. Such examples make the local working of IU-initial *I think* even clearer. An example would be the following (already partly presented in example (18) above), where Rebecca, a lawyer, is engaged in a very delicate issue in trying to prepare a female witness, Rickie, to relate to the jury how upset she was after her experience of falling victim to an exhibitionist, especially since some jury members may not be able to realize what the effect of such an experience can be to a woman.

(54) ***I think*** *doing local work, with an NP in its scope* (Telljury 820–848)

RICKIE: (SNIFF)
REBECCA: ... (h) `A=nd,
ˆespecially,
.. I `have some .. `young single ˆmen,
.. on my jury ˆpanel.
RICKIE: [Mhm],
REBECCA: [(H)] `A=nd,
...% `I% - -
.. my .. ˆworry is that they `don't .. `relate to what a ˆwoman feels,
.. [when] `something like that is ˆhappening,
RICKIE: [Mhm].
REBECCA: <A`because ˆtheir experience would be totally ˆdifferent.
(H) if a `man ˆexposes [himself],
RICKIE: [(SNIFF)]
REBECCA: `which,
.. a `man would never ˆdo that.
[`Be]cause,
RICKIE: [Mhm].
[2(SNIFF)2]

20 REBECCA: [2(H)2] `number ˆone they pick `out,
21 ⇒ .. `***I think*** .. more vulnerable ˆpeople. A>
22 RICKIE: Mhm.
23 REBECCA: (H) But `if,
24 .. u=m,
25 ... a `ma=n .. were to be ˆexposed to,
26 they would ... ˆlaugh,
27 .. `or,
28 .. `you know,
29 `be ˆdisgusted,

As it turns out, Rickie has experienced such an incident twice by the same defendant. Rebecca produces a claim in lines 20–21 that exhibitionists (*they* in line 20) are not likely to choose men as their victims but "more vulnerable people" instead. We have good reason to suspect that she designs her utterance on the fly to avoid bluntly referring to the fact that Rickie belongs to the category of vulnerable people (and therefore ended up as a victim), as that would constitute an indirect evaluation of her. Rickie was in fact seen in the immediately preceding discourse to be quite vulnerable: she has just expressed extreme emotional anxiety over her experience, has been very upset and cried, and can still be heard sniffing throughout this extract. While already producing the utterance, Rebecca then chooses to preface the potentially face-threatening *vulnerable ˆpeople* by '*I think*. There is some evidence that she redesigns the utterance here: the whole turn-so-far has been said in rather fluent rapid speech, but there are two micropauses in line 21, both before and after *I think*, indicating some hesitation before the upcoming troublesome item.[6] Her turn design is successful in that it acquires an immediate acknowledgment from Rickie: *Mhm.* in line 22. Such examples can be taken as evidence for what Goodwin (1979: 104) has claimed to be a pervasive feature of conversational interaction: "a speaker in natural conversation has the capacity to modify the emerging meaning of his sentence as he is producing it in accord with the characteristics of its current recipient." In other words such split-second recipient design is possible with the help of local alignment devices like *I think*.

Finally, as far as the few cases are concerned where *I think* is encoded as a separate intonation unit and comes before what it modifies, this marker can be quite local in scope here as well. Below is an instance of on-line planning, where the scope of *I think* is really only the following NP.

(55) ***I think*** *doing local work, with an NP in its scope* (Telljury 1349–1358)

1 REBECCA: Now the bag that he was carrying around this time,

2		what was it.
3	RICKIE:	.. M=,
4		.. <P let me see P>,
5 ⇒		***I ˆthink***,
6		... a duffel bag?
7		***I*** [ˆ***th=ink***].
8	REBECCA:	[Okay].
9	RICKIE:	(H)
10	REBECCA:	Okay.

After this brief excursion into the very local work that *I think* can do, let us turn to the interactional functions of pre-positioned *I think* in its two discourse environments, at the beginning of a longer intonation unit and as a separate intonation unit coming before what it has in its scope.

5.4.1 Functions of IU-initial *I think*

We have seen above that intonation unit initial position is the unmarked position for the marking of speaker stance in general in the whole database, and consequently for *I think* as well. In the great majority of cases of IU-initial *I think* (of which there are 32 in all), such intonation units are full finite clauses. It is conceivable that the speaker has a more or less clear idea of the direction that the emerging intonation unit or utterance will take. Generally there are indeed no clear indications of on-line planning or other "disturbances" in the flow of speech (no pausing, hesitations, repairs, slower speech or the like), which indicates that the utterance is produced as a predesigned chunk. By placing *I think* at the beginning of the intonation unit the speaker wants to display a certain stance towards its content, and by extension to the conversational activity and to the coparticipants.

The sequential environment of pre-positioned IU-initial *I think* is most commonly an adjacency pair: *I think* may appear in the first but especially in the second pair parts of such pairs. Sometimes *I think* also appears in extended turns, such as conversational stories. The functions that *I think* performs in these positions bear a relationship to the *sequence type* that intonation units containing *I think* are part of, but they are perhaps equally dependent on the *prosodic realization* of this item, and the utterance containing it, within that sequence. It is possible to group these functions into three main types: (A) a starting-point function to mark certain boundaries in discourse, (B) a starting-point function to mark that the upcoming turn will bring in a new or different

perspective compared to the prior turn, and (C) an explicitly recipient-oriented design of utterances. It is important to note, however, that the three types of function are not completely distinct varieties but form a continuum from A through B to C, with boundaries that are quite fuzzy between the groups.

A. Starting-point function: Marking boundaries

There are numerous cases of *I think* in my data in which it is difficult to assign any more function to it than simply acting as a starting-point for a perspective, or providing a *frame* (or part of a frame) that simply *marks a boundary* of some kind in the talk. By frame I here mean what Schiffrin (1980, 1987: 36–37) calls brackets, markers that come at different levels of organization of talk. Thus, meta-linguistic brackets may mark a discourse unit as long as a conversation or as short as a word, or mark units embedded within larger units (such as reasons within explanations). Schiffrin argues that discourse markers bracket units of talk, whether those units are sentences, propositions, speech acts or tone units (Schiffrin 1987: 35). When *I think* is used as a frame in IU-initial position, its prosodic encoding shows some distinct features: it tends to be phonologically reduced (sometimes to the point of being pronounced as one word and sounding something like [ayIn?]), in faster tempo, unstressed or only weakly stressed, and occasionally receives high pitch.

The following two examples illustrate *I think* acting as a starting-point of an aside within an extended turn, where one primary speaker is telling a conversational story. In example (56) the topic is Angela's chair that she has had repaired.

(56) ***I think** framing an aside* (Retire 932–952)

1	ANGELA:	& [nice].
2		... Now,
3		it was a,
4		... a tight little spring,
5		(H) .. [that um],
6	DORIS:	...[(SIGH)]
7	ANGELA:	.. governed the mechanism.
8		... And held the chair together,
9		... when you .. put out &
10	SAM:	... Oh,
11		the [footrest].
12	ANGELA:	& [the foot]rest.
13		... (Hx) And I ˆtold - -

14 ⇒		... <A Well ***I*** `***think*** I ˆtold you `this A>.
15		(H) I ˆphoned her and `said,
16		...(1) I don't know `whether I can ˆsit in the `chair at ˆa=ll or `not.
17		...(1.5) And ..ˆI said,
18		.. and `besides,
19		when I go ˆby it,
20		it ˆsnarls at me.
21	DORIS:	... [@@@@@@@@@@ (H)]

From line 14 we can infer that Angela has apparently told part of the story to Doris and/or Sam already on some earlier occasion (for lack of videotape we cannot tell whether this utterance was directed to only one of the coparticipants or to both), and she wants to display that she is aware that at least some of what she is going to say is old information for one of them. In line 13 Angela starts to tell about her phone call to the company (*And I ˆtold - -*) but then engages in self-repair and inserts an aside in line 14, realizing there that she has in fact told some of it before: ... *<A Well* ***I*** *`****think*** *I ˆtold you `this A>*.. Here, the content of the aside is in itself not relevant for the progression of the story, hence it is prefaced with *well*, which marks an orientation shift within one speaker's extended turn (Schiffrin 1987: 102–127). Here *well* displays to the other participants that what follows is not fully coherent with the main story line but an instance of meta-talk. It is then followed by *I think*. The whole intonation unit is said in slightly faster tempo than the surrounding speech, and the nuclear syllable *ˆtold* is in rather low pitch (compared to *ˆtold* in the previous IU, where it receives a much higher pitch). These are all prosodic cues that signal that speech is assigned subsidiary status, that of an aside, at this point (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996b: 28). This and the fact that there is nothing in Angela's tone of voice or intonation that indicates any hesitation or expectation of hearer validation (the aside ends with a period or final intonation contour, nor does the speaker pause to get any validation) seem to indicate that she is in fact fairly certain of having told it. This in turn can be taken as evidence for the function of *I think* as simply a starting-point of an aside, rather than indicating uncertainty or doubt. In other words, it constitutes a frame together with *well*. The aside as a whole projects forward into the story that unfolds, which is even made explicit by the cataphoric pronoun *this*.

A slightly different example of a starting-point of an aside would be the following, where *I think* alone constitutes the frame. Doris is telling her friends about the muumuus that she had spotted at a store.

(57) ***I think*** *framing an aside* (Retire 365–382)

1	ANGELA:	... Mhm.
2	DORIS:	weren't those pretty ones up,
3		in= Dillards the other day,
4		those muumuus,
5		did you notice em?
6		... (H) Didn't you notice em,
7		as you went out,
8		... all beautiful colors?
9		... So pretty.
10		.. (H) Well anyway,
11		they were on the rack.
12		... (H) `And uh,
13		... (TSK) (H) I `wanted to `order that ˆmuumuu,
14 ⇒		...<A `***I think*** it was around A> `twenty-nine ˆdollars,
15		or `something like ˆthat,
16		.. (H) and `two pairs of `short ˆpajamas.
17		... `One for `Sam,
18		and one for ˆme.

The utterance *...<A `**I think** it was around A> `twenty-nine ˆdollars, or `something like ˆthat,* in lines 14–15 provides some additional information that later proves very relevant for the story line (because the postage would have depended on the cost of the items, not weight, in this case amounting to eight dollars), in other words the content of the aside is not irrelevant. *Well* would not be acceptable here. The way *I think* is encoded is again very reduced, to the point that it is hard to identify as *I think* (it is pronounced something like [ayθIn?], with some stress on the pronoun) and the whole of the beginning of the intonation unit is said in rapid speech. On one hand, we could claim that *I think* simply marks uncertainty about the exact price of the muumuu; on the other hand, the speaker quotes a fairly exact price, 29 dollars, rather than a round figure, while there are also other linguistic means in the utterance that convey uncertainty, namely *around* and *or something like that*.[7] Another interpretation is therefore at least equally if not more valid: *I think* seems to be part of a frame created by the speaker to highlight that the price comes as extra information inserted in the main story line, and something that the other participants should keep track of for later use.

Again, this aside is signaled by lower pitch on the nuclear tone in *ˆdollars* and fast tempo, even if only on part of the aside. Couper-Kuhlen (1992: 344–

345) claims that accelerated tempo, especially when it is interactively achieved (as when two speakers jointly pick up a faster pace for a brief period in talk), may serve as a 'frame' for a side sequence by setting such a sequence off from prior or subsequent discourse (she looks specifically at repair sequences). Different pacing may in her opinion signal or in part constitute their different status. This is analogous to my claim here, even though my example is from an extended turn by one speaker, showing variation within her own rate of speech only. Her faster pace only extends as far as the initial frame (...<*A `**I think** it was around A*>), but the argument can be made that it likewise signals the subsidiary status of the upcoming utterance (expressed over two intonation units here); it is a typical encoding of an epistemic stance marker acting as a frame in discourse.

The hedge *or something like that* can then be claimed to be the end point of the frame or bracket, even though brackets terminating such spates of activities are not considered equally important as initial brackets (Schiffrin 1987: 37) and may therefore be lacking. In sum, *I think* acts as a conversational frame, a starting-point of an aside, and its status as a frame is further marked by increased pace and phonological reduction. Notice that it can do so without another discourse particle like *well* or *you know*, but may also co-occur with one as in example (56) above.

In the following example, *I think* is similarly part of a frame that marks a transition to answering the original question presented earlier in the discourse. In other words *I think* again comes at a boundary in discourse. The two sisters discuss a car whose engine had caught fire when Mary was driving in it with another person.

(58) ***I think** framing an upcoming answer* (Tree 458–488)

1	ALICE:	... So he knew that the oil was leaking?
2	MARY:	No,
3		... (TSK) we knew we were losing oil,
4		but we didn't know where.
5		I just figured it was from= that valve cover gasket.
6		... Just from lifting up the hood and looking at it.
7 ⇒	ALICE:	... (H) So what's he gonna do.
8	MARY:	... Well,
9		..%and two of his wires,
10		the sparkplug wires?
11	ALICE:	... Unhunh.
12	MARY:	were fried all the way through.

13 ALICE: ... Unhunh.
14 MARY: .. So we took those off and we,
15 .. replaced them with some old ones out of the garage.
16 ALICE: .. I knew tha=t.
17 MARY: And it runs.
18 ... It runs.
19 There's enough uh=,
20 ... radiator fluid in there.
21 ALICE: ... Mhm.
22 MARY: ... so that it will,
23 ... It's .. it's enough.
24 ALICE: ... Mhm.
25 ⇒ MARY: ... (DRINK) <A But ***I think*** `running it `out on the open ˆroad A>,
26 will `cause it ... ˆpossibly to shoot more ˆoil out.
27 ALICE: ... Mhm.
28 MARY: (0) That `valve cover `gasket has to be ˆreplaced.
29 ALICE: ... Hm.
30 ... (H)
31 MARY: ... I don't know.

The original question in line 7, *... (H) So what's he gonna do.*, does not receive a response from Mary, who refrains from giving one for a while, possibly because she has more information on the car that she wants to convey first (*and* in line 9 is additional evidence for this). Notice how she starts with *Well* in line 8, as though to indicate that what follows does not provide a coherent response, or, as Schiffrin puts it (1987:326), *well* marks the speaker's interactional presence despite the lack of an immediately ready response. She then retracts completely and withholds the answer until line 28. But she starts to work towards it already in the claim made in lines 25–26: *... <A But **I think** `running it out on the open ˆroad A>, will `cause it ... ˆpossibly to shoot more ˆoil out.*. Again, *I think* occurs in conjunction with another discourse marker, *But*, whose organizational role in discourse has been well established: *but* in many of its uses according to Schiffrin (1987:177) may be interpreted as a speaker's efforts to return to a prior concern of making a point, or to the ideational core of an answer to a question (1987:326). In the above example, it could be interpreted as indicating that the speaker is returning to formulating an answer to a question that was presented much earlier in the discourse. That there is a boundary of some kind in the discourse at this point is further signaled by the difference in tempo, as IU 25 is in clearly faster tempo than prior speech by the same speaker. The utterance in lines 25 and 26 acts as a preliminary to the final response in line 28,

That `valve cover `gasket has to be ˆreplaced, in other words the claim containing *I think* occurs in a sequential slot that projects forward. Some proof for this can be found in the fact that the speaker could not really have stopped after line 26 and have adequately answered the question, and in Alice's acknowledgment token ... *Mhm.*, which indicates that Alice does not interpret Mary's turn-so-far as having completed the ongoing activity of answering the question in line 7.

It is worth noting again that the intonation unit in line 25 is in rapid speech, and that *I think* receives no accent here. All it seems to be doing, along with *but*, is to mark a return to an original line of discourse, and to show that the speaker treats the claim in lines 25–26 as preparatory to, and part of, the final answer, that the valve cover gasket has to be replaced in the end. In other words, *but* marks a transition, a return to an earlier point, while *I think* faces forward, acting as a starting-point of the speaker's personal perspective, from which the final answer is formulated.

Finally, in a case of unelicited opinion (which is a rare instance of *I think* occurring in a first pair part of an adjacency pair), *I think* appears turn-initially together with another discourse marker and forms part of a frame at a point of transition in discourse. The topic has been a relative of Sam's (Sam is a female speaker despite the name) and his work at the local Walmart, the premises of which are being expanded.

(59) ***I think*** *framing an upcoming opinion sequence* (Retire 254–264)

1	SAM:	but he hasn't had day hours,
2		he's been working (H) ... evening hours and weekends.
3	ANGELA:	...(2) <HI you `know,
4 ⇒		...(1) `***I think*** HI> I'd ˆhate to be in ˆbusiness right `now,
5	DORIS:	... <P Oo= P>.
6	ANGELA:	.. you `can't ..`sit .. ˆstill.
7	DORIS:	... <P Hm-m P>.
8	ANGELA:	... You `have to ˆexpand,
9		... or ˆsomething,
10	DORIS:	... [(TSK)]
11	ANGELA:	[to `keep] ... <MRC `in the `main ˆstream MRC>.

After a pause of about two seconds, Angela starts a new topic by uttering *you know* on line 3. Schiffrin (1987:290) argues that one of the functions of *y'know* is to lead a hearer to focus attention on a piece of information (either prior or upcoming), or create an interactive focus on speaker-provided information, while the successful fulfillment of the role of information provider is contingent upon hearer attention. In Schiffrin's terms, *you know* may thus seek a par-

ticular interactional alignment (cf. Schiffrin 1987:279 on *y'know* as a marker of consensual truths). Here, *you know* indeed serves to secure hearer attention, even though the conversational activity is not so much providing information but offering an opinion: ...(1) `***I think*** *I'd ˆhate to be in ˆbusiness right `now*. The high onset in this IU, namely the relatively higher pitch on *you know* and *I think* compared to the rest of the intonation unit, appears to project a lengthier than one-TCU turn (line 4). Couper-Kuhlen and Selting (1996b) observe that high onsets typically accompany topic initiations, and that seems to be its function in this example as well. There is some stress on the pronoun in *I think*, and the marker is not reduced in its phonetic substance (even though this may be due to the generally slow rate of speech of this speaker). The pitch then goes down towards the end of the intonation unit, but rises to a mid high at the end, and indicates that the speaker projects more talk, namely an account of why she holds that view. Indeed, other speakers interpret all these cues, high onset and continuing intonation at the end of the IU, as projecting further talk and do not take a turn at this point, but only provide minimal acknowledgment and indicate hearer attention (Doris' ... *<P Oo= P>* in soft speech in line 5). Angela is now able to continue by giving an account: .. *You `can't .. `sit .. ˆstill*. This, and especially the following lines (8–11) are quite emphatic (produced with a very emphatic marcato rhythm) and express the actual point of this extended turn.

The meaning of this sequence as a whole emerges as Angela goes along, and we may now claim that the utterance in line 4 was only intended as a preface or an introduction to the main point in lines 6–11 (even though these are interactively constructed, with Doris providing a supportive acknowledgment token ... *<P Hm-m P>*. but not taking the floor, which leads Angela to produce further talk). The preface *I'd hate to be in business right now* in itself constitutes an opinion, without the *I think*, in the sense of providing an unverifiable proposition, and it is therefore possible to claim that this marker is there primarily to do some other work, namely framing what follows as an opinion sequence, i.e. acting as a starting-point. A longer sequence, or more talk on this subject, really has to follow, as it would be decidedly odd for the speaker to make an utterance like this at this point in the discourse, where 'being in business' has not yet been a topic, without further elaborating it. *You know* and *I think* together constitute a frame that indicates that an opinion or a lengthy opinion sequence is about to follow, at a point in discourse where the opinion and the upcoming sequence constitute a slight shift in topic. Thus, *I think* again comes at a boundary of some kind, which is here being further signaled by the lengthy pauses before IUs 3 and 4.

Summary

My argument so far has been that *I think* can be used as *a frame or a bracket at a boundary in discourse*, at a point of transition, such as a topic shift, a shift to meta-discourse or subsidiary information, or a shift back to an earlier or to a completely new point. In such sequential slots *I think* then points forward in the discourse. It can be argued that explicitly bringing in the speaker perspective at certain crucial moments in discourse already acts as a boundary marker (as though when a lecture monologue is closed by saying *I think I'll stop here*), even though we may have other elements, notably other discourse markers, that further signal and intensify that function. Often the utterance containing *I think* gives rise to, or is prefatory to, more talk, or is somehow relevant for later discourse. Whether *I think* thereby actually projects additional talk is another matter and will be discussed in the summary of section B in more detail. *I think* then tends to be realized in phonetically reduced form (so that the pronoun or even the verb is sometimes not very audible at all), and it may be faster in tempo, and consequently appears in unstressed form. If there is some stress, it seems to be secondary.[8] One can indeed claim that acting as a frame at different levels of organization in discourse is work of a rather *routinized* kind, and therefore generally not in need of special emphasis. Occasionally, *I think* also bears other prosodic marking, such as high pitch, which further intensifies its framing function.

Were we to claim that *I think* in the above examples simply displays the speaker's epistemic uncertainty and doubt about the proposition and is used, say, for not imposing one's opinion on the coparticipants (as is possible to claim and has indeed been said of instances like (59) above), then we can offer a counterargument to this: the unemphatic encoding (reduced and/or accelerated phonetic realization, lack of stress) of this marker make it a very poor marker of speaker uncertainty at best.

Further, often other discourse markers co-occur in the same utterance with *I think*. Some earlier research indicates that such markers tend to cluster at turn-initial position (cf. Sacks et al. 1978; Heritage 1984a; Aijmer 1997), but as we have seen, *I think* may also appear in turn-medial position, within one speaker's extended turn, and may be preceded by other discourse markers in this position as well. In other words, its function as a frame is by no means confined to turn-initial position, and *I think* may function more locally in discourse, at the level of individual utterances and/or intonation units within turns. Often we also see other modality markers (such as *probably*, *maybe*) or hedges (*around*, *or something like that*) in the same utterance, which lends further support for the fact that *I think* is then marking something else than ten-

tativeness (cf. Holmes 1990; Aijmer 1997). Because it may not thereby "adequately" bring out the speaker's uncertainty (or certainty for that matter), other epistemic markers can be argued to perform that function in the utterance.

Finally, it should be noted, however, that *I think* may, even though rarely, display uncertainty whilst simultaneously acting as a boundary marker in discourse. This is the case in the following example of Rickie, the witness who is being prepared to appear in court.

(60) ***I think*** *framing subsidiary information (and expressing uncertainty)* (Telljury 399–408)

1	REBECCA:	A=nd,
2		.. when he came in,
3		.. when .. where was he when you first saw him .. come in.
4	RICKIE:	`He got on the ˆtrai=n `o=n like,
5 ⇒		(THROAT) ***I ˆthink*** ˆTwelfth Street or something?
6		in .. (H) ˆOakland?
7		(H)<VOX And like in the,
8		.. let me see VOX>.
9		. . .Okay.
10		. . .He got on another car.

In contrast to the above cases of *I think*, it is here clearly stressed and unreduced, thus conveying some emphasis on its semantic meaning of uncertainty. The modification through *I think* takes place very locally, in the middle of a syntactic unit (a clause), so that *I think* only has an NP in its scope. In this case it acts to highlight that the speaker is indeed in doubt about the exact location where the defendant got on the train. But if we look at the discourse that follows, we can see that the IU in line 5 contains only subsidiary information anyway, as Rebecca's question was really meant to establish where on the train, rather than where in Oakland, the defendant had been when Rickie first laid eyes on him. Indeed, Rickie immediately goes on to provide more information about whether the defendant got in the same car or not. Notice how the actual NP, *Twelfth Street*, is framed on both sides to display that the NP is really less important information, as *or something?* provides the closing frame. The semantic potential of *I think* to mark uncertainty, especially when the verb is strongly accented, makes it quite a useful tool for acting as a boundary marker and simultaneously expressing uncertainty, if need be. Thus, even though we in general have encountered examples where *I think* does not receive any accent at all or only secondary accent, and consequently does not indicate a high degree

of uncertainty, it is always possible for speakers to fine-tune their utterances in accordance with the interactional demands of the situation.

B. Starting-point function: routinely bringing in speaker perspective

Very frequently in the data, *I think* occurs in certain sequential positions, namely in second-pair parts of adjacency pairs, where the current speaker perceives some minor interactional trouble in the preceding turn. *I think* locates and *routinely attends to that trouble* in the current turn, by marking specifically that the *current speaker's perspective will follow*. Nofsinger claims that "any second part of an adjacency pair also displays its speaker's alignment toward the participant who produced the first pair part" (Nofsinger 1991: 143), and in the examples discussed below the speakers are less than fully aligned to each other. Such instances of *I think* occur in answers to questions, in second assessments, weak agreements, and acceptances of compliments in the data. As in the previous group of examples, *I think* is similarly not highly stressed and may be accelerated and phonologically reduced.

Here *I think* then simultaneously points backward and forward in discourse: backward, as its use is engendered by the trouble perceived in the previous turn, and forward, as it deals with that trouble by marking that the current speaker's perspective will follow. It often simultaneously projects forward into more talk on the matter at hand, a longer sequence of discourse that the speaker produces (cf. discussion on projection in the summary section below). *I think* then marks the starting-point of the speaker-perspective within such a sequence.

In the following example, the perceived "trouble" is rather minimal in kind. Two sisters are discussing their cousin's partner Tammy, who may have to become pregnant again to straighten out her hormone system (after a cyst had been removed from her ovary).

(61) ***I think*** *bringing in a different slant in an answer* (Tree 717–728)

1	MARY:	... (TSK) I don't know if Tammy would be too happy with that though.
2		... (SWALLOW) Seems to me that she's trying to straighten herself out,
3		and,
4		... pursue a family.
5	ALICE:	... Tammy?
6	MARY:	... (TSK) What do ˆyou think.
7	ALICE:	... I don't ˆknow(Hx).
8	MARY:	... (TSK) Or <A do you think A> it `might be a matter of ˆconvenience.
9 ⇒	ALICE:	...(1) <A ***I `think*** A> it's a ˆconvenience for ˆboth of em.
10	MARY:	... ˆYeah=?

11 ... ˆYeah=?
12 ALICE: ... It's `also a `convenience for ˆCookie.

I think seems ostensibly to only mark that the upcoming proposition is going to be an opinion: an opinion is explicitly sought in the preceding turn (line 8, where *it* refers to not becoming pregnant again). The whole phrase, *I think*, is reduced to something like [aθInk], and, perhaps in part because of its reduced form, sounds faster in tempo than the surrounding speech. Iconically, the way the opinion was elicited was also done in faster speech and in a very reduced form: <*A do you think A*>. *I think* appears to do little more than function as a starting-point for a perspective or the opinion that is offered in line 9.[9] Yet the utterance would be an opinion even without *I think* (in the sense that it constitutes an unverifiable claim) that would adequately answer the elicitation; there is strictly speaking no need to mark that specifically (as there would not be even if the opinion were unelicited, cf. example (59) above). It is conceivable that this marker may be there to do something more than simply mark an opinion. Indeed, this is a typical instance of the current speaker answering a question by bringing in some new aspect, something that was not asked for, or a slightly different slant to the original issue in the question. The function of *I think* is simply to mark that something like this will follow. Here Alice, rather than responding by something like *Yeah, it's* (*probably*) *a convenience* (i.e. to Tammy), chooses to preface the utterance by *I think* and then brings in Tammy's significant other as well. In sum, even though it is also true that *I think* functions as a starting-point of a perspective here, the reason why it is doing that is because the upcoming utterance contains some material that was unasked for. This finds indirect support in the next turn: Mary clearly expects Alice to account for the new perspective, as she utters a lengthened *ˆYeah=?* twice, with a distinctly rising intonation (in lines 10 and 11). In other words, Mary orients to line 9 as warranting an explanation or an account, but Alice chooses not to offer one and brings in a new element, Tammy's mother-in-law, Cookie, instead.

Similarly, in the following example, the turn starting with *I think* indicates that the previous assessment was not quite accurate and the speaker again provides a slightly different slant to it. The topic of kids' bones was inspired by the specific case of Harold's nephew whose broken leg had healed very quickly.

(62) ***I think*** *bringing in a different slant in second assessment* (Lambada 64–76)

1 PETE: [That's like],
2 .. <X I guess X> that he was being hauled around in a little

		wagon [2and stuff2].
3	HAROLD:	[2Right2].
4		... [3He ˆhealed very `quickly3].
5	JAMIE:	[3<X `Guess X> kids' ˆbo=nes,
6		just like3] .. [4grow4][5`back5] really ˆfast(Hx).
7	PETE:	[4`M4][5hm=5].
8	HAROLD:	[5Yeah5].
9 ⇒		<HI ***I `think*** HI> they're really `soft to ˆstart with.
10	JAMIE:	They're `made of ˆrubber.
11		...<P Th- that's it. P>
12	HAROLD:	`That's why b-,
13		.. little ˆkids usually don't break their legs ˆanyway.

Jamie makes an assessment that kids' bones grow back really fast (lines 5–6). Part of this is overlapped by what Harold himself is saying in line 4 (apparently to Pete), yet Harold provides a positive acknowledgment before Jamie's utterance has even come to completion (*Yeah.* in line 8). But he immediately launches into a second assessment that introduces the "real" state of affairs: *<HI **I `think** HI> they're really `soft to ˆstart with..*[10] Even though this utterance ends with a final (period) intonation contour, the high onset on *I think* makes it possible to argue that Harold projects more talk but is momentarily "interrupted" by Jamie's humorous appreciation of his assessment, which is latched on almost immediately, *They're `made of ˆrubber. ...<P Th-that's it. P>*. In lines 12–13 Harold then resumes without a pause his main line of argument, that children do not break their legs in the first place because their bones are so soft. It is therefore possible to argue that *I think* is not really marking uncertainty or doubt here, and rather than marking that the claim made is an opinion of the speaker (which it does not really seem to be anyway, since the speaker is making an assessment based on general cultural knowledge), it seems to express that the current speaker orients to the assessment offered in the prior turn as not quite accurate and that he is about to bring in a slightly different slant to it. The second assessment simultaneously projects more talk to account for this new perspective, which indeed follows in lines 12–13.

In the following example, the speech action that the participants are involved in is trying to establish together what type of person is likely to become a victim of the defendant, a man accused of exhibitionism. Rickie's opinion sequence in lines 2–22 makes a response of some kind relevant; this is conveyed by how she ends the sequence, *that's what it look like*, which rather nicely wraps up what she had said so far and hands it over to the other participants.

(63) ***I think*** *bringing in a different slant in a second opinion sequence* (Telljury 170–207)

1	REBECCA:	.. So,
2	RICKIE:	... (H) <X well X> see,
3		.. what it is,
4		it seems like he wants <X someone X> more scary=,
5		... y%%- I don't kno=w,
6		cause,
7		(H)= ... he would walk up and down the aisles,
8		there was women on the other side,
9		too,
10		but they'd look like,
11		you know,
12		you wouldn't mess with em,
13		but if you're sitting there,
14		you know,
15		trying to mind your own business,
16		[or=],
17	REBECCA:	[Right].
18	RICKIE:	.. look like you can intimidate someone,
19		you [know],
20	REBECCA:	[Right].
21	RICKIE:	I i- - -
22		that's what it look like,
23 ⇒	REBECCA:	.. (H) ***I*** <HI ˆ***think*** HI> that's,
24 ⇒		***I*** `***think*** he he `finds somebody that's ˆisolated,
25	RICKIE:	[Mhm].
26	REBECCA:	[(H)] a=nd `he= .. `goes for a certain ˆage group,
27 ⇒		[2 ***I*** `***think*** 2].
28	RICKIE:	[2 Yeah 2].
29	REBECCA:	(H).. `U=m,
30		.. `a=nd,
31		*you know like*%%,
32 ⇒		for some ˆreason ***I*** `***think*** he likes ˆstudents,
33		[or `people] who ˆlook like `stu[2dents=2].
34	RICKIE:	[Unhunh].
35		[2Mh2]m.
36	REBECCA:	.. So,
37		.. (H)= anyway,
38		.. okay,

Rickie first volunteers her own opinion sequence (in lines 2–22) of what type of person would be a likely victim for the incident that took place on the train. Rebecca offers a second opinion in lines 23–33. Each participant relates her view in accordance with the type of knowledge that she has about the offender – they each have different access to the matter at hand. Rickie has her personal experiences to base her opinion on, while Rebecca has some institutional knowledge that she has attained from working on other cases that involve the same defendant. As Rickie has been a victim herself, twice in fact, her judgment is based on actual visual evidence of the defendant's activity on the train, which is expressed explicitly in *that's what it look like*. Rebecca first acknowledges Rickie's view of a type of victim who is easily frightened (*Right.* in IUs 17 and 20) and then proceeds to say: .. (*H*) ***I*** *<HI ˆ**think** HI> that's, **I** `**think** he he `finds somebody that's ˆisolated,*. She starts her opinion sequence with *I think*, which is marked by primary accent and high pitch on *think*; this beginning simply indicates that there is a new start here, the beginning of her personalized opinion sequence (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996b; Couper-Kuhlen 1998a, 1998b on high onsets typically accompanying topic initiations). But she then self-repairs and redirects her utterance, possibly because she needs to shift from using the demonstrative *that's* (which was how Rickie ended her turn) to referring to the defendant by *he*. *I think* now obtains only a secondary accent, while there is a sudden fall to a low pitch on *ˆisolated;* she basically agrees with Rickie but simultaneously brings in a slightly different slant by making an explicit reference to 'being isolated,' as opposed to Rickie's 'sitting there trying to mind your own business.' In other words the utterance in line 24 resembles our previous examples quite closely.

Simultaneously with Rickie's acknowledgment in line 25 *[Mhm.]*, Rebecca then goes on to offer some new information on lines 26–27, that the victims are possibly young: [(*H*)] *a=nd `he= .. `goes for a certain ˆage group,* [2 *I `think* 2]. Here we have one of the few occurrences in the data of post-positioned *I think* encoded as a separate intonation unit, of which more will be said in Section 5.5. I will only mention here that its function in this position is geared towards turn exchange. As Rickie does not take a speaking turn at this point, however, Rebecca continues to talk and mentions one further characteristic of the defendant, that he likes students. But she clearly has some trouble continuing: the lengthenings in *U=m* and *a=nd*, the hesitation *U=m*, the discourse particles *you know* and *like*, as well as the glottalizations (*%*) seem to indicate that she was not planning to add anything more to the profile of the defendant after line 27. When she finally does, even this is prefaced by a hedge *for some reason*, which, as was discussed in connection with example (32), is comparable to *I*

think in marking a speaker stance (even though not epistemic). It is possible to argue about IU 32 that it also routinely deals with a trouble spot in the prior discourse: in this case the interactional trouble ensues simply because the other speaker does not take a speaking turn.

A slightly different example, in a different interactional environment, of *I think* locating and dealing with some trouble in the preceding turn is the following, where the speaker introduces a lengthy opinion sequence with *cause* and *I think*. The participants are discussing some Indonesian masks that hang on the wall.

(64) ***I think*** *introducing a disaligning second opinion sequence* (Lambada 510–535)

1	MILES:	.. I [figure the second] [2one from the to2][3p3].
2	HAROLD:	[Tumenggung].
3	JAMIE:	[2The second from the2] [3top3],
4	PETE:	[3Tumeng3]gung?
5		... Hunh.
6	MILES:	I look at that and think,
7		yeah,
8		that looks like a brother.
9	PETE:	... That's [`interesting,
10	JAMIE:	[@ @@
11 ⇒	PETE:	.. `cause ***I*** `***think*** Indo- ^Indonesians],
12	JAMIE:	think (H)]?
13	PETE:	or,
14		.. `people who've been to ^Indonesia,
15		.. `think that `those `guys,
16		like the two ^top `ones,
17		... have `really ^European `characteristics.
18		... [`compared] to ^Indonesians.
19	JAMIE:	[Uh],
20	PETE:	... Just cause their eyes are real [2big and their noses are big2].
21	HAROLD:	[2Their eyes are rou=nd2].
22	JAMIE:	... Oh [3really=3]?
23	PETE:	[3And Indonesians3] have real thin eyes,
24		and,
25		... and flat noses and stuff.
26		... <P I= don't know P>.

Before this extract, Miles, an African American, has just expressed an opinion that one of the figures portrayed in the masks looks like a certain black per-

son that he has in mind. He repeats this in lines 6–8 as a more general claim, *yeah, that looks like a brother.* Pete starts his turn by *That's `interesting,* which strongly projects that he is not going to fully align with the previous speaker – and indeed a second opinion is given in the rest of the turn introduced by *cause*. Pete offers what he believes to be another and more valid view: Indonesians themselves and people who have been to Indonesia regard these figures as typically European looking. The incrementally added intonation units that the turn consists of relate factual information (lines 11 and 13–18) and give further accounts to support Pete's view (lines 20 and lines 23–25), and in effect constitute a disaligning turn, a difference of opinion with Miles' expressed opinion. *I think* displays that such an action is about to follow. It constitutes a starting-point for that second opinion and the speaker perspective, in this case an extended disaligning sequence.

In the next example *I think* appears in a turn that constitutes a weak agreement (possibly acting as a disagreement preface) with the preceding turn. In this extract, a piece of argumentative discourse, Darryl challenges Pamela's belief in miracles as not in any way superior to his own belief in Murphy's Law.

(65) ***I think*** *prefacing weak agreement (and subsequent disagreement)* (Death 1–11)

1	DARRYL:	But,
2		.. but to try and .. and talk me out of believing in Murphy's Law,
3		by offering a miracle as a replacement,
4		that doesn't d- work.
5		(TSK) (H)
6	PAMELA:	Well you're ˆright,
7 ⇒		***I `think*** they're `probably flip ˆsides.
8		(TSK) (H)
9	DARRYL:	<A I mean A> who [ˆare you].
10	PAMELA:	[But 'I'm] - -
11	DARRYL:	ˆPollyanna?

Darryl's challenge ostensibly gets an agreeing response from Pamela in lines 6–7, *Well you're ˆright, **I `think** they're `probably flip ˆsides.* Yet the turn so far contains some linguistic items, such as *well* and *probably*, which suggest that the agreement may be less than a hundred per cent. In other words the interactional trouble for Pamela here consists of not being able, or willing, to fully agree with the prior turn (when full agreement is the preferred option). And if we look at how the interaction proceeds, Pamela actually seems to launch into a disagreement immediately afterwards (e.g. to provide a reason why she

finds miracles important), but is interrupted by Darryl: she inhales audibly after finishing line 7 and starts a turn with *But I'm - -* in line 9. The turn in lines 6–7, then, can be considered an instance of weak agreement acting as a preface to disagreement (Pomerantz 1984: 72), while *I think* is used to mark the starting-point of the speaker's inserted new perspective at this point: how Pamela perceives miracles and Murphy's Law as similar in kind, whereas Darryl's point had been that he is not going to be persuaded by Pamela to abandon Murphy's Law in favor of miracles. At the same time Pamela goes on to produce her actual disagreement, which here gets interrupted, however. The utterance contains another epistemic marker, *probably*, which indicates the speaker's unwillingness to make more than a partial concession at this point (***I think*** *they're flip sides* would not convey that). This example as a whole then exhibits features of what Pomerantz (1984) calls dispreferred turn shapes (cf. discussion in the summary section below).

So far we have seen examples of second pair parts that bring in a new or different perspective, in that sense showing a less than hundred per cent alignment with the preceding turn. There are also cases in the data where the current speaker is not quite clear about the interactional import of the previous turn. In the following example, the trouble with the previous question is that it is inappropriate in some sense, but the speaker struggles to answer it anyway. The participants have been discussing a three-year-old's tap dancing hobby.

(66) ***I think*** *dealing with unclear import of previous turn* (Lambada 1–15)

1	JAMIE:	How [can you teach a three-year-old to] ta=p [2dance2].
2	HAROLD:	[I can't imagine teaching a] - -
3		[2@`Yeah2],
4		ˆreally.
5	JAMIE:	... (H)=
6 ⇒	MILES:	... Who ˆsuggested this `to em.
7	HAROLD:	<A `I have no ˆidea A>.
8		It was `probably my= .. ˆsister-in-law's `idea because,
9 ⇒		.. ***I `think*** they `saw= ... that ˆmovie.
10	JAMIE:	... `Tap?
11		[X] [2X2] –
12	HAROLD:	[What] [2was the2],
13	MILES:	[2<X They had X>2] - -
14	HAROLD:	the `movie with that .. `really hot ˆtap danc[er].
15	JAMIE:	[`Oh] that ˆki=d.

The question in line 6, *Who suggested this to em.*, is in a way the "wrong" question to ask here, as the idea of teaching a three-year-old to tap dance originated in the parents seeing a film that features an excellent young tap dancer (the film is called 'Tap'). Harold's first reaction is to say *I have no idea.* (in line 7) in very fast tempo, but he immediately goes on to indicate that he does have an idea: it was not a person but a film that gave the idea to the mother, Harold's sister-in-law. Harold realizes as he goes along that he does possess more information about the issue, but since the original question was framed so that it did not address this information, he is momentarily sidetracked and needs time to deal with this, and possibly also to retrieve the information from memory. What *I think* seems to be doing is both reflecting this and facing forward to establishing the identity of the film. Harold is less uncertain about the seeing of the film as such, as he is about its identity: the lengthening on *saw*= and the pause before *that ˆmovie*, as well as Harold's question *What was the, the `movie with that .. `really hot ˆtap dancer.* in lines 12 and 14 are evidence for this.[11] Notice how Jamie in the next turn picks up on the film and offers a candidate name *Tap?*, but casts no doubt on whether Harold is making a valid claim about the parents having seen one. It is of course possible to claim that Harold is only and genuinely uncertain about how the events proceeded, but that interpretation does not seem very plausible, or at least not the only plausible one, in the light of what he says once the participants have established which film they are talking about: *But **I'm sure** that was the .. the impetus.* (IU29). In sum, Harold did not choose a more "unmarked" way to realize the same semantic content, precisely because he had to deal with the interactional problem of a question that was inappropriately framed and simultaneously shift towards establishing the relevant facts, namely the identity of the film.

In the next somewhat similar example, interactional trouble ensues because the interactional meaning or import of the previous turn is not quite clear. Two sisters are talking about making arrangements for one of them to take care of the other's child for a couple of days (which is generally not a small favor).

(67) ***I think** dealing with unclear import of previous turn* (Tree 610–633)

1	MARY:	... (DRINK) (Hx)
2	ALICE:	...(3) I was gonna ask you and m=om,
3		too,
4		if you could um,
5		...(2.5) take care of Trace for a couple days next week.
6	MARY:	...(1) (TSK) Oh?

7		... What you got in mind.
8	ALICE:	... I need to get caught up on my work.
9	MARY:	... (DRINK) Wednesday I have an appointment at nine thirty.
10	ALICE:	...(1.5) Mom's off,
11		isn't she?
12	MARY:	... Oh,
13		that's ˆrigh=t.
14		...(3) That's ˆright.
15 ⇒	ALICE:	... <ARH Yeah ***I think*** ˆthat'd,
16 ⇒		...(3.5) ***I think*** ˆthat'd um,
17		...(1.5) (TSK) work ˆout ARH>,
18		...(1.5) like if `she had to go ˆshopping or `something maybe you could go `with her,
19		and `help her `with him?
20		...(1) And `Nicky helps her .. with him a `lot anyway.
21	MARY:	Yeah.
22		...(1) And then of course he [adores] me.
23	ALICE:	[(Hx)]
24		... Mhm.

Alice's utterance in lines 2–5 clearly constitutes a request for Mary, but its acceptance is withheld by her first in ...(1) (*TSK*) *Oh? ... What you got in mind.* and then in ... (*DRINK*) *Wednesday I have an appointment at nine thirty.*. This results in what can be regarded as insertion sequences within the longer conversational activity (lines 6–8 and lines 9–13/14). When Alice finds another counter-argument, ...(*1.5*) *Mom's off, isn't she?*, this receives a very favorable response from Mary, who seems to only then realize that this is the case (cf. Heritage 1984b for the change-of-state token *Oh*; there is also a discovery intonation and a lengthening on ... *Oh, that's ˆrigh=t.*). But as it stands, the turn as a whole does not comply with the original request, it only rather emphatically acknowledges the fact that the mother will have a day off when Mary herself will have an appointment; *That's ˆright.* is only repeated after a long pause of 3 seconds, but no explicit comment is made about the significance of this information for the original request. However, it seems likely that this turn, or possibly the last part of it, is *taken* by Alice to constitute at least an implicit compliance with the request, since she then concludes that the arrangement is possible: ... *Yeah* ***I think*** *ˆthat'd,* ...(*3.5*) ***I think*** *ˆthat'd um,* ...(*1.5*) (*TSK*) *work ˆout,*.

Alice nevertheless exhibits a fair amount of uncertainty about the interactional import of the previous turn, and the outcome of the interaction. This interpretation is supported by the way her utterance is realized, namely in a very

hesitant and halting manner. First of all there are long pauses before each intonation unit; even though we cannot in general assign too much significance to pauses in this conversation, in which the pace is quite slow and there frequently are long gaps between turns and pauses between intonation units within turns, here they become distinctly longer than in the preceding talk. Secondly, the utterance is not realized as one whole but produced rather haltingly over three intonation units (ARH stands for arrhythmic and halting speech), with some of the content repeated. Thirdly, there is a hesitation marker *um* before the verb phrase *work ˆout*. This item has been shown in earlier research to occur, among other things, before a problematic element and thereby display "I'm thinking about how to put it" (Davidson 1984: 110; quoting Jefferson 1974). It is possible to claim that *work out* is precisely the problematic element here, and that Alice chooses to present it as such. She also chooses a hypothetical rather than an indicative form (*that'd*), thus expressing uncertainty about her conclusion. As far as *I think* is concerned, both occurrences are here unstressed and the second is also very reduced in phonetic substance, almost to the point of inaudibility of the pronoun *I*. This may reflect the fact that it is a repetition (we could suggest that it is repeated here because the pause is so long, 3.5 seconds, before the restarted intonation unit). Yet, by virtue of the fact that both occurrences of *I think* are quite reduced and unstressed, we may argue that a semantic meaning of uncertainty or doubt cannot be very strong (otherwise we would expect *think* to receive primary accent), but *I think* is rather used as a starting-point for the speaker's personalized perspective here. In all, rather than saying something like *Yeah, that will work out then.*, and assuming that the recipient has fully complied with the request, Alice does not do so; while she is speaking she appears to try to make sense of the previous turn, while she also projects more talk in each of the intonation units in lines 15–17, as these IUs end with a continuing intonation contour. She subsequently tries to elicit a reaction from Mary as (only) helping the mother, who is portrayed as the primary person taking care of the child (lines 18–19). The fact that Alice regards this as necessary lends further support for the claim that she has not interpreted Mary's talk so far as constituting a clear acceptance or compliance. As Mary still does not take a turn (note the one-second pause before IU 20), Alice gives one more reason why the arrangement is feasible in her opinion. This, finally, elicits a response and some kind of acceptance from Mary: *Yeah. ...(1) And then of course he adores me.*

In this example, then, we may say that rather than expressing doubt and uncertainty, or, at the pragmatic level, tentativeness (cf. Aijmer's and Holmes' treatments above in 5.3), *I think* is prefatory to a display of uncertainty about

the interactional import of a previous turn, i.e. the interactional trouble perceived is of that kind. The turn as a whole works towards allowing the recipient ample opportunities to make this import clearer. And even if *I think* is part of an array of cues which project more talk to come, its use is engendered by what happened or, rather, did not happen in the prior turn: the utterance containing *I think* is trying to assess the outcome of the interaction so far. In this sense *I think* again points both backward and forward in the discourse.[12]

Finally, having said that *I think* routinely deals with interactional trouble spots in certain sequential environments, I came across a different example, one that does not occur in my data but which in fact lends further support for positing a starting-point function for *I think*. It appears in Pomerantz's (1984) analysis of *agreement* turns and their shape.

(68) Pomerantz (1984:66)

A: They keep `im awful nice somehow
B: Oh yeah ***I think*** she must wash `im every [week
A: [God-che must (h) wash `im every day ***the way he looks to me***

(example continues; emphases mine)

In this example, then, the speakers appear perfectly aligned to each other in producing their respective assessments about a dog and a dog holder or holders, as there is no overt hitch or trouble to be perceived between the turns. In fact the speakers provide assessments that reinforce or upgrade each other in turn, and are claimed to constitute an agreement series by Pomerantz (1984:66). Yet speaker B prefaces his/her assessment with *I think*. We can speculate on the reason why s/he should do so.[13] A's first assessment *They keep `im awful nice somehow* is rather vague in content but conveys a very positive attitude towards the dog holders. B agrees with this (*Oh yeah*) and then makes a second assessment, ***I think*** *she must wash `im every week*. However, this assessment is more specific in content and makes reference to *she* as opposed to the other dog holders (*they*) referred to by A. It is possible to claim that (at least with the right kind of prosody) this assessment presents the female dog holder's activity of washing the dog every week as something out of the ordinary, possibly excessive. In other words, B does not make a similar unequivocally positive assessment as A, but shows a difference in stance. S/he thereby marks this difference through *I think*. And indeed B's assessment elicits a much more negatively-loaded and similarly personalized assessment from A, *God-che*

must (h) wash `im every day ***the way he looks to me***, which clearly shows that A orients to and in turn upgrades the "abnormal" element in B's assessment. In effect we can see here that *I think* can be a constituent of an agreement turn, without any overt hitch being manifested in the discourse at that point. *I think* simply provides a personalized starting-point for the assessment, marking the current speaker's slight shift in perspective. Support for this analysis can be obtained from Heritage and Raymond (forthcoming), who claim that speakers who find themselves producing a *responsive* rather than first assessment often upgrade their (similarly positive) assessment, e.g. by using various techniques (like *I think*, *oh*-prefacing, tag questions, and negative interrogatives) to complement but also to dispute the position taken by the first speaker. The authors claim that offering a first assessment carries an implied claim that the speaker has primary rights to evaluate some referent, and in upgrading their second assessment second speakers simultaneously upgrade *their* right to assess that referent. In effect, the interpretation offered by Heritage and Raymond then also carries an implication of some minor trouble in the ongoing interaction.

Summary

In sum, we have seen examples where the speaker locates trouble in the preceding turn, in the sense that the current speaker wants to bring in a slightly different perspective or slant to the matter expressed in the prior turn, to disagree with it, or to display uncertainty about its interactional import or relevance. ***I think*** *routinely attends to that trouble*, because it specifically marks the starting-point for the current speaker's perspective as a response or a reaction to the prior turn. This tends to take place in a special sequential environment, namely in second pair parts of adjacency pairs: in answers to questions (whether the answer is an opinion that was asked for, or an answer that reflects the current speaker's conception about the inappropriateness of the question), in second assessments and opinions, in weak agreements (in response to being challenged), in conclusory comments (after a request–compliance sequence, whose significance is not clear to the current speaker, or analyst), and the like.

As far as the prosodic realization of *I think* in this sequential location is concerned, it is generally not highly stressed, most commonly receiving secondary stress on the verb. It may also sometimes appear in an accelerated and reduced form. What is worth noting is that *I think* does not generally receive primary stress in this sequential environment, which can be seen as evidence for suggesting a more routinized function of this marker, that of marking that the speaker's own perspective will follow. In most cases this is enough to deal with the rather minor routinelike trouble spots in interaction that were seen

above. As far as the semantic content of *I think* is concerned here, it generally does *not* express a high degree of doubt or uncertainty in these sequential environments – if anything it tends towards the certainty end of the scale, in the sense of a semantic meaning of 'personal attitude' (cf. Section 5.3 on Simon-Vandenbergen's treatment of *I think*). Expressing a personal attitude is of course quite close to the starting-point function posited for *I think* in my study, but I have shown here that speakers are more likely to explicitly refer to their personal perspective in some sequential environments rather than others, namely at certain trouble spots in interaction. On the other hand, as regards the other semantic meanings suggested for the certainty end of *I think*, namely 'opinion' and 'personal conviction' (cf. again Section 5.3), we have seen that in many cases the actual propositions do not constitute an opinion, while the characterization of personal conviction for *I think* is too strong in these routinelike usages.

I have dealt with the starting-point function of *I think* in groups A and B above. Two further points will be made here that concern this function: that *I think* may actually project further talk in these sequential positions, and that the notion of 'face' is not highly relevant for the description of this marker when it functions as a starting-point.

As far as the first point is concerned, I have made the observation with many of the examples above that a trajectory of further talk is often set up in environments where the speaker uses *I think* as a frame at some boundary point in discourse or when s/he initiates a second pair part through *I think*. It is of course debatable whether *I think* sets this projection up or whether further talk is simply a reflection of a need by the speaker to pragmatically complete the action in question. Beach and Metzger (1997: 577–578) claim that "a prefaced claim of insufficient knowledge [through *I don't know*] may necessitate additional talk simply because participants orient to such a claim as somehow troublesome and construct other talk to ward off the consequences of such a claim." The authors further mention (1997: 578) that when *I think* and "other disclaimers" come before utterances (i.e. act as prefaces, as in the case of IU-initial *I think*), additional explanation is included to avoid having a response treated as unresponsive or unacceptable.[14] Ford et al. (1996: 441) similarly point out that disagreement usually projects some kind of account. It can be argued, then, that there is a pragmatic necessity for speakers to explain themselves further, to give accounts, explanations and further information when they are involved in presenting divergent perspectives, expressing disagreements, or dealing with uncertainty about prior turns, in other words in the second pair parts in my data. Indeed, there is evidence in my examples

that the participants often orient to utterances with *I think* initiating second pair parts as requiring or projecting more talk: other participants do not take a speaking turn (as in example 64 about Indonesians), or when they do take a speaking turn, this tends to constitute an interruption and the first speaker then continues with the original line of argument immediately afterwards (as in examples (62) about kids' bones and (65) about miracles and Murphy's Law). But the same holds for other sequential environments as well in my data: other participants do not take a turn or only provide minimal acknowledgment when *I think* functions as a frame in extended turns or first pair parts (as in example (58) about the valve cover gasket and (59) about the difficulty of being in business nowadays). There are also cases where an aside framed by *I think* points towards later discourse (as in example (56), in which the speaker shows awareness of having told something before, or in example (57), in which the inserted price of the muumuu is relevant for a point made later in the story). We may conclude that *I think* tends strongly to occur in environments where both speakers and recipients orient to further talk, and that this marker therefore at least weakly *projects more talk* beyond the clause that it occurs in. Yet there are often other cues that may cooperate in projecting such talk, notably the prosodic realization of *I think* (especially high pitch) and of the intonation unit containing this marker (as when the IU ends in a continuing intonation; cf. Schegloff 1996: 61–62 on the prosodic realization of *I don't know* as being largely responsible for the "more to come" interpretation in turn-initial position), as well as the semantics of the utterance itself (e.g. cataphoric *this* to refer to talk produced immediately afterwards). In sum, the function of *I think* as a starting-point and a frame finds further support in the additional talk that is projected: it is a starting-point to a speaker perspective that is elaborated upon in, or has significance for, further discourse.

As regards the second point about face, finally, it is possible to see a progression in the examples (61)–(65) towards a more "consequential" kind, as the types of sequential environments, especially second pair parts, become interactionally more demanding: an answer to a question, even though presenting a different slant or perspective, does not in most cases constitute a similar threat towards the recipient's face as does offering a slightly disagreeing second assessment (for the notion of 'face' see Brown & Levinson 1987, whose treatment in turn is based on Goffman's original discussion of the term). Thus, in examples (62) about kids' bones and (64) about Indonesians, it is possible to claim (as has been done in earlier pragmatic research) that *I think* only acts to reduce this face threat, or the force of the second assessment or opinion, and thereby acts as a politeness device. This has been claimed to be by virtue of the po-

tential of *I think* for expressing (semantic) uncertainty and doubt. But as we have seen, the degree of uncertainty and doubt expressed by this marker in the above contexts is in fact quite low. The point that I would like to make is that one may be tempted to read too much into *I think* in many sequential slots, or to ascribe *only* a politeness function to this marker, unless one looks carefully at the sequential contexts in which it occurs. As we have seen, this marker may at times simply be doing some rather *routinized work* in conversational organization, namely that of a frame to mark certain boundaries in discourse, or to mark that the upcoming turn may introduce some new information or a slightly different slant. The latter turn types may to varying degrees involve what have been called dispreferred turn shapes in conversation analytical research: such turns are typically indirect, structurally elaborated (qualified), delayed and accounted for (Levinson 1983; Heritage 1984a; Pomerantz 1984). Heritage (1984a: 267), among many other CA researchers, mentions explicitly that such turn shapes refer simply to a structural preference for certain types of second pair parts over others, and makes no reference to the speaker's individual psychological preferences: they are highly *generalized* and *institutionalized* ways of speaking. He further observes that they vary little in relation to particular speakers or social contexts. Yet he concedes that the issue of face is closely associated with preference organization: it is deviation from these institutionalized designs that may constitute a face-threat (Heritage 1984a: 268). Recent studies have pointed out that it is both possible and probably desirable to combine these approaches to some extent. Brown and Levinson (1987: 38–42) argue that preference of certain sequencing patterns (e.g. preference for agreement vs. disagreement) and for certain repair patterns (self-repair vs. other-repair) can be related to face considerations (see also Heritage 1989 for a review of CA studies that involve a notion of face and avoidance of conflict). Yet, Couper-Kuhlen (1992: 361) argues that the handling of repair as either a routine trouble or as a face threat is collaboratively achieved by interactants over time, and in this process the contribution of prosody and especially rhythm is considerable. In the above examples, *I think* generally appears in contexts that do not inherently involve a high face threat to the recipient (or the speaker, for that matter), or in which the threat is rather minimal, and the notion of face is not a primary concern in the interpretation of the functions of this marker in most examples under A or B. Nor do characteristic features of dispreferred turn shapes, such as indirectness, delays, prefaces, fillers (*well*, *uh*), disclaimers (*I don't know*), justifications, or excuses, always co-occur with *I think*; in other words the "degree of dispreferredness" is often quite low – in most cases only *I think* is uttered and the speaker provides an account or offers further information. In effect,

the notion of a starting-point seems to adequately capture its main function in the examples in groups A and B, where the prosodic realization of this marker is often quite unremarkable. The role of *I think* is to simply mark that what follows is an explicitly personalized assessment, claim, opinion, etc. (because it is still true that there is a first person subject in that phrase that is in most cases audible), but the focus is not on this personalization itself but on the rest of the utterance and what its function is in a given sequential slot. The fact that a speaker *chooses to routinely personalize* an utterance through *I think* is in itself significant, and we have indeed seen in the preceding examples that this is not done randomly but to mark boundaries in discourse and to deal with some kind of routine interactional trouble.[15]

We will see in the next section that when a higher threat to either the recipient's or the speaker's face is inherent in the conversational action, it indeed becomes harder to account for the use of *I think* simply in terms of constituting a starting-point for a perspective.

C. Recipient-oriented design of utterances

At the other end of the continuum, from type (A), or the starting-point function to mark boundaries, through type (B), or the starting-point of a new or different perspective, we have cases like (C) where *I think* appears in more demanding trouble spots in the interaction. It does some rather active or purposeful *strategic interactional work* here, and it is then not confined to second pair parts of adjacency pairs but appears in different sequential slots, such as first pair parts and expansions of second pair parts. It also most commonly receives a clear primary accent, or is otherwise prosodically marked. In other words, there is simultaneously some emphasis on the semantic content of *I think*, be it doubt or lack of doubt.

This marker then works primarily in the *recipient design* of discourse, in how speakers design and also redesign and modify the emerging meaning of their utterances to suit particular kinds of recipients (Goodwin 1981). In certain interactional environments, as when interactionally problematic topics are discussed or when a speaker has to make an assessment about a coparticipant, s/he may want to ensure a certain type of *alignment* from the recipients and to guide their interpretations rather closely. Consideration for one's conversational partner and the mutual orientation to *face* can then be seen to motivate the ways in which the participants' relationship is negotiated in the course of talk (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987 for the issue of face). It is here that clusters of *I think* rather than individual tokens tend to occur, and this marker also figures in certain repair patterns (with potential stress shifts).

In the following example we have a case where one participant shows disagreement with the preceding turn and prefaces her assertion by *I think* (twice). However, this assertion simultaneously constitutes a first pair part that clearly requires a certain kind of agreeing response as a second pair part. The topic is growing basil from seed.

(69) ***I think** pursuing a certain type of response* (Retire 152–169)

1	SAM:	Yes?
2	ANGELA:	(H) Well *I think* it was Barbara that ... has some seeds.
3	SAM:	... Just- - -
4		No problem.
5		It [comes right] up.
6	ANGELA:	[Yeah].
7		... Yeah.
8	DORIS:	... Isn't [`that] what you `gave the ˆneighbor one ˆtime?
9	SAM:	[I-] - -
10	DORIS:	... You gave ˆhim some [2kind of ˆherb2].
11	SAM:	[2Did I `give him some2] - -
12		.. I `gave him a red ˆpepper.
13 ⇒	DORIS:	...(1) ˆ***I think*** y- - -
14 ⇒		`***I think*** you `gave him ... some ... ˆherb of some [`kind].
15	SAM:	[ˆI may have] given-
		`given him some `basil,
16		[2ˆyes2].
17	DORIS:	[2Yeah2],
18	SAM:	.. (H) I don't have any this year,

Doris is in effect telling the recipient, Sam, something that she should already know but does not recall; there is evidence that Doris is not quite sure either, as her turn is designed in the form of a negative question (line 8) and as a statement that leaves open the actual identity of the herb (line 10). Sam's response in line 12, .. *I `gave him a red ˆpepper.*, rejects or corrects Doris' earlier utterance in line 10, as red pepper is not a herb. The one-second pause that follows (line 13) displays Doris' orientation to the preceding turn, Sam's response, as somehow problematic. She then starts a counter-argument by *ˆI think y- - -*, by now expressing a fair amount of certainty (rather than doubt) about the upcoming utterance. The effect of relative certainty is achieved mainly by the primary accent on the first person pronoun *ˆI*; it is slightly lengthened and louder than the surrounding speech, and the marker as a whole is also relatively high in pitch. Aijmer (1997: 22) similarly observes that when the prosodic nucleus moves from the verb to the subject, more reinforcement and reassurance is expressed by *I think*. But the degree of certainty is then toned down slightly

with the restart in line 14, which is indicated by a shift to a secondary accent on *`I think*.[16] The utterance *`**I think** you `gave him ... some ... ˆherb of some `kind.* is similar in content to line 10, but there are some significant differences in the way it is produced. The utterance is produced somewhat haltingly, with pauses before *some* and *ˆherb* indicating some hesitation on Doris' part. Yet, *ˆherb* is strongly accented and shows a clear fall in pitch, indicating some certainty even though Doris still leaves it open whether the herb was actually basil or not. But it is above all the insertion of the personalized speaker perspective (as compared to line 10) through *ˆI think* (twice) that adds some weight to the counter-argument. In all, the assertion produced over two intonation units in lines 13–14 contains an array of prosodic and linguistic cues that are clearly used to pursue a certain kind of preferred response from the recipient, namely an acceptance of the proposed item, but these multiple cues work towards making this action less abrupt and direct. An alternative way to formulate this second assertion might have been something like *No, you gave him a herb.*, which might have received a much less favorable response – it is significant that Doris gets the desired response almost at its earliest opportunity, soon after the word *ˆherb*.

We may now ask why the above example is not simply an example of *I think* routinely providing a starting-point for the speaker perspective, as in the examples under B (second pair parts). Indeed, it is true that *I think* in the utterance in lines 13–14 personalizes the counter-argument made, but this is not all that it is doing here. First of all, *I think* appears in a first rather than second pair part of an adjacency pair (in a series of arguments). Secondly, it appears in an environment where the speaker is making an assertion about a coparticipant's past actions, which may potentially constitute a high face threat to that participant: she may thereby be portrayed as forgetful of her own actions. By comparison, in the examples under A and B, an assertion, an opinion or an assessment was offered about some idea, thing or artifact referred to (such as the price of the muumuu, the car engine, children's bones or Murphy's Law), about some third party not present (such as Tammy and her significant other, the man accused of exhibitionism, Indonesians or Harold's sister-in-law and her family) or about the speaker him- or herself (as when Angela tells a story about calling the phone company and inserts an aside recognizing that she has told some of it before, or when Angela offers an opinion about how difficult it is to be in business). In other words, such actions do not in most cases constitute a similar face threat to the participants, whether the speakers themselves or the recipients, as do those where something is asserted about a party actually co-present in the interaction. Furthermore, the counter-argument above

is done in a sequential environment where a similar assertion (line 10) was just dismissed by the recipient in the preceding turn (lines 11–12), i.e. more argumentative discourse might ensue unless speakers work towards preventing it. In this sense, *I think* addresses this need to pay heed to the recipient's face wants by "seemingly" only introducing another counter-argument, while simultaneously also toning down this action.

In the following extract (already presented above as example (53)), *I think* appears in a second pair part, in a response to a certain kind of challenge that clearly requires a response. Here, two of the participants have some kind of access to a common experience in the past, because they have been to a store (Dillards) together, but for some reason their exact perception of the situation differs – Angela had not paid attention to the same muumuus as Doris.

(70) ***I think*** *displaying uncertainty and showing solidarity towards recipient* (Retire 450–483)

1	SAM:	[At Dillards].
2	DORIS:	.. They] - -
3		they were sure pretty.
4		... Pretty c- - -
5		.. pretty colors.
6		.. [Some of] em were [2dark2],
7	X:	[Yeah].
8		[2Yeah2].
9	DORIS:	but they had,
10		.. (H) oh,
11		.. purples and,
12		% re=ds an=d,
13		.. pinks and,
14		oh,
15		pretty [designs] in em.
16	ANGELA:	[Hm].
17		(H)
18	DORIS:	.. `You didn't ˆsee em.
19	ANGELA:	...(1) *I don't `think* I was- - -
20		(H) <F ˆI was F>- -
21 ⇒		... ***I ˆthink*** I was `concerned about your `getting there and ˆback.
22		[@]
23	DORIS:	[@Oh].
24	SAM:	Oh,
25		[2@hunh2],

26	DORIS:	[2@2]
27		<@ You're not the only one baby @>.
28	ANGELA:	@@[@@@@]
29	DORIS:	[@ (H)]
30		You weren't [2the only one2],
31	ANGELA:	[2(H)=2]
32	DORIS:	Sam,
33		I was just dripping - -
34		... (H) I was just soaked.

Doris has explicitly asked Angela a little earlier in the discourse whether she saw the muumuus at Dillards a few days earlier, but at that point Doris receives no response, nor any audible reaction from Angela. Here, possibly because Angela does not engage in active co-telling with Doris (which is primarily done to inform Sam, who was not at the store) or show similar appreciation of the muumuus, Doris draws the conclusion that Angela had not really seen them (line 18 *`You didn't ˆsee em.* – note with final intonation). This utterance is a question in the form of a B-event statement, in which the speaker formulates some matter as one to which the recipient has primary access (Heritage & Roth 1995: 10). This is interpreted by Angela as a first pair part, a challenge, requiring some comment or an account of why she had not seen them. But her response emerges quite slowly and she clearly has some problems with getting started: there is a pause before Angela starts, which shows an orientation to the prior turn as problematic, and *I don't `think I was- - -* is said in a hesitant tone of voice, potentially indicating problems with remembering at this point (which would not be surprising in view of Angela's age, as she is 90 years old). But as it turns out, she did not see the muumuus because she had been more worried about Doris' health at the time. As becomes clear a little later in the discourse, Doris had suddenly started to perspire profusely, an inconvenience that she had been suffering from increasingly. Angela chooses to refer to her own past concern, whether Doris was able to get to the restaurant (at the store) and then back home, in a way that "disguises" this concern somewhat: ***I ˆthink*** *I was `concerned about your `getting there and ˆback.* Here *think* even receives primary stress and is therefore rather emphatic, semantically indicating a fair amount of uncertainty. Had she stated the same in terms of a fact (e.g. without *I think*) or framed it with *I remember* instead, the utterance would have constituted much more of a face-threat to Doris, as that would have bluntly reminded her of her rather embarrassing state at the store.

But it is also possible to argue that Angela is not really expressing genuine uncertainty but attempting to bypass the interactional trouble spot of reminding a recipient about an embarrassing past event. Certain contextualization cues point towards such an interpretation. Line 20 *<F ˆI was F>* - - is said in distinctly louder speech, with emphasis on *I*, which indicates that the speaker is coming to a realization already at that point (cf. Goodwin 1979: 103 for discovery intonation locating where a discovery occurs and warranting a restart).[17] Also, Angela's laughter at IU 22 seems to indicate that she in fact remembers very well what happened at the store. Notice how she redesigns her utterance and adds *I ˆthink* after the first start in line 20 – it clearly seems intentional rather than a completely routine activity. In all, through presenting herself as forgetful and uncertain, and not completely clear about her own behavior at the store, she shows social solidarity towards the recipient (cf. Heritage 1984a: 265–280; Tainio 1997). Here we can see the current speaker attending to a coparticipant's face wants, i.e. the need to retain a positive self-image for herself, and redesigning and fine-tuning the emerging meaning of her utterance to convey this solidarity.

To say that *I think* marks a dispreferred answer to a question would not capture much of the function of this item in this context. Angela designs her talk in this way to a knowing recipient, as Doris was at the store and knows very well what happened to her there. Angela chooses to minimize the extent to which she herself is the knowing speaker, however. She chooses to display herself as forgetful and uncertain (when she is not), and thereby shows to Doris that she need not take her utterance at face value. This is a common enough technique in conversation, where "displays of forgetfulness and uncertainty not only enable a speaker to display to others some of the information processing, or other "backstage" work involved in producing an utterance, but also provide participants with resources for shaping their emerging interaction" (Goodwin 1987: 115–116). Such displays are social phenomena, with repercussions for the social identities that the participants assume for themselves in the interaction. Through such formulations, speakers are able to make sure that communication can still run smoothly between them. Indeed, Doris "appreciates the joke" by joining in in the laughter, and immediately afterwards starts to relate to Sam in some detail what had happened to her at the store.

It is interesting to examine what the semantic content of *I think* is here. It seems to be one of uncertainty, by virtue of the fact that *think* is stressed, and yet we have seen that there may be no real doubt involved at all. Notice that since *I ˆthink* here carries primary stress, it would be called 'deliberative' by Aijmer and Holmes, but this label does not capture what seems to be its

most important function here, that of presenting oneself as uncertain in order to show social solidarity.

In the following example, *I think* appears several times in an extended turn. Doris engages in talk about the trouble that she is having with taking medication, starting already in line 29, with Angela and Sam offering some advice during the telling and Doris in turn rejecting it.

(71) ***I think*** *responding to inappropiate alignment by displaying heightened commitment* (Retire 801–870)

1	DORIS:	.. Uh=,
2		... (H) that - -
3		... Excuse me,
4		I've got the hiccups.
5		... @@@
6		.. (H)(THROAT)
7		... He said uh,
8		take %% ... the uh,
9	SAM:	... (H)
10	DORIS:	... what do you call it?
11		... The water pill.
12		... (H) Diarrhetic.
13		... (H) Take .. one of the capsules,
14		and two of the white.
15		... Las- .. Lazex?
16		Or [something like] - -
17	SAM:	[Lazix=]?
18	DORIS:	Hunh?
19	SAM:	.. Lazix[=]?
20	DORIS:	[Lazix].
21		.. (H) <X but I'll be X> taking the generic drug.
22		Of it (Hx).
23		(H) ... In the morning.
24		.. (H) Then in the afternoo=n,
25		take the capsule and one .. one Lazik.
26	ANGELA:	Mhm.
27	DORIS:	(H) (Hx) (H)
28	SAM:	.. She did [that yesterday].
29	DORIS:	[I can't do it].
30		My stomach ... gives me trouble,
31		... I cramp,

32		...(H)
33	ANGELA:	(H) [Well what] - -
34	DORIS:	[X] (Hx) - -
35	ANGELA:	... (H) Are are you% eating Tums,
36		... for [calcium]?
37	DORIS:	[No].
38		... [2I'm not eating Tums.
39	ANGELA:	[2@@@@@2]
40	DORIS:	(H)2] I have- - -
41		... Oh I did take,
42		.. I did s- - -
43		... call out last night,
44		and say l-,
45		..% make a note for potassium though.
46	ANGELA:	(H) Do you `have one of those little ^things that (H) has a `compartment in it for [each ^day].
47	SAM:	[`No].
48	DORIS:	... <P `No.
49		... `Heaven ^sakes. P>
50		.. @@@
51		... (H) <HI `I'm HI> not a very good ^pill taker,
52		I'm re- - -
53 ⇒		.. ***I ^think*** I'm [^resenting,
54	ANGELA:	[I'm not ^either,
55		but I have] –
56	DORIS:	(H) `I'm ^re]senting this [2^medicine2].
57	SAM:	[2(COUGH)2]
58 ⇒	DORIS:	And ***^I think*** it's `contributing to my ^problems.
59		I ^really do.
60 ⇒		...(1) (H) ***^I think*** that .. the .. ^cardazam `is,
61 ⇒		.. ***^I think*** that the .. d- ^diarrhetic `is,
62		... (H)% ... (Hx)
63	SAM:	(H) `Well now `your,
64		`your= `ankles were down this ^morning and your `legs.
65	DORIS:	Well ^yes.
66		They ^are.
67		They ^were.
68		... ^Now look at em.
69	SAM:	... `Now they're s- ... ^tight again.

Jefferson and Lee (1981) have identified a conversational phenomenon called 'troubles-telling', during which coparticipants should align themselves as troubles-recipients, rather than, say, advice givers, for the smooth progression of the sequence. If advice occurs prematurely, it is typically rejected by the troubles-teller (Jefferson & Lee 1981:407). Here we can see Angela offering advice in lines 35–36, ... (*H*) *Are are you% eating Tu=ms, ... for calcium?*, and being rejected by Doris in lines 37–38. In line 46 we have another such advice giving, a suggestion: (*H*) *Do you `have one of those little ˆthings that* (*H*) *has a `compartment in it for each ˆday*. This is immediately rejected by Doris in lines 48–49: her tone of voice is rather dismissive on *<P `No. `Heaven ˆsakes. P>*, and she even gives a little laugh (@@@) at the idea. One reason that is assumed to be behind the frequent rejection of advice in such sequences is that the troubles-teller wishes to preserve the status of the talk as troubles-telling, and his/her status as a troubles-teller, but the delivery of advice may bring with it a removal from this category (Jefferson & Lee 1981:410). This seems true of the above example as well: after dismissing Angela's advice, Doris immediately launches into more troubles-talk on how bad a pill taker she is and how medication affects her (lines 51–62), i.e. she makes statements about herself (and not about another co-present participant, as in examples (69) and (70)). Prosodically there is a boundary, a new beginning, in the turn-at-talk at this point: a high onset on the first-person pronoun in line 51 signals a new initiation (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 1996b) or a re-initiation of the topic of pill-taking, Doris' rate of speech becomes distinctly faster and louder at this point, and she rushes through what she has to say in lines 51–59 without pausing or yielding the floor (Angela tries in vain to break into the conversation in lines 54–55: *I'm not ˆeither, but I have - -*).

It is possible to think of several reasons for the occurrence of the four *I think*s in Doris' turn, and in fact these occurrences do not form a unified picture – they differ in their prosodic realization and even in the fact that this item is followed by the complementizer *that* in two instances. I argue that *I think* is there because the other participants have so far *not* been aligned to the troubles-talk and Doris needs to make her statement stronger and more forceful in the face of this interactional dilemma. In other words, in this example *I think* generally works to make an utterance or turn-at-talk stronger, it adds weight to what is said (rather than softens it). The reason why it is doing so is that it responds to the perceived inappropriate alignment of the other participants.

In the first instance in line 53, *I ˆthink* is added to the intonation unit as Doris redesigns and restarts her utterance:

52 I'm re- - -
53–> .. ***I ˆthink*** I'm [ˆresenting,

Because there is primary stress on *ˆthink* and also because it is added to what was first begun as an unqualified utterance (*I'm re- - -*), this epistemic marker seems to emphasize the speaker's *un*certainty about the subject matter. But there are some prosodic contextualization cues that point towards the opposite interpretation. We already saw above that Doris' talk becomes more "weighty" (faster, louder, no pausing, several primary accents in the IUs) in line 51 and continues to be so until line 59. In terms of content, Doris is also making a rather strong claim about the effect of medication on her: that she resents it and that it makes her condition worse. But she is the only one of the participants who has any real access to this issue, and it is up to her to convince others about what she has to say, against the threat of more displays of inappropriate alignment such as premature advice-giving. It therefore seems likely that the first instance of *I ˆthink* is designed to add more weight to the utterance (rather than do the opposite, which is also possible through *I think*, cf. Section 5.3). Notice that Aijmer (1997) and Holmes (1990) would label an instance that carries prosodic prominence on the verb and occurs in initial position as a 'deliberative' use of *I think*, i.e. one where this marker is used to add weight to the assertion.[18]

After Angela's interruption in lines 54–55 (*I'm not ˆeither, but I have - -*), again a display of inappropriate alignment, *I think* is not repeated in the restart in line 56 (*`I'm ˆresenting this ˆmedicine.*). This omission is comparable to other element deletion in repairs: personalizing (e.g. *honey*) and interactionalizing elements (e.g. *I guess*) and elements that show the sequential placement of an utterance (e.g. *well*, *cause*) are generally not repeated in repaired utterances (Schegloff, unpublished research in progress). Significantly, however, the fact that *I think* is *not* repeated and that this intonation unit is said in slightly louder speech than the previous one, precisely because Doris has to compete for the floor, contribute to a sense of Doris gaining even more certainty at this point. This impression is made even stronger in the next lines (58–59), in *And **ˆI think** it's `contributing to my ˆproblems. I ˆreally ˆdo.* Here the stress clearly shifts from *think* to *I*, now clearly indicating a degree of certainty. The utterance as a whole is quite strong in content and in prosody. The latter part, *I ˆreally ˆdo,* adds more weight to the first part: it is latched on immediately, there are two primary accents in it, and *really* works as an intensifier. Doris then brings in some details in lines 60 and 61 to further strengthen her argument: ... (*H*) ***ˆI***

think *that .. the .. ˆcardazam is, .. ˆ**I think** that the .. d- ˆdiarrhetic is,*.[19] She ends both intonation units in a distinctly rising intonation, as though recounting items on a (possibly three-part) list, even though she does not finish it. There is further the complementizer *that* in both instances of *I think*. I would like to argue that the presence of *that* simply has to do with the overall rhythm of the two utterances: because the main predicate (viz. *is contributing to my problems*) is not repeated in full, the utterances require "more substance" to sound forceful enough. Doris is recounting her necessarily subjective views but tries to give them more substance and credibility by resorting to a lengthier device (*I think that*). It appears that there is no great difference between *I think* with the complementizer *that* and *I think* without one: both may perform similar interactional functions, in this case add weight to an assertion, and the difference in using one rather than the other may be a stylistic one.[20] Interestingly, after Doris has finished, the other participants do not offer advice but comment rather feebly on the relative effectiveness of the medication so far (it had had an effect "this morning" at least, lines 63–64).

We have seen that *I think* indicates rather a strong certainty on the part of the speakers in the various occurrences in example (71). The role of *I think* in this extended turn, then, is to take part in displaying the heightened involvement and commitment of the speaker in the subject matter. It is the complex interplay of semantic content and prosodic contextualization cues that work together to display this commitment. Its function is therefore closely interwoven with how the interaction proceeds otherwise: the reason why the speaker needs to display heightened commitment is that she responds to the inappropriate alignment of the other participants. There is therefore an issue of face involved here: the speaker's wish to present herself as a troubles-teller and one who has a valid complaint is being undermined by the other participants' frequent attempts to move away from the category of troubles-talk. We may conclude that there is then more substance to *I think* than simply providing a starting-point for the speaker's perspective here, and this is mainly achieved through primary accent on this marker and through the fact that it is repeated several times over an extended turn.

Summary

In conclusion, we have seen in the present section that *I think* may work effectively in the *recipient-oriented design of utterances* in conversation, in how speakers design and redesign their utterances at points of more consequentiality in the interaction. Such interactional circumstances may arise when a speaker is engaged in troubles-talk (about him- or herself) or has to make an

assertion concerning a coparticipant or, in some cases, of some referent outside the immediate situation. We saw one more example of the latter kind in example (54), which highlighted the potentially very local nature of *I think*: when the lawyer said *`number ˆone they pick out, .. `**I think** .. more vulnerable ˆpeople.*, she in effect designed her utterance on the fly to avoid evaluating the recipient. This was done even if the assertion made did not overtly involve the recipient but a group of third persons, namely exhibitionists. In my data, the speakers design or redesign their utterances dynamically, to make them suitable for their current recipients at a given moment in the unfolding interaction: they may pursue a preferred response (an agreement) in a way that is not too abrupt, disguise in forgetfulness an answer that would otherwise directly remind the recipient of unpleasant past events, and respond rather forcefully to the improper alignment of the other participants. We may say that *face* is being constructed in talk at these points. Such interactional work is then not confined to second pair parts of adjacency pairs in the data (as was the case with the more routinized and institutionalized forms of talk in the preceding section) but is more free-ranging in appearance, being evidenced in sequential environments such as first pair parts and extended turns. *I think* is *not* used in a routinized fashion here, but receives a fair amount of emphasis in the form of primary stress, and also in the sense that it is specifically added to restarted utterances or is repeated over an extended turn. We have seen only a few examples of *I think* used for face-saving in the above treatment, but it is conceivable that it can be so used in an almost infinite number of ways, to achieve slightly different effects in slightly different sequential environments. Rather than attempting to describe as many sequences as possible, I have only presented a few that exhibit certain commonalities, notably the interactional circumstances giving rise to its use (type of claim made in the utterance), and primary accent on *I think*, with potential repetitions of this marker in the course of the turn.

5.4.2 Functions of *I think* as a separate IU: On-line planning

A general observation was made in Section 4.4.4 that when epistemic stance is encoded as a separate intonation unit, this tends to do special interactive work: epistemic markers may act as rhetorical story-telling devices or as instances of on-line planning in discourse, for example. There are only 3 instances in the data of *I think* realized as a separate intonation unit and facing forward in discourse (in the sense of being clearly connected to something, a noun phrase or a clause or parts of a clause, that follows, and exhibiting a continuing intonation contour). These instances appear in the speech of only one participant, Rickie,

who is being prepared by Rebecca to act as a witness in a trial. The interactional sequences in which such instances of *I think* are found are answers or extended answer sequences (i.e. second pair parts in adjacency pairs). The interactional environment here is that of on-line planning of talk: such utterances are as a whole produced haltingly over several intonation units, with many hesitation phenomena (such as *uh*, pausing, etc.) also occurring in conjunction with *I think*. These trends were also confirmed in the extended corpus on *I think* of eight additional conversations (69 instances of *I think*): the very small number found, 8 instances, of forward-facing *I think* encoded as a separate IU occurred in false starts (2 cases) or consisted of cases of clear on-line processing and speech produced haltingly, with typically other hesitation phenomena and repairs present as well. In other words, such occurrences of *I think* are in general restricted to a certain type of interactional sequence (answers) and environment (on-line planning) only, as they are also clearly less common compared to the more free-ranging IU-initial cases of *I think*.

In the 3 instances witnessed in Rickie's speech, *I think* always indicates a high degree of uncertainty, as the verb always receives clear primary accent. The speaker displays doubt through *I think* about some state of affairs. Yet, this marker is simultaneously an indication of on-line planning of talk in a context where there are also other indications of such speech processing.

In the following example, in which Rickie is trying to answer Rebecca's question about the identity of the exhibitionist's bag, the scope of the pre-positioned *I think* is over an upcoming NP only.

(72) ***I think*** *displaying uncertainty in on-line planning* (Telljury 1351–1355)

1	REBECCA:	Now the `bag that he was carrying around ˆthis time,
2		what ˆwas it.
3	RICKIE:	.. M=,
4		.. <P let me `see P>,
5 ⇒		***I ˆthink***,
6		... a ˆduffel bag?
7		*I* [*ˆth=ink*].

The turn starts with a hesitation (*M*=) and a metalinguistic frame in soft speech, .. *<P let me `see P>*, which indicate that the speaker has some trouble formulating an answer to the question, possibly because she has to retrieve the relevant facts from memory. The verb *think* receives strong primary accent and clearly indicates that the speaker is uncertain about the identity of the bag, and that the recipient should hear the information that follows in light of that

uncertainty. There is also a pause before the NP, ... *a ˆduffel bag?*, indicating further difficulty in establishing the referent, while the clearly rising intonation at the end of the IU expresses further speaker uncertainty. This example is similar to (60) above, ***I ˆthink*** *ˆTwelfth Street or something?*, but in that case the NP was marked by *I think* as subsidiary information by the speaker. In the present example, no similar boundary marking is involved, and *I think* is simply one more display of talk planned on line, while it allows the speaker simultaneously to indicate her uncertainty about the expressed referent.

In the following case (already presented above as example (44)), Rickie is formulating an answer to Rebecca's question, in which Rebecca assumes that Rickie had called the police immediately after the incident on the train. The scope of *I think* is similarly an NP.

(73) ***I think*** *displaying uncertainty in on-line planning* (Telljury 889–895)

1	RICKIE:	(SNIFF) `That was ˆthat,
2 ⇒		and then ***I ˆthink***,
3		uh=,
4		.. `couple of days ˆafter,
5		.. `one of the `uh,
6		.. ˆdetectives,
7		(H) `called me and `then I made a ˆreport.

As it turns out, Rickie had tried in vain to report the incident to the BART police (BART refers to public transportation in the San Francisco – Oakland – Berkeley area). The above extract starts after this, continuing the extended answer sequence. *I think* receives rather strong primary accent and functions here to mark that what follows should not be treated by the recipient as absolutely certain information. Rickie expresses a rather high degree of doubt about the length of time that elapsed after her call and the detective calling back (notice the hesitation *uh*= in line 3). She also exhibits some hesitation (*uh* and a break in timing) before the word *ˆdetectives*, possibly because of some difficulty to think of the right term. In other words, there is evidence that Rickie is planning this utterance on line rather than producing it as one chunk of information and in one intonation unit, with *I think* appearing IU-initially. The latter would of course be a far more common way to display epistemic stance, as we have seen earlier in this study.

As we only have 3 instances of pre-positioned *I think* realized as a separate IU, and all appear in the speech of only one participant, we cannot make very definite claims about the interactional functions of such encodings of *I think*.

However, in the trial preparation examples above, establishing the details right is actually quite important: at one point in the interaction the lawyer, Rebecca, pointed out that the defense attorney is going to try and "focus on little things" because that is all he can do (as the case is so obvious). Since it is of consequence that the witness-to-be establishes the little things right before appearing in court, she needs to mark what will emerge in her talk as not definite facts but as her best guesses. *I think* is thus used for the function of *displaying doubt and uncertainty* about what will follow, or in other words, its function is quite close to its semantic meaning. But in addition, it appears in an interactional sequence that is clearly *planned on line*, which is why *I think* is encoded as a separate intonation unit rather than IU-initially.

5.4.3 Summary of pre-positioned *I think*

In Section 5.4 on the interactional functions of pre-positioned *I think*, we have seen both cases where it is realized IU-initially (by far more common) and cases (only a few) where it appears as a separate IU coming before what it has in its scope.

In the IU-initial instances, these functions were divided, firstly, into a *starting-point function*, bringing in a personalized speaker perspective to mark certain boundaries in discourse (A) or to mark that the upcoming turn will bring in a new or different perspective compared to the prior turn (B), and secondly, into *recipient-oriented design of utterances*, to pay respect to the recipient's but also to the speaker's attempts to maintain face in interaction (C). In all these functions, *I think* appears to have an NP, a clause fragment or a full clause or sentence in its immediate scope (even though there is no clear evidence of syntactic subordination or complementation). Interactionally, too, it primarily faces forward in discourse, even though its use may be engendered by what has happened in the prior turn(s). The three types of function should further not be seen as completely distinct varieties or types of function. Rather, they constitute a continuum and the dividing lines are certainly hazy in between. Thus, the prosodic contextualization cues that figured rather strongly in the above analysis, may range from phonetically reduced and unstressed form and fast tempo (A), to non-reduced and non-accelerated form receiving primary accent (C). Also (not unrelatedly), the semantic meaning of *I think* ranges from 'not much uncertainty at all' or simply 'personal attitude' (A and B) to even emphasized speaker uncertainty or certainty, whether genuine or not (C). What is common to all these groups is that speakers establish their stance towards a proposition or parts thereof before they express that proposition. *I think* thereby acts as

a guide for the recipients so that they know how to align themselves to the upcoming utterance: whether what is coming constitutes a transition of some kind in the current speaker's ongoing discourse (a topic shift, a shift to meta-discourse or inserted information, a shift to an earlier or new point), whether it is going to be a new or slightly different perspective to what the prior speaker just said, or whether the current speaker is doing some strategic interactional work to take issues of face into account. Many of these uses are part and parcel of the work that conversationalists routinely do to mark aspects of their talk for the recipients, while others are manifestations of more strategic face-work and not entirely routinelike in nature. But behind all these uses we can easily see an interactional motivation; *I think* arises from the immediate interaction between speakers and recipients in very local contexts of use.

In the few cases of pre-positioned *I think* realized as a separate IU, this marker clearly also faces forward in discourse, as it has an NP or (parts of) a clause in its scope. Such usage is restricted to on-line planning in conversation, and such speech production can be regarded as the reason why this marker is encoded as a separate IU rather than IU-initially (in which case the rest of the utterance would be produced as one chunk in the same IU with *I think*). *I think* here also expresses a rather high degree of uncertainty about what will follow, thus acting as a guide for the recipients to take the information offered with some caution.

5.5 Functions of post-positioned *I think*

In the following, we will turn to cases, again only a few, where *I think* comes after what it has in its scope, in which case the interactional functions of this marker differ clearly from those presented thus far.

5.5.1 Functions of *I think* as a separate IU: Signaling completion and pursuing a response

It is possible for *I think* to occur after the unit (NP, clause, longer utterance etc.) that it is connected with, in other words it is encoded as a separate IU and faces backward in discourse. When *I think* faces backward, it qualifies, at least ostensibly, something that has already been verbalized. Chafe (1988) calls this function the 'afterthought' function of intonation units, whereby speakers 'tack on' an intonation unit that conveys some additional information to what preceded (his approach is basically cognitive and emphasizes the activation of

ideas by speakers in discourse). But as Chafe himself points out (1994: 63–64), the primary function of items like *I think* is not to bring in new information but to regulate the interaction or information flow. Indeed, the addition of *I think* after a point of pragmatic, grammatical and/or intonational completion may be doing rather special interactional work, in general geared towards turn completion and turn exchange. The *scope* of *I think* in such cases is generally the turn-so-far. But in some cases the turn-so-far only consists of a single NP (as in example (74)), in which case we may safely say that this NP is in *I think*'s syntactic and pragmatic scope. At other times the turn-so-far may consist of several clauses, the last of which may be latched on to and sometimes also clearly qualified by *I think*. This is the case in example (75) below, while in example (76) it is not clear whether *I think* has the immediately preceding or two preceding clauses in its syntactic/pragmatic scope. The scope of such *I think* can ultimately be seen to depend on certain prosodic aspects of talk: if a CTRP precedes and the previous IU ends in a final intonation contour, this marker may be relatively independent of what went on immediately before and may have a longer stretch of preceding discourse in its scope (especially if the speaker pauses before *I think*).

Again, only 3 instances of this kind were found in the database. In the extended database of eight additional conversations and 69 occurrences of *I think*, no instances were found. We may thus conclude, as was the case with pre-positioned *I think* occurring as a separate IU, that it is favored much less as a marker of speaker stance than IU-initial *I think*. The sequential environment of post-positioned *I think* may be in a clear adjacency pair, namely in a second pair part, as in an answer to a question (example (74)), or within an extended second opinion or answer sequence (as in examples (75) and (76) below).

In the following example, the interactional activity involved is that of establishing details of the offender (this example was already presented as (72)).

(74) ***I think*** *signaling turn completion (and emphasizing uncertainty)* (Telljury 1349–1358)

1	REBECCA:	Now the `bag that he was carrying around ^this time,
2		what ^was it.
3	RICKIE:	.. M=,
4		.. <P let me `see P>,
5		***I ^think***,
6		... a ^duffel bag?
7 ⇒		***I*** [***^th=ink***].
8	REBECCA:	[Okay].

9	RICKIE:	(H)
10	REBECCA:	Okay.
11	RICKIE:	One time it was a duffel bag,
12		and then one time it was like a,
13		... <P %uh,
14		what do you [call them] P>.
15	REBECCA:	[(THROAT)]
16	RICKIE:	Like a sh=-,
17		.. like a .. [old be-],
18	REBECCA:	[Shopp]ing bag?
19		a plastic,
20	RICKIE:	Ye[ah].
21	REBECCA:	[Ye]ah,
22	RICKIE:	Mhm.

We have here two occurrences of *I think*, both before and after the NP. As we saw above in Section 5.4.2, the first *I ˆthink* in line 5, a pre-positioned separate IU, is an instance of on-line planning that gives the speaker more time to think ahead, while simultaneously expressing speaker uncertainty and asking the recipient to interpret the information offered against this uncertainty. But there seems to be a difference between this *I think* and the one that comes after the NP in line 7.

Rickie chooses to encode the actual answer NP, *a ˆduffel bag?*, with a high rise in intonation at the end of the unit. She is clearly in doubt even while offering the information. A high rise in intonation is typically claimed to expect some validation from the hearer (it is called 'appeal intonation' by Du Bois et al. 1993), while it is simultaneously considered a final intonation contour, indicating that the speaker could yield the speaking turn to another speaker (Du Bois et al. 1993: 54–55; Ford & Thompson 1996). But in this example, where Rickie is noticeably planning her answer on line, the rising intonation seems more directed to the speaker herself than to the recipient. Rickie is involved in actively retrieving certain information from memory, rather than simply providing the requested information to the recipient. Notice that she does not pause to get any validation from the recipient, but continues immediately with *I ˆthink*, thus completing the process of coming up with a response. The second occurrence of *I think* receives even more prosodic prominence than the first, because of the lengthening on the initial consonant. Because it is a repetition and prosodically quite emphatic, it underlines that the offered piece of information, the duffel bag, is only the speaker's best guess and not to be treated as an absolute fact.

The post-NP instance of *I think* is uttered as potentially turn-final, however, as there is a CTRP at the end of this IU (cf. Ford, Fox, & Thompson 2002b on turn extensions). We may thus claim that the latter *I think* functions as a final frame for the candidate answer, the NP, in other words it signals completion of the response. In this example the speaker simultaneously chooses to emphasize her uncertainty about the information given and thus instructs the recipient to interpret it in this light.

But even though Rebecca could take a full speaking turn after *I ˆthink*., she chooses not to do so and only accepts the offered information as adequate or accurate enough (*okay* in lines 8 and 10). And in fact Rickie herself goes on immediately to produce more talk about the issue: there is an inbreath in line 9 that indicates that she is getting ready to talk here, but she pauses to let Rebecca say her second *okay*. Rickie has witnessed two separate incidents and has seen the defendant carry two different bags, which makes it more difficult for her to establish which bag is at issue here, and she indeed continues to give an account of why the information she provided earlier was marked as uncertain. But this additional talk constitutes a different action from that of providing a candidate answer, namely an account, which is clearly signaled by the difference in tempo at this point: Rickie's speech becomes distinctly faster at line 11. We may thus say with some certainty that *I think* marks the end of one type of activity, namely coming up with a candidate answer, that may then be further qualified or accounted for in subsequent speech by the speaker.

The semantic meaning of uncertainty need not always be so strongly emphasized in order for *I think* to be used as a final frame and a signal of completion of some unit in discourse. Consider the following example of a post-positioned *I think*, already touched on briefly in example (63) above; the topic deals with the likely victims of the exhibitionist.

(75) ***I think*** *signaling completion of opinion sequence and turn* (Telljury 175–183)

1	REBECCA:	.. (H) ***I*** <HI ˆ***think*** HI> that's,
2		***I*** `***think*** he he `finds somebody that's ˆisolated,
3	RICKIE:	[Mhm].
4	REBECCA:	[(H)] a=nd `he= .. `goes for a certain ˆage group,
5 ⇒		[2 ***I*** `***think*** 2].
6	RICKIE:	[2 Yeah 2].
7	REBECCA:	(H).. `U=m,
8		.. `a=nd,
9		*you know like* %%,
10		for some ˆreason ***I*** `***think*** he likes ˆstudents,

11		[or `people] who ˆlook like `stu[2dents=2].
12	RICKIE:	[Unhunh].
13		[2Mh2]m.
14	REBECCA:	.. So,
15		.. (H)= anyway,
16		.. okay,

We saw that *a certain ˆage group* comes as a new piece of information in Rebecca's second opinion sequence at this point in the discourse. It is simultaneously the second item on a list of characteristics of the victim, the first being *isolated*. The speaker does not plan her utterance intonationally to end after the information given in line 4 (even though grammatically and pragmatically it could end here, cf. Ford & Thompson 1996), but ends it in a continuing or comma intonation and immediately latches on *I `think*. This marker receives only a secondary accent here but nevertheless works as a final frame, signaling that the speaker has reached completion of her opinion sequence at this point. Rickie's [*2 Yeah 2*]. occurs in overlap with [*2 I think 2*] here, but she does not take a full speaking turn at this point. We may find evidence for *I think* marking completion of the opinion sequence when we look at how Rebecca continues her talk after this point: she appears to have some trouble continuing, as there are slight breaks in timing (..), hesitations and lengthenings of some initial sounds (*U=m, a=nd*), hedges (*you know*, *like*) and glottalizations in her speech. She does not appear to have planned to add a third item, students, in her talk, but she nevertheless produces it in face of the fact that Rickie does not take a full speaking-turn. That she did not initially plan to add a third type of victim finds some more support in the prosodic features of the utterance in line 10, *for some ˆreason* ***I `think*** *he likes ˆstudents*, where *ˆreason* receives a strong accent and is also rather high in pitch, giving an impression that the speaker came up with the idea then and there. In all, even though the speaker does not choose to stress her uncertainty (through primary accent on *ˆthink*) about the opinion that she just verbalized, post-positioned *I think* can still perform the function of a final frame in discourse, marking completion of some sub-unit or sequence or activity in the speaker's turn.

In the following example, finally, three elderly ladies are involved in establishing the identity and activities of a group of people referred to in the conversation.

(76) ***I think*** *resignaling turn completion and pursuing recipient verification* (Retire 548–608)

ANGELA: [(H)] You know the little folks who live above [2me2],
DORIS: [2(H)2] Mhm.
ANGELA: ... (H) go over to .. Tucson Mall,
and [walk] every [2morning2].
DORIS: [(SNIFF)]
[2Yeah2].
.. [3That's good3].
ANGELA: [3(H) And there's3] a side door,
DORIS: ... Mhm.
ANGELA: .. Unlocked.
So that they can go in,
... oh I [think] - -
DORIS: [A lotta] people do that.
ANGELA: ... They go r=- [2uh- at least2] by eight o'clock.
DORIS: [2(H)2]
.. Yeah.
ANGELA: ... And they go= [i=n],
DORIS: [They go] in and walk.
ANGELA: ... and then they know X,
(H) so many times around,
[you know],
DORIS: [Mhm].
.. [2Mhm2].
ANGELA: [2(H)2] will um,
... (TSK) make a mile.
... And then there's a=,
.. soft drink place up there that they all congregate.
SAM: Oh.
@@
ANGELA: And uh,
DORIS: ... Why don't you join em.
ANGELA: ... and they have pi=ns,
when they (H) cover fifty miles,
or whatever [you know,
DORIS: [Yeah],
ANGELA: and a hun]dred miles of,
(H) @@ [2(H)2]
⇒ SAM: [2What `out2]fit is ˆthis from.

39		ˆOasis?
40	ANGELA:	.. (H) ˆNo,
41	DORIS:	(H) [no,
42	ANGELA:	[it's a-] - -
43	DORIS:	it's just] a ˆneighborhood `thing.
44		.. [2It's just `people2] `around in that ˆarea,
45	ANGELA:	[2it's n=e-2] - -
46	DORIS:	(H) and `they go there to ˆwalk.
47	ANGELA:	(H)[=]
48 ⇒	DORIS:	[***I ˆthink***].
49 ⇒		...(1.5) (H) <P ***I ˆthink*** that's `it P>.
50		...(2) But uh=,
51		...(1.5) (H) I- - -
52		uh - -
53		`we've been `over there,
54		and `we've seen em go ˆin,
55		... and `all they're `doing is just ˆwalking.
56	ANGELA:	...(1.0) Mhm.
57		...(0.5) (H) (Hx) They might be good `people,
58		we could (H)`cultivate to .. ˆhunt things for us.
59	SAM:	... @ [@@@@] [2@ (H)2]
60	DORIS:	[@@@@@]
61	ANGELA:	... @@@@@@ [2@@2]

It is Angela who first brings up the topic of "the little folks"; she is the main narrator of the conversational story. She explains in great detail that this group of people only go to the mall to walk around. But Doris clearly also shares some knowledge of this phenomenon and actively accompanies Angela's story throughout its telling (cf. utterances on lines 13 *a lotta people do that* and 18 *They go in and walk* are said in confirmation of Angela, and *yeah* in lines 16 and 35 is said with a distinct "knowing" intonation). In line 41 Doris takes on an even more active role: she wins the floor for herself and starts to give her own answer, in effect interrupting Angela. At this point her pitch and volume rises, which gives an overall impression of some assurance about the content of her utterance. She claims Sam's candidate answer in line 39 to be wrong and gives her own answer, that these are people from the neighborhood who only go to the mall to walk. However, through a sharp rise-fall intonation pattern on *walk* displaying a surprised attitude, and by repeating the fact of walking, which was already established in prior discourse, Doris clearly emphasizes what for her is the curious nature of this activity. She thereby invites the other participants to

join in the evaluation of this activity. She does not project further talk on the matter, as the IU on line 46 ends with a final intonation contour; the utterance may be considered pragmatically complete in a global and not just local sense (cf. Ford & Thompson 1996: 151). But no appreciation is forthcoming: there is no uptake from Sam, for whose benefit the telling has been in the first place, nor any verification from Angela, whose story it has been so far (only her inbreath can be heard at this point, but no talk ensues).

At this point Doris adds *I ˆthink* (line 48), which at least ostensibly displays considerable doubt about the content of her utterance. She even stresses the phrase through primary accent and by making it a separate IU. Yet the other participants do not take this sudden shift in semantic meaning (from certainty to uncertainty) very seriously – they do not challenge the speaker for changing her opinion suddenly. We can argue that *I think* is here being used to both re-signal completion of the response but also to simultaneously pursue a verifying uptake or response from the coparticipants.[21] Further proof for this can be found in the following. *I think* is said with a final intonation contour, indicating that Doris is possibly done with her turn-at-talk. Since (again) no other speaker takes a turn, however, she repeats the epistemic marker in soft speech and with a final intonation, <*P* ***I ˆthink*** *that's `it.* *P*>, thereby re-signaling that she has come to the end of her answer turn (cf. Goodwin & Goodwin 1992b: 169). Still no other speaker takes a turn, but a lengthy pause follows, and Doris struggles on with some difficulty (notice the hesitations, self-repairs and pauses in the following intonation units). It is only after she has added further evidence for her claim, namely that she and presumably Angela have actually witnessed the people as "only" walking, that a rather unemphatic uptake and minimal ratification by Angela follows in line 56, ...(1.0) *Mhm*.

5.5.2 Summary of post-positioned *I think*

In the examples found of post-positioned *I think* encoded as a separate intonation unit, it is added after the speaker has already verbalized the proposition or an NP, and may come after a syntactic, pragmatic and intonational completion point. More importantly, *I think* itself provides another possible place of turn completion, another transition relevance place, as it is said with a clearly final intonation and the utterance so far is grammatically and pragmatically complete. Speakers may then shift or change the direction of their talk after such *I think*. In the preceding examples *I think* completes some sub-unit, sequence or action in the current turn, but there is at least some evidence that post-positioned *I think* encoded as a separate IU is intended to signal completion of

the *whole* turn-at-talk, as speakers clearly display that they have some trouble continuing their talk after this. Ford and Thompson (1996: 167) argue that in interaction it is common for speakers to resort to turn extensions that pursue a recipient response: such turn extensions can be of different forms, such as recompletions of previous turns, tag questions, adding support to some prior claim, or communicating uncertainty (cf. *I think* in the above examples).

> Same-speaker continuations are regularly aimed at dealing with the fact that expected uptake has not been precise and immediate. When uptake does not occur, the original speaker extends the original turn in a manner that will *signal or re-signal completion*, and, to varying degrees, may also specify or elaborate the content of the turn being extended.
>
> (Ford & Thompson 1996: 170, emphasis added)

Such turn extensions are thus used at points where there are problems with recipient uptake. But speakers do not always appear to have trouble with uptake *before I think*, but rather they expect uptake *after* they have produced this marker as a separate IU. Evidence for this is that *I think* does not always come after a grammatical, pragmatic and intonational completion point but may come after a continuing intonation contour as well, and that it may be tagged on without a pause to the current speaker's talk (cf. example (75)). These prosodic cues indicate that the speaker did not intend to stop before *I think*, and therefore did not expect recipient uptake at this point but rather after *I think*, after the final frame that signaled completion of an opinion sequence, for example. But whether *I think* signals or re-signals completion, it may simultaneously pursue a certain *kind* of response (as in example (76)), i.e. thereby also attend to problems in recipient design (cf. Schegloff 2000 on turn increments as managing a variety of recipient design problems).

As regards the semantic content present in post-positioned *I think*, it seems that again the whole range from 'some uncertainty' to 'high degree of uncertainty' is possible. Speakers may choose to emphasize their uncertainty about the proposition or NP that they just expressed, in which case *think* may receive primary accent and be otherwise prosodically prominent (when the speaker is clearly in doubt about the information she is providing, as in example (74)). But speakers do not necessarily always display much uncertainty at all, and *think* receives only secondary accent (when the speaker is providing a second opinion about content of which she is fairly certain, as in example (75)).

Finally, we may compare this type of *I think* to another discourse marker, *I don't know*, in view of the stretch of preceding discourse that it has in its scope. Scheibman (2000: 120–123) claims about *I don't know* that it may make refer-

ence to an extended stretch of talk, and that there is then evidence that these more global uses have become grammaticized as markers of turn exchange. In the three instances of post-positioned *I think* in my data, the scope of this marker ranges from an NP to a clause (or two), which interactionally constitute the gist of the current turn-at-talk, however. There is no evidence that *I think* is tagged on to an extended stretch of talk in the same way as *I don't know* may be, which indicates that the two markers are clearly different in their degree of discourse mobility. Yet it is certainly possible to claim that when *I think* signals completion in the above examples, it simultaneously does turn exchange work as it thereby also pursues uptake from the recipients.

5.6 Conclusion

In this section, some general conclusions are made about *I think* and the interactional functions established for it in the spoken American English discourse data represented in my study. I make observations of the differentiation of these functions according to the intonation unit encoding of *I think*, examine once more the primarily local nature of *I think* as a conversational stance marker, and also posit a general or overall function for this marker in conversational interaction in terms of its indexical function. Finally, I will suggest why *I think* can be considered a full-fledged discourse marker, and briefly touch on the implications this may have for the grammaticization of *I think*.

5.6.1 Functions of *I think* in discourse

I have presented the results of a very detailed inductive analysis of *I think* in the activity and sequential contexts within which it occurs in American English conversational discourse. My overall starting-point and basic hypothesis was that the construction of this marker in terms of intonation units has a bearing on its interactional functions. In addition, certain prosodic features, such as utterance stress, intonation, tempo, pitch, tone of voice, pauses, and hesitations, were deemed to be relevant for the establishment of these functions, as these cues have an important contextualizing function and yield situated interpretations of *I think*.

As we have clearly seen, the IU-initial encoding is the unmarked way to code *I think*, that is, whatever function *I think* thereby performs, this marker still strongly tends to come immediately before what it has in its scope, from a phrase to a full clause, and this unit follows immediately under the same into-

nation contour, i.e. in the same intonation unit. The fact that pre-positioned *I think* encoded as a separate intonation unit is so rare and restricted to a rather specific interactional environment, namely on-line planning, serves as indirect evidence for the prevalence of IU-initial encoding: that *I think* occurs as a separate IU in such instances should be seen as an exception to the general tendency to package a proposition (or an NP or a PP or adverbial phrase) in the same IU with *I think*. In addition, the fact that post-positioned *I think* realized as a separate intonation unit is also quite rare further indicates that *I think* (still) shows much less discourse mobility than could be assumed on the basis of some earlier research, which has shown this marker to be an independent epistemic phrase or particle or formula (cf. Thompson & Mulac 1991a; Aijmer 1997; Thompson 2002). The work that *I think* does in interaction differs from the work done by another marker (of insufficient knowledge), *I don't know*, in some important respects. The latter marker may act as a preface to additional talk or be tagged on to an extended stretch of talk, and it is grammaticized so that it may be completely independent of the immediately upcoming or preceding clause or utterance (cf. Tsui 1991; Beach & Metzger 1997; Scheibman 2000).[22] In other words it may appear on its own after some grammatically, intonationally, and pragmatically complete utterance-action, and it may even constitute a separate turn. There is still very little evidence of similar independence in the case of *I think*.

As regards my basic hypothesis of the potential relevance of intonation unit encoding for the interactional functions of *I think*, this proved to hold. The general point can be made that there is indeed a rather clear *functional divergence* according to whether *I think* is encoded IU-initially or whether it is encoded as a separate IU. But since IU-initial encoding is so much more frequent than the other two types, it is natural that *further differentiation* has emerged within this category. Thus, we have seen that it is possible to distinguish three main types of functions of IU-initial instances. The first two types are both examples of a starting-point function of *I think*, to routinely bring in the speaker's personalized perspective in the discourse at a given point, either to mark boundaries and act as a frame in discourse (at points of transition), or to display that the upcoming turn will contain a new or different perspective to what was said in the prior turn (in second pair parts). Of these, the first type or boundary marking is clearly an aspect of the more organizational work that speakers do in discourse, how they routinely organize their speaking turns and make this organization transparent to the recipients. But it is possible to view the second type as organizational, too, because *I think* is (part of) marking how the upcoming turn is relevant to the slot that it fills, namely that it

constitutes a second pair part that is going to be to some extent a dispreferred one.[23] Insofar as this is a completely routine activity, and the "problem" is handled interactively as a routine trouble rather than as a more consequential face threat, we may view this action as organizational rather than addressing issues of discourse content and attending to the recipients' face. As for the third type of function of IU-initial *I think*, recipient-oriented design of utterances, this activity clearly involves trouble that is regarded by the speaker as a face threat to one of the interactants, which accounts for the stronger prosodic emphasis placed on *I think*. In that sense the work that *I think* does is not routine or simply organizational but of a more strategic and purposeful kind. In all, then, IU-initial *I think* as by far the most frequent type has already acquired several different functions, some more to do with the *organization* of discourse and others with its *actual content* and with the *relationship between participants*. Further, as regards pre-positioned *I think* encoded as a separate IU, this is restricted to one type of activity, on-line planning. It is therefore a type of its own and clearly different from the IU-initial cases (even though we lack enough examples to make any more claims about it). And finally, there is some evidence that post-positioned *I think* realized as a separate IU is used for signaling completion of a sequence or turn, while simultaneously pursuing a (certain type of) recipient uptake. It is thus oriented towards turn exchange, i.e. doing the organizational work of projecting a link to the next turn.

It has become obvious in the present study, then, that *I think* is *not* just a marker of tentativeness or deliberativeness, or of negative and positive politeness, as has been claimed in much earlier research (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987; Holmes 1990; Aijmer 1997, for example), but shows rather multiple functions in conversation. Tentativeness (indicating uncertainty or acting as a softener and a hedge) and deliberativeness (conveying certainty and reassurance) may be good depictions for the functions of *I think* in some contexts, but we have seen that they are not necessary or sufficient characterizations in many others. In a majority of cases *I think* simply performs some routine (organizational) task in interaction, without conveying either clear uncertainty or certainty, or serving to soften or reassure (i.e. when it acts as a starting-point or as a turn exchange device), while in some other cases something more is going on socially than simply expressing tentativeness or deliberativeness (as when *I think* is used rather strategically to take heed of the face wants of some interactants, including the speaker's own). But it should be noted that speakers may sometimes opt to upgrade the degree of uncertainty that *I think* expresses even in sequential contexts where it mainly has a discourse organizational function: they do so,

when there is an interactional demand to display that they are uncertain about something.

We may find some additional support for the starting-point function of *I think* if we think of the process of grammaticization of grammatical markers, and the subjectification that their meanings have been observed to undergo. Scheibman (2001) claims that there is a weakness or generality of referentiality in the subject of expressions like *you know*, *I mean* and *I think*: the speaker is not specifically referring to himself in these usages, but the entire collocation takes on pragmatic function with a concomitant reduction in specificity of the pronominal referent. Traugott indeed claims of the English *I think* that it is becoming more subjective both in function (towards a fixed phrase indicating speaker's epistemic attitude) and also in the overwhelming selection of the first person subject form, which may eventually become eroded and leave only a discourse particle (presumably *think*[24] – Traugott 1995: 38). She further states that the subject of *I think* is "losing referential (objective) properties, and becoming simply the starting-point of a perspective" (1995: 39). Even though Traugott only speaks of the first person pronoun in *I think*, it has been shown above that we need not expect much more semantic content to the whole phrase beyond marking a starting-point of a perspective in many of its contexts of use.

It has further become clear in the above treatment of *I think* that the functions of this epistemic marker do not depend on initial position in the turn, but may be spread all over the turn, and, in fact, *I think* rather seldom occurs at the end of a speaking turn. And we have also seen that *I think* is seldom strictly turn-initial, but is often preceded by discourse markers like *well*, *you know*, *but* or *cause*, or items like *yeah*. It is possible to claim that turn-initial occurrence of *I think* may even be a "coincidence," in that turns often consist of only one utterance or intonation unit: it is IU-initial position that is more crucial and in fact the unmarked position for this marker. We saw evidence in Section 5.4 that *I think* can function in a very *local* way, with the upcoming proposition but also a simple NP in its scope. *I think* may guide the interpretation of utterances more locally than do lengthier prefaces that commonly appear in turn-initial position, such as disclaimers (*I know it's none of my business, but...*) and licenses (*well I only heard this from X*). Longer prefaces tend to be more global in scope and are often followed by an extended turn, such as a conversational story. Yet speakers need more local devices as well. The more local stance markers such as *I think* are quite flexible, as they can be inserted almost anywhere and enable a split-second modification of utterances at the onset (rather than after completion) of a clause or an intonation unit, or even just a phrase inside one.

It has been established, then, that the referential (semantic) meaning(s) of *I think*, highly context-bound as they are, are at best unhelpful in the determination of the pragmatic functions of this marker, and that even the pragmatic functions tend to be more diverse than has hitherto been thought. Is it then possible at all to posit a general description and find some commonality for the diverse interactional functions of *I think*? This becomes difficult for the following reason. As Schiffrin (1987:67) puts it, one result of analysis that pays close attention to sequential structure is an unwillingness to view the emergent regularities as tokens of the same underlying type. And as we have seen, *I think* may be part of diverse interactional activities in rather different sequential slots in the data. Schiffrin (1987) further claims that discourse markers only act to display the relationship between utterances, and that the relationship is already there, in that specific sequential context, anyway. And the other way around, these markers are greatly enriched by the context in which they appear, as we saw above in Section 5.3 (cf. discussion of semantic meaning below in Section 5.6.2). But we may start to approach this commonality between the various functions of *I think* in terms of the indexical function that this epistemic marker has, as is done by Schiffrin for other discourse markers. The context to which the markers may index utterances includes both participants and discourse:[25] some markers index an utterance to speaker, others to hearer and yet others to both, while markers may point backward in discourse, forward or in both directions (Schiffrin 1987:322–326). Thus, we can clearly state of *I think* that it *indexes an utterance to the speaker and generally looks forward in discourse*. It is speaker-oriented in its indexical meaning, in that it (still) explicitly refers to the speaker and personalizes an utterance-action, whether it thereby then only acts as a starting-point or does some more consequential interactional work. It is forward-looking in most contexts of use, as it has the upcoming proposition in its scope (when it is IU-initial), and it thereby appears to project beyond the immediately following proposition or clause.

Yet, this kind of indexical meaning misses the essentially interactional nature of stance-taking through *I think*. In the preceding chapters I have explored the interactive nature of intonation units, rather than their cognitive nature as units of information, in discourse. It has become clear that the very construction of epistemic intonation units, i.e. initial stance marking to ensure alignment, is to a very large extent constrained by interactional factors, as it is indeed a very important aspect of the speakers' design of their turns and of their utterances for their current recipients. On the other hand, the presence of *I think* in a conversational action itself arises from the *speaker–recipient interaction*: the need to mark for the recipient certain boundaries in the talk, the

need to routinely deal with minor interactional troubles in certain sequence types, and the need to take the recipient's or the speaker's claims to maintaining face into consideration. Also, the function of signaling completion of turns and pursuing a certain kind of uptake is clearly interactional in nature, while showing uncertainty in on-line speech can also be considered at least in part to be governed by the interactional demands of the situation. It is then another matter whether all functions of *I think* can be equally regarded as manifestations of the speaker's stance towards the content of the following utterance. Often the epistemic stance has crystallized into a highly conventionalized discourse-organizational function that resembles that of a discourse marker, i.e. it signals the relationship of the current message to the preceding or following discourse, or to the following turn. The question whether *I think* is a discourse marker or simply an epistemic phrase marking stance, or both, will be briefly pursued below.

5.6.2 *I think* as a discourse marker

In this section I argue that depending on our criteria *I think* is a full-fledged discourse marker on a par with *you know*, *I mean*, *but*, *so* and *and*. There have been several studies over the last decades on the discourse functions of items commonly perceived as clearly interactional and/or discourse-organizational, such as *you know*, *I mean*, and *well*, and these have been variously termed 'discourse markers' (Schiffrin 1987), 'pragmatic particles' (Östman 1981, 1995), 'gambits' (Keller 1981; Edmondson 1981), and the like. On the other hand we have seen that Holmes (1990) calls *I think* a 'pragmatic particle', while Aijmer (1997) terms it a 'modal particle' – in other words this marker has been acknowledged by some researchers to be gaining a more particle-like status, yet it has not been included in any of the studies on discourse markers in recent years (for an overview of these see Helt 1997: 13–25).

Schiffrin (1987: 328) offers the following tentative list of what specific linguistic conditions allow an expression to be used as a discourse marker (cf. also an essentially similar list by Brinton represented in Jucker & Ziv 1998: 3, and a summary of criteria by different scholars in Helt 1997: 16–17):

1. it has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence
2. it has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance
3. it has to have a range of prosodic contours e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction

4. it has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse, and on different planes of discourse
5. this means that it either has to have no meaning, a vague meaning, or to be reflexive (of the language, of the speaker)

(1) We may find some arguments to support the first linguistic condition, that *I think* is syntactically detachable from a sentence. Firstly, this marker has largely lost all overt marking of a syntactic connection to sentences, namely the complementizer *that*, in spoken discourse, i.e. it works as an epistemic phrase or fragment. Secondly, we have seen in the present study that at least some discourse and sentence mobility is manifested by *I think* as an epistemic parenthetical (parentheticals have been claimed to be comparable to adverbs and freely transportable to positions other than clause-initial, cf. Chapter 4): thus, even though it tends strongly to be realized IU-initially and at the same time clause- and sentence-initially, it may also be encoded as an independent entity, a separate IU, latched on after a point of syntactic, intonational and pragmatic completion, and it may even appear in the middle of a syntactic sentence when it has a single NP in its scope.

(2) Schiffrin's second criterion for discourse markers is that they have to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance. The prevalently intonation-unit initial position (if not strictly turn-initial position) of *I think* has been clearly evidenced above. According to the definition of 'utterance' adopted in this study, that it is a prosodic unity that consists of a syntactic and semantic whole, it is clear that in a majority of cases clause-initial equals utterance-initial.

(3) It has certainly been established in this book that *I think* exhibits a range of prosodic contours, in terms of stress, pausing and phonological reduction (as listed by Schiffrin above).

(4) There is also evidence that *I think* may operate at both local and global levels of discourse. Even though I have emphasized the potentially very local nature of this marker at various points in the analysis, so that it often has a single clause/utterance or even a single phrase rather than a whole turn in its scope, it is still true that in its more organizational uses the functions of *I think* span over the immediately preceding or following discourse (cf. above all the use of *I think* as a frame to mark boundaries and as a turn completion marker providing a link to the next turn). Further, Schiffrin views discourse as the product

of several interlocking components: exchange, action, and idea structures, an information state, and a participation framework (Schiffrin 1987: 24–29, 315–317 for example). Viewed within this framework, it is possible to say that *I think* operates in the exchange structure (cf. to mark completion of turns and to provide a link to the next turn, i.e. acting as a turn transition device), in the action structure (cf. marking certain actions such as second assessments), in the information state (cf. *I think* as a marker of on-line planning), and in the participation framework (cf. *I think* doing some recipient-oriented work in discourse). We can thus safely say that this marker operates on different planes of discourse, at least as these are understood by Schiffrin. What is not so clear is whether these planes can be separated from each other in a straightforward way, as even the distinction between organizational vs. something else (referred to above as the content plane) is to a certain extent a matter of degree and an analyst's convenience, and sometimes problematic to keep up in the practical analysis of actual discourse data.

(5) As for Schiffrin's last linguistic condition, or how much meaning there is in *I think*, I have mentioned above in Section 5.3 the extreme context-boundedness of the semantic meanings of *I think* (and of modal items in general, recognized by several scholars). Depending on the context, the referential meaning of doubt may be quite strong, while at other times there is not much doubt at all, while yet in other cases it is clearly lack of doubt that the speakers display (cf. also Schiffrin 1987, who makes similar observations about the discourse markers included in her study). Of course we can argue that there is *some* semantic meaning to *I think*, as speakers do not simply choose *you know* or some other discourse marker in its place – in other words we cannot say that *I think* has no meaning at all. Its meaning is obviously closely related to the first person pronoun and the predicate *think*. But we already observed above the weak or general referentiality of the subject pronoun, to the point that it is sometimes omitted completely. We also saw in Section 5.3 that *think* is polysemous (Aijmer 1997), its semantic meanings ranging from the prototype 'cogitate' to 'belief' (cf. uncertainty) and 'opinion' (cf. certainty). Of these, cogitation is clearly not in the foreground in the occurrences of *I think* in my data. As regards the semantic meanings suggested for the certainty end of *I think*, namely 'opinion' and 'personal attitude or conviction,' we have seen that in many cases the actual propositions do not constitute clear opinions, while the characterization of personal conviction for *I think* is too strong in many of the routinelike usages encountered in the analysis (whereas personal attitude is more to the point). On the other hand, the meanings suggested for the uncer-

tainty end, 'belief' and 'insufficient evidence,' are more accurate as such, but the actual uncertainty expressed may be quite low in many functions of *I think* (cf. when it is used as a frame to mark boundaries).

We may then ask how much referential meaning is left in the whole collocation. As Schiffrin states, there may be degrees of referential meaning in an expression, so that some cases of *y'know* are less referentially meaningful than others (1987:319). Similarly, Stenström (Helt 1997) observes of the 'comment clauses' *I think, I mean, you know,* and *you see* that they fill various slots along a semantic continuum that represents a strong relationship to their literal meanings at one end, and a minimal relationship to literal meaning at the other. As we have seen, *I think* is capable of occurring in sequential contexts where its semantic meanings of certainty or uncertainty are highlighted for the benefit of the recipient and also the speaker him/herself. I therefore argue that *I think* has not completely lost all semantic meaning but this meaning has become latent, waiting to be put to use when needed. In this sense we can say that its meaning is exceedingly context-dependent, at times quite *vague* and at other times even relatively *clear* in indicating either 'certainty' or 'uncertainty.' In the latter case it is clearly not being used as a particle, as can be seen from its prosodic manifestation but also from its syntactic behavior: it is then possible for *I think* to be negated, as in the repair sequence in example (70) above, with *I don't `think* repaired into *I ˆthink*.[26] Context, then, comprises aspects like sequential slot and type of action that speakers are involved in, type of proposition expressed in the utterance, prosodic cues on *I think* and on the rest of the utterance, and encoding of this marker in terms of intonation units. In all, rather than talking about bleaching of semantic meaning, we may argue for the strengthening of conversational implicatures and the development of new pragmatic meanings of this item (cf. Aijmer 1997:2). It is true to say that *I think* fulfills Schiffrin's last criterion, too.

We may thus conclude that, according to Schiffrin's criteria, *I think* is a discourse marker. Aijmer (1997:1) is of the same opinion but argues that *I think* is an incomplete discourse marker, as it shows structural and formal flexibility, i.e. with regard to tense, aspect and modality (cf. *I thought*, *I was thinking*, *I would think*, *I would have thought/that Bill was at home/*), which causes it to straddle grammar and discourse (Aijmer 1997:6–7). It is certainly true that these structural forms exist (and in addition *I'm thinking* is fairly commonly used in spoken discourse), but it seems to me that *I think* has advanced so far in its own direction that there is no need to take into account these other forms, whose discourse functions are potentially quite different from *I think*.

In the present study, I have offered a synchronic perspective of where *I think* stands in terms of its status as an epistemic marker, and I have claimed that it currently functions as a discourse marker. The claim that *I think* is a discourse marker has implications for the (further) *grammaticization process* of this item, where grammaticization is taken to mean not just the reanalysis of lexical material as grammatical material, but also the reanalysis of a discourse pattern as a structural pattern (Du Bois 1985). As also noted by Aijmer, *I think* has "developed a number of new functions as a response to the demands of planning and interaction with the hearer which may in their turn become conventionalized" (Aijmer 1997: 40).

We have seen some evidence that *I think*, due to its high frequency in spoken discourse, is grammaticizing into a starting-point function, i.e. into an expression that is used at the level of individual sentences but also at the level of discourse, whereby its phonetic substance may be reduced and its prosodic form displays certain features like increased speed, no stress or only secondary stress. Bybee et al. (1994: 20), for example, find that as lexical items move along paths to becoming grammatical expressions, their meanings become more general and their phonological forms reduce. On the other hand, we have also seen that there are occurrences of *I think* which do not show phonological reduction or any of the above prosodic features. Instead, they show a full pronunciation of *I think*, with either the pronoun or the verb receiving primary stress, and the semantic content of certainty or uncertainty being highlighted, and performing different functions in discourse, namely in the recipient-oriented design of utterances. Now, according to Scheibman (2000) for example, this is a situation characteristic of grammaticizing material in which an expression undergoes semantic and phonological reduction processes in only some of its uses. Consequently, the item simultaneously exists in both its old and new forms, with each variant fulfilling different functions (Scheibman 2000: 122; quoting Heine & Reh 1984). Hopper (1991) refers to this same phenomenon as *divergence*. That the verb *think* is used both in *I think* as a pragmatic expression and as a normal verb with other subjects (*John thinks (that)*) and that speakers can treat *I think* as an ordinary subject-verb combination (*I'm thinking that it's time to go*) are examples of divergence (Aijmer 1997; Thompson & Mulac 1991a: 325). But as grammaticization is an ongoing process, also the fact that *I think* is capable of doing rather different work in different sequential slots and at different levels of discourse, and thereby appearing in different phonetic and prosodic forms, can be seen as evidence of further divergence in function.

Notes

1. The terms 'prosodic' and 'paralinguistic' are used somewhat interchangeably by researchers; from now on I will use the term 'prosodic' to cover both the prosodic and paralinguistic features listed by Gumperz.

2. The discrepancy between this figure and the one in Table 2 (46 occurrences) is due to the fact that five cases were excluded from analysis because they occurred in incomplete and unfinished utterances in contexts where the topic then shifted to a completely different direction.

3. I am excluding hearsay evidentials from Tables 11 and 12 for simplicity. They generally exhibit an even stronger tendency to appear turn-medially (cf. Section 4.5.2), while the pattern in terms of intonation units is similar to other epistemic phrases (cf. Table 6 in Section 4.4).

4. Chafe (1986:266), however, apparently regards these two as different sides of the same coin, as he states that "belief, or opinion (a weaker form of it)" can be expressed by items like *I think*, *I guess* or *I suppose*.

5. Yet *I think* cannot be considered syntactically dependent on the rest of the utterance.

6. Such examples come close to same-turn self-repair, where speakers commonly initiate the repair by adding a subjective element such as *I mean*, but such turns also show other indications of repair, such as abandonment of the syntactic structure so far, repetitions, etc.

7. Schiffrin (1987:66) indeed comments on complementarism (rather than redundancy) as the way messages are created: the presence of one element which conveys a particular component of a message frees other elements from the need to duplicate that component of the message. We may certainly argue that it would be rather superfluous in our example for *I think*, too, to mark uncertainty and doubt, or to *only* mark that.

8. Scheibman (2000:115) draws attention to the difficulty of delineating stress in connected speech, as it is dependent upon discourse and interactional factors; stress is typically a property of the entire utterance. In the preceding examples, too, it is sometimes very difficult to say whether there is much stress on *I think* when it is realized in an accelerated form, yet at other times some stress is perceptible.

9. It is of course true, at the same time, that *I think* answers the question *do you think* in the previous turn.

10. It is difficult to tell in this utterance whether the stress is on *I* or on *think*, or whether there is equal stress on both; it is also possible that the high pitch may only start on the verb rather than already on the pronoun *I*.

11. Further evidence for the fact that Harold cannot identify the film at this point can be found in the fall to a *mid* rather than completely low pitch at the end of IU 9. This is not reflected by the period mark in the transcription, which does not distinguish between degrees of falling intonation.

12. Tsui (1993) has claimed that a potentially three-part exchange rather than the adjacency pair structure is the basic organizational unit of conversation. Similarly, ten Have (1999:113) points out that a conversational sequence quite often includes more than just two pair-parts:

an item may be added in 'third position', as an acknowledgement or evaluation by the first speaker of the turn produced in the second position. In this example it is indeed difficult to maintain that the utterance ... *Yeah* ***I think*** *ˆthat'd, ...(3.5)* ***I think*** *ˆthat'd um, ...(1.5) (TSK) work ˆout,* is clearly a first or a second pair part in an adjacency pair. It is more like a continuation of some earlier exchange structure, a follow-up move that constitutes a third part in a sequence that consists of the original request, *some* form of compliance (an ambivalent utterance) and the follow-up move. If we think of it this way, it would explain the backward working of *I think* very well.

13. Because prosodic features were not transcribed in the original, any comments about the function of *I think* here must remain tentative.

14. Here the authors clearly view *I think* as simply expressing insufficient information, in other words uncertainty and doubt. But as we have seen, in the examples that I label as representing a starting-point function, the degree of uncertainty or doubt may be very low, and neither 'marker of insufficient information' nor 'disclaimer' are accurate characterizations for functions of *I think*.

15. Heritage and Raymond (forthcoming), however, consider that even though participants were in agreement and the relevant sequences of talk were fundamentally affiliative in character, such sequences can nevertheless involve complex face considerations that relate to the management of knowledge, i.e. who has epistemic authority in making assessments.

16. Such turn-initial restarts by the speaker have been claimed by Goodwin (1981) to simply act as requests for the recipient's gaze. For lack of videotape it is not possible to tell whether Doris seeks to engage Sam's gaze here, but I would be inclined to argue that the repetition of *I think* and especially the stress shift on it is still potentially relevant and can have interactional significance, in addition to possibly acting as a request for gaze.

17. Again, it is possible to claim that such turn-initial restarts are simply requests for the recipient's gaze (Goodwin 1981), but that does not seem to be their function here, notably because of the distinctive tone of voice and intonation on this and the following intonation unit.

18. I have shown elsewhere that prosodic prominence on the verb and initial position are not enough as such to label a given occurrence as 'deliberative,' i.e. adding weight or expressing reassurance – cf. example (70), ***I ˆthink*** *I was `concerned about your `getting there and ˆback.*, where *I ˆthink* was used in a playful way to display forgetfulness and show social solidarity.

19. Stress in these two intonation units is again somewhere between primary and secondary stress; the reason why I have labeled it primary is that the pronoun is in both cases loud and slightly lengthened, with some pitch movement perceptible as well.

20. Aijmer (1997:21) mentions that all examples where *I think* is followed by the *that*-complementizer are regarded as 'deliberative' in her study, since they carry some prominence.

21. Goodwin (1981) suggests another specific interactional reason why speakers might want to do so: they sometimes display uncertainty in the presence of knowing recipients (cf. Angela here) in order to request their verification; this involves a shift in the talk to the knowing recipient, who now becomes the focal recipient, while the unknowing recipient is still also spoken to but a nonfocal recipient. For lack of videotape we cannot make definite claims

about who the primary recipient is at this point in discourse, as direction of gaze would be crucial for determining it. Yet, Doris is clearly a knowing participant herself, who has up to now been a relatively active co-teller in the story.

22. If it takes the complement *if* or *whether*, it is of course not independent of the syntax of the following clause.

23. Sacks et al. (1978:36–38) discuss the three jobs of a turn: turns regularly have a part which addresses the relation of the turn to the prior turn, a part involved with what is occupying the turn, and a part which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one. As the authors observe (Sacks et al. 1978:36), turns display such organizational features which reflect the occurrence of turns in a series.

24. In my data it is really only in one speaker's talk (Alice in *Tree*) that the pronoun *I* is practically inaudible, and this only in two cases, however.

25. Schiffrin (1987) prefers the term 'text' for discourse.

26. I thank Auli Hakulinen for this observation.

Chapter 6

Concluding remarks

In this book I have established some recurrent patterns, linguistic and interactional, that expressions of epistemic stance enter into in conversational American English. Showing commitment to the status of the information that one is providing, i.e. marking epistemic stance, was shown to be an essentially *interactive activity*. First of all, the very initial placement of epistemic markers in intonation units or utterances can be seen as interactionally motivated: establishing stance before the upcoming utterance helps recipients to align themselves to the unfolding utterance, sometimes only a word that needs qualification in the course of the utterance's production. Secondly, stance is not just an isolated mental position of an individual speaker that randomly "surfaces" at various points in the discourse, it is firmly rooted in and engendered by the interaction between the conversational coparticipants: stance displays manifest aspects of that interaction such as managing routine trouble spots, engaging in more strategic recipient design, pursuing uptake or signaling completion of one's turn-at-talk.

On the other hand I also showed that speakers have developed certain *routine* ways of handling the kind of recurrent interactional tasks mentioned above. They show a distinct preference for using certain markers over others in their everyday interactions, most often those involving assessments of reliability, some degree of belief in what they are saying, and attributions of information to some third party. They also show a preference for initial rather than final (or 'afterthought') placement of stance markers. And as many stance markers are exceedingly common in conversation and their functional contexts increase (and phonetic forms reduce; Scheibman 2000: 120), they may develop a diversity of functions in interaction, with *I think* and *I don't know* cases in point. In some of their functional contexts they are clearly oriented to aspects of the interaction, either towards its content or towards the recipients, in which case their semantic content may be relatively full. In other contexts, however, they tend to become markers of discourse organization, showing little or only a vague semantic content (to the point of non-referentiality of the personal pronoun of markers like *I think* or *s/he said*), and doing some very

routinized interactional work. I have further observed that the most common hearsay evidentials (*s/he said*) and mental constructs in the data (*I'm thinking*, *I thought*) similarly act as stance frames and show similar recurring discourse patterns in terms of intonation-unit-related occurrence and prosodic realization (and lack of the complementizer *that*) as the prototypical epistemic phrase *I think*. In other words, there is evidence that they are grammaticizing into epistemic/evidential phrases. And in the case of *I think*, a further grammaticization process has resulted in this item developing into a discourse marker, on a par with markers like *you know* and *I mean*. *I think* fulfills the many linguistic conditions that allow a marker to work at the level of discourse rather than at the level of clauses or sentences.

As the data were originally transcribed into intonation units, I was able to examine epistemicity as it is expressed in intonation units rather than in clauses or sentences. This enabled me to focus on stance markers within the incrementally produced turn-so-far, as potentially syntactically rather independent constructs, at times also forming TCUs of their own, and available to recipients as they emerge. In this way, recurrent patterns became obvious that would otherwise have missed the eye.

However, my focus in this book has been precisely on those sedimented expressions and recurrent patterns that are the prevalent means to mark epistemic stance in American English everyday speech. In fact we may argue that such epistemic markers often really only *frame* a stance – I have often referred to the function of stance markers as constituting a frame of some kind (e.g. some mental constructs acting as storytelling frames, or *I think* framing the current speaker's upcoming slightly different perspective). In many cases the actual stance is taken (an evaluation is made, an assessment is constructed, an opinion is offered, and so on) only *after* this frame, in the rest of the utterance or over several utterances. Indeed, there is need to shift the focus in linguistic research from these high-frequency items to the possibly multiple ways that stances are taken in turns-at-talk beyond the initial frames, and also by different speakers across speaking turns. As is shown by Goodwin and Goodwin (1992), often the very construction of an opinion, assessment, or evaluation is already interactional in nature (cf. on performing an assessment as a structured interactive activity showing the coparticipants' heightened involvement and heightened participation within the assessment activity). Du Bois (2000b, 2002) further examines how speakers construct a stance by building on, modifying, and aligning or disaligning with the immediately co-present stance of a dialogic partner, making thereby use of the words and structures and other linguistic resources invoked by the first speaker. Similarly, in Kärkkäinen (2003)

I focus on stances as they emerge as a result of joint engagement in evaluative activity by the coparticipants, and outline some of the linguistic resources used, especially the syntactic, semantic and prosodic resonance between contributions by different speakers. If by stance-taking we indeed mean evaluative *action*, then there is indeed reason to shift the focus of research from the rather sedimented patterns established in this book towards stance-taking as a joint activity between discourse participants.

What kind of implications, then, do my findings have for the organization of an interactional grammar of English? Attempts are currently being made in linguistics to write grammars based on actual usage of actual speakers and writers, often relying on large corpora of spoken and written language (e.g. Biber et al. 1999). Another body of research aims towards outlining a grammar of interaction, or grammar-in-interaction (e.g. Ford 1993; Ford & Fox 1996; Ochs et al. 1996; Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson 1999; Selting & Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Ford et al. 2002a). The former have so far presented a very speaker-based and static view of stance, as a store of fixed forms and expressions inherently conveying different types of stance (cf. Biber et al. 1999 on the grammatical marking of stance, Martin 2000 on appraisal systems in evaluative lexis), with very little attention to the way it figures in and arises from interaction. The latter body of work has so far not addressed stance at all but has concentrated on different grammatical (syntactic) language structures as interactional resources, or has identified the linguistic practices implicated by dimensions of the interactional order such as turn construction, turn projection, and repair work. Ultimately, however, a coherent overall model of the human language should include cognitive and interactional factors such as memory, attention, empathy, affect, and stance. In view of stance, such a model must be sensitive to the fact that a lot of conversational stance-taking is in fact highly routinized and regular, at least in the speech of native speakers of English, but very likely in other languages as well. But even more importantly, we have also seen that stance must be viewed as not simply an internal relatively fixed state of mind of an individual speaker, but as a truly interactive practice. In the words of Hunston and Thompson (2000: 143), "the expression of attitude is not, as is often claimed, simply a personal matter – the speaker 'commenting' on the world – but a truly interpersonal matter in that the basic reason for advancing an opinion is to elicit a response of solidarity from the addressee."

Finally, some observations are in order about the research design and methodology adopted in this book. As we have seen, my quantitative survey preceded the qualitative analysis; a more "usual" case would indeed be qualitative methodology complemented by some quantitative counting of frequen-

cies, for example (cf. Silverman 1993: 163 on how simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data that may be lost in intensive qualitative research). Yet, this kind of research design was motivated by my descriptive focus and a wish to rely on close observation of a body of (even rather limited) data and on the regularities and recurrent patterns emerging from them, rather than to apply top-down taxonomies or carry out computer-assisted frequency counts of collocational patterns in large corpora. This book, then, combined different but complementary methodologies and frameworks for analyzing epistemicity in language. Chapter 4 represented work typically done in discourse–functional linguistics in that it explored the distributional patterns of the marking of epistemic stance in a body of naturally-occurring data, and uncovered, on the one hand, the highly recurrent and routinized nature of this marking, and, on the other, the securing of recipient alignment as the functional motivation behind such patterning. Chapter 5 brought in a close inductive micro-analysis of the conversational structures and sequences that one epistemic stance marker, *I think*, may enter into, and the interactional functions that it may then have. This work adopted the conversation analytic methodology of locating the analytical categories and interpretations in the participants' own orientations, finding proof for the latter in the very situated interpretations of instances of *I think*. Such situated interpretations were arrived at by taking into account, besides other aspects of the sequential context, above all the manifold and often subtle prosodic cues through which the speakers' utterances were contextualized, and which were also available to the recipients.

In sum, my study can be seen to represent the newly emerging field of studies that combines the discourse–functional orientation with the conversation analytic one, and calls itself 'interactional linguistics.' My work lies at the linguistic end of such studies, or as Couper-Kuhlen and Selting state in the introduction to Selting and Couper-Kuhlen (2001: 6–7):

> Linguistically oriented studies of interaction thus aim to reveal recurrent formal patterns on which the sense-making of conversation depends and on which participants rely in their conduct of interaction. These patterns are identified less on the grounds of statistical frequency than of routine expectation (Levinson 1983). It is the (strategic) use of certain resources – or the (strategic) lack of their use – in sequentially specifiable circumstances which underlies the inferences that participants make in conducting conversation.

The results of the present book contribute to our understanding of how a central domain in our everyday language use, epistemic stance as one aspect of

the general subjectivity of language, can be viewed from a dialogical and interactional perspective, and how it might fit in with the larger framework of the communicative work that humans do. I have established some recurrent formal and functional patterns in the expression of epistemic stance. However, stance or the expression of attitude is of course a much larger issue than was portrayed in this book; for example, stance may be conveyed by language that has no inherently evaluative content at all (cf. Martin 2000:161 on ideational meanings that do not use evaluative lexis but may nevertheless evoke a stance), while many interactional practices (such as direct reported speech) may clearly be expressive of a speaker attitude but have so far not been brought under a comprehensive treatment of stance. A full explication of stance-taking in interaction is indeed a daunting task, while my book has offered one solution for viewing one salient subsystem in it.

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Appendix

Symbols used in transcription

(From Du Bois et al. 1993)

UNITS		
Intonation unit	{carriage return}	
Truncated intonation unit	- -	
Truncated word	-	
TRANSITIONAL CONTINUITY		
Final	.	
Continuing	,	
Appeal (seeking a validating response from listener)	?	
SPEAKERS		
Speech overlap (numbers inside brackets index overlaps)	[ ]	
ACCENT AND LENGTHENING		
Primary accent (prominent pitch movement carrying intonational meaning)	ˆ	
Secondary accent	`	
Unaccented		
Lengthening	=	
PAUSE		
Long and medium	...	
Short (brief break in speech rhythm)	..	
Latching	(0)	
VOCAL NOISES		
e.g. (TSK), (SNIFF), (YAWN), (DRINK)		
Glottal stop	%	
Exhalation	(Hx)	
Inhalation	(H)	
Laughter (one pulse)	@	
QUALITY		
Loudness		
Forte: loud	<F	F>
Piano: soft	<P	P>

Pitch		
Higher pitch level	<HI	HI>
Lowered pitch level	<LO	LO>
Parenthetical prosody	<PAR	PAR>
Tempo and rhythm		
Allegro: rapid speech	<A	A>
Lento: slow speech	<L	L>
Marcato: each word distinct and emphasized	<MRC	MRC>
Arrhythmic: halting speech	<ARH	ARH>
Voice quality		
Whispered	<WH	WH>
Breathy	<BR	BR>
Creaky	<%	%>
Crying	<CRY	CRY>
Yawning	<YWN	YWN>
Quotation quality	<Q	Q>
TRANSCRIBER'S PERSPECTIVE		
Uncertain hearing	<X	X>

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